Rethinking sponsoring: Evidencing and conceptualising sponsorship as a relational practice for women's career development

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Management

Massey University, Palmerston North

New Zealand

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2019

Abstract

Sponsoring has been heralded as the means to redressing women's underrepresentation in senior leadership positions, given that mentoring has not fixed this long standing problem. Sponsors are said to influence promotion decisions, give access to those in power, and provide other support for women's career progression. However, despite the bold claims made for its efficacy, remarkably little is known about the experiences of those involved in sponsoring relationships, resulting in limited understanding of the sponsoring process, and its benefits, challenges and wider outcomes. This research adopted a qualitative research design with a phenomenological orientation to explore the experiences of sponsoring and provides insights into the nature of the sponsoring relationship through in-depth interviews with 16 people (15 women, 1 man) in New Zealand, from different professions, background and ethnicities and at different stages of their career.

Findings reveal three key dynamics shaping the character of the sponsoring relationship. Firstly, rather than an instrumental focus on career advancement, the relationship is marked by perceptions of sponsors as benevolent and giving. Secondly, nurturing, caring and friendship are central features of the relationship, with different expectations held of male and female sponsors. Finally, sponsees' ethnic and migrant identity also shaped their experience of sponsoring, indicating that the relationship is mediated by factors other than gender alone.

These findings extend scholarly and practitioner knowledge about sponsoring and its positive influence upon women's career advancement, with important implications for

sponsorship research, policy and practice. They challenge the dominant understanding of sponsoring as an instrumental exchange and enable its re-conceptualisation as a relational practice of sponsorship that is oriented to fostering the sponsee's development. They also indicate that sponsorship is experienced as a meaningful connection that extends beyond the workplace and offers broader benefits than presently recognised. From a policy and practice perspective, the findings indicate that attention to issues of gender and ethnic discrimination, and the obligations invoked in sponsees, arising from their perception of sponsor generosity, giving, nurturing and caring', all warrant attention in organisations seeking to implement, encourage or support sponsorship programmes. Overall, the potential of sponsoring to support women's advancement is both more personally meaningful and more complex than current research has identified.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is a labour of love, but not just mine. It is the result of the love and support of some key people surrounding me. I cannot thank these people enough.

To my parents, my children and my sister: thank you for your unwavering love and support, I could not have done this without you. Thank you.

To my supervisors Sarah Leberman, Farah Palmer and Suze Wilson: Indeed, this has been a journey just like you said it would be. The journey would not have been possible without you. Thank you.

To participants of this research: Thank you for sharing your stories and making this happen.

There are several other people at Massey who made this journey pleasant. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

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Glossary of Māori Terms

- Mana - having status, influence or power, authority or prestige (comes from various sources)
- Whānau –is used to refer to the family unit (can be genealogical or based on purpose for gathering)
- Iwi – refers to extended kinship group, tribe. Often refers to a large group of people descended from a common ancestor and associated with a distinct territory
- Hapū - kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe - section of a large kinship group and the primary political unit in traditional Māori society. It consisted of a number of whānau sharing descent from a common ancestor, usually being named after the ancestor, but sometimes from an important event in the group's history. A number of related hapū usually shared adjacent territories forming a looser tribal federation (iwi)
- Marae - courtyard - the open area in front of the wharenui (main house), where formal greetings and discussions take place. Often also used to include the complex of buildings around the marae
- Whanaungatanga - relationship, kinship, sense of family connection - a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging

- Manaatikanga - hospitality, kindness, generosity, support - the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others.
- Mana whenua - People of the land. Phrase used to refer to the indigenous people of Aotearoa (now known collectively as Māori).
- Whakapapa - genealogy, descent - cited ancestry which establishes whānau, hapū and iwi links. Also refers to connections within flora and fauna species
- Utu - to pay, repay or respond - linked to koha and the expectation of reciprocity. Can also relate to avenging a wrong-doing
- Koha - gift, present or offering – in the modern context used to thank an individual or group. Traditionally there was an expectation of reciprocity

Adapted from the Māori dictionary, 2019.

Chapter One: Background & Introduction

Sponsoring has been signalled as a solution to women's under-representation in senior leadership, yet little is known about how it is experienced. My research examines the sponsoring experiences of women in New Zealand with the aim of understanding the nature of the sponsoring relationship and its attributes. This first chapter sets the scene for the ensuing study. Here I outline reasons for my interest in this topic and introduce the subject of organisational sponsoring, including its significance and relevance, followed by an outline of the contribution of my study to theory and practice and the structure of the thesis. Additionally, I present insights into my personal background, something that has influenced both my decision to undertake the study and its parameters.

1.1 My interest in the topic

My interest in sponsorship emerged over time. It was informed by my wider interest in women's advancement and sparked by a chance conversation during a social gathering for women students about to start their MBA in the United Kingdom (UK). I had arrived in the UK to pursue an MBA from India, having lived and worked there after graduating from medical school. Until then, I had rather naively assumed that gender issues in the workplace were mainly overt and largely a result of wider social norms such as what I had witnessed in India. However, I quickly realised that women in the developed world also faced considerable struggles in moving into leadership positions, evident in the low number of women in senior leadership positions across the globe. Thus I began to

question why this was so, and what could be done about it. In particular, my curiosity and research interest were aroused with respect to the practice of sponsoring, a practice increasingly advocated as an effective solution to problems of women's advancement (e.g. de Vries & Binns, 2018; Followell, 2014; Foust-Cummings, Dinolfo & Kohler, 2011; Headlam-Wells, 2004; Hellicar, 2013; Hewlett, Peraino, Sherbin & Sumberg, 2010; Hewlett, Marshall & Sherbin, 2011; Paddison, 2013; Travis, Doty & Helitzer, 2013). Initially explored notions of sponsoring as part of a 2014 Masters research project and this provided a foundation on which to develop my doctoral research.

Prior to researching sponsoring/sponsorship within organisations, I believed that through appropriate initiatives and interventions such as leadership development programmes, mentoring and coaching, barriers to women's career advancement could be addressed, at least to some extent. I assumed this to be more valid in the Western world, which I and those around me considered to be better for women to live and work in than developing countries. Findings from my 2014 Europe based research (Bhide, 2014) reveal that barriers such as stereotyping, unconscious bias, family commitments and lack of organisational support prevent many from progressing in their careers. It also showed that there is ambiguity about what constitutes sponsoring, how it comes about, and why it is not equally available to all women. These questions became a focus of this study.

1.2 Women in senior leadership

> *"We need women at all levels, including the top to change the dynamic, reshape the conversation, to make sure women's voices are heard and heeded, not overlooked and ignored."* (Sandberg, 2011, para 9)

Women continue to be under-represented in leadership positions, board and executive levels across the globe (Catalyst, 2014, 2017, 2018; Grant Thornton International 2015, 2016, 2017), including New Zealand (National Council of Women of New Zealand, 2015). In 2015, board seats held by women worldwide were 14.7% (Catalyst, 2017; Dawson, Kersley & Natella, 2016). Women of colour were least represented in senior leadership behind white men, white women and men of colour (McKinsey & Company, 2018), and absent from most of the US Fortune 500 companies' Boards, with unknown figures across the globe (Catalyst, 2015).

Research evidence shows that gender diversity contributes to better organisational and financial performance, and organisations with a higher number of women in board positions display stronger financial and organisational performance, as well as better corporate governance (e.g. Badal & Harter, 2014; Catalyst, 2013; Dawson et al., 2014; Desvaux, Devillard-Hoellinger & Baumgarten, 2007; Dezsö & Ross, 2012; European Commission, 2013; Gratton, Kelan & Walker, 2007; Grene & Newlands, 2015; Joecks, Pull, & Vetter, 2013; Lee, Marshall, Rallis, Moscardi, 2015; Pellegrino, D'Amato, & Weisberg, 2011; Wagner, 2011). Moreover, when ethnic diversity on boards is also taken into consideration, the improvement on all the outcome measures is 35%, whereas taking only gender diversity into consideration has been shown to contribute only 15% improvement (McKinsey & Company, 2015). However, a predominant focus on financial results, which consistently demonstrate an improvement when the number of women in senior leadership increase, may have diminished the focus on other beneficial impacts that women in senior leadership have on organisational policy and practices (Glass & Cook, 2018). For example, research indicates that when there are more women in senior

leadership positions (Kurtulus & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2012; Skaggs, Stainback, & Duncan, 2012), there is an increase in the number of women promoted overall in organisations, as well as a lowering of the gender pay gap (Cohen & Huffman, 2007). There is also an increase in the likelihood of women's voices being heard in the boardrooms when there is a critical mass of women on boards (Broome, Conley & Krawiec, 2011; Joecks et al., 2013; Konrad, Kramer & Erkut, 2008; Torchia, Calabro & Huse, 2011). Thus, the low numbers of women in leadership are not only problematic for organisational and financial performance, but also for women's progress and truly achieving gender equity.

Reasons for lack of women's advancement to senior leadership

Academic and popular literature has identified the reasons for the lack of advancement of women to senior leadership positions at two levels (the individual and the organisational level) often referred to as the 'pipeline theory' and 'glass ceiling' effect respectively (e.g. Cook & Glass, 2014a; Carli & Eagly, 2016; Kanter, 1977; Morrison, 1992; Reskin, 1993; Tharenou, 1999; Rhode, 2017; LaPierre & Zimmerman, 2012). The pipeline theory refers to the notion that the individual characteristics of women determine their potential and talented women will eventually move up the corporate ladder. This differs from the glass ceiling effect, which refers to the notion that various organisational forces or barriers to advancement in the workplace prevent talented women from moving up the corporate ladder (LaPierre & Zimmerman, 2012). Other metaphors have also been identified to indicate the obstruction to women's career advancement that exist at an individual level. For example, the 'glass wall' effect refers to the presence of horizontal (and largely invisible) barriers which prevent women's advancement (e.g. Lyness &

Terrazas, 2006; Wellington, Kropf & Gerkovich, 2003) and the ‘glass slipper’ effect, which refers to characterisation of work in a manner that only enables some people to fit the roles created (Ashcraft, 2013). One result of the glass slipper effect is that senior leadership roles are attributed stereotypically ‘masculine’ characteristics such as rationality, control or authority and cultural stereotypes likewise serve to create a perception that women are unsuited to these roles (Simpson & Kumra, 2016). The ‘glass’ metaphor can invoke notions of clarity and transparency, but in all of these cases it refers to the illusion that there is nothing to impede women’s advancement.

Obstacles to women’s career advancement have also been characterised as a labyrinth that requires navigation (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Accordingly, while the pathway to senior leadership is straightforward for men, for women it is relatively byzantine, even as more women enter the workforce and there is increasing gender diversity in workplaces (Gipson, Plaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci & Burke, 2017; McKinsey & Company, 2018). Some of the identified barriers to the career advancement of women within this labyrinth include a lack of mentoring and access to informal networks; lack of legislative, and social, cultural and organisational factors such as policies that support family responsibilities; differing performance evaluations standards for men and women; unconscious gender bias, and gendered stereotypes of leaders (Catalyst, 2013; Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Johnson, Murphy; Zewdie, & Reichard, 2008; Mavin & Grandy, 2012; Powell, 2012; Prime, Carter, & Welbourne, 2009; Rhee & Sigler, 2015).

Women are perceived as pushy and selfish if they advocate for themselves or as un-ambitious and not serious enough if they do not, thus they are subject to a ‘double bind’. Research suggests that gender stereotyping contributes towards the lack of women in

senior positions more than is generally acknowledged (Agars, 2004; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Glick & Fiske, 2007; Hewlett et al., 2010; Ibarra, Ely & Kolb, 2013). Additionally, gendered expectations often lead to women feeling compelled to display certain leadership behaviours when operating within organisational structures which tend to favour men as leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Johns, 2013; Johnson et al., 2008). Women's leadership potential is often evaluated within these masculinised organisational contexts which then influence women's perceptions of themselves as leaders and prevents greater numbers applying for senior leadership positions (Bird & Rhoton, 2011; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Ely, Ibarra & Kolb, 2011; Ibarra et al., 2013). Women have also been reported to have less access to career enhancing opportunities and assignments than men, and frequently miss out on such opportunities because they are less visible to influential decision makers in organisations and unable to form informal networks with them (Madsen, 2017; Madsen, Ngunjiri, Longman, & Cherry, 2015; Rhode, 2017).

Some commentators claim that these barriers are often unseen and are entrenched within organisational and societal structures (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Furthermore, the barriers are compounded for women of colour who report that the lack of others who are similar to them in senior organisational leadership, leads to diminished mentoring, sponsorship and networking opportunities (e.g. Black-Beard, Murrell & Thomas, 2006; Cox & Nkomo, 1990; Dreher & Cox, 1996; Fitzgerald, 2006; Ibarra, 1993, 1995; Rhode, 2017; Thomas, 1990). Women of colour also report being expected to accommodate an organisational culture defined by the ethnic majority or 'white' people, thus it comes as no surprise that women of colour often display lower levels of optimism about opportunities

for career progress than do women who are members of the dominant ethnicity (Giscombe & Matttis, 2002).

Organisational and policy level interventions

Organisations, governments and policy-making bodies have responded to calls for greater representation of women in senior organisational roles with various diversity management initiatives designed to redress the on-going gender imbalance (e.g. APEC, 2017; Department of Treasury & Finance, Tasmania, 2017; Devillard, de Zelicourt, Kossoff & Sandra Sancier-Sultan, 2017; Giscombe & Mattis, 2002; Grant Thornton International, 2014; Jamieson & O'Mara, 1991; Johnson & Davis, 2017; Kalev, Dobbin & Kelly, 2006; Konrad & Linnehan 1995**;** Leck & Saunders, 1992; Thomas, 1990; Wentling & Rivas, 1998)**.**

An example at a policy level is the European Union's (EU) quota system for women on boards enacted in 2013 (European Commission, 2018). The target set was to have 40% of non-executive board membership roles in publicly listed companies in Europe being held by women by 2020 (European Commission, 2018). Sanctions can be applied by member states of the EU to companies that do not meet this target. As a consequence of this initiative, Norway has already reached this target. Some reports, however, suggest that the quota mandate has yet to translate into benefits for women in other levels in organisations, including senior levels outside of boards (Devillard, Hunt & Yee, 2018; Raleigh, 2018; Smith, 2018).

Various interventions have been implemented at an organisational level for the career advancement of women into senior leadership positions. Such programmes include

mentoring, sponsoring, leadership development and board internships; flexible workplace policies; and networking events (e.g. Giscombe, 2008**;** Grant Thornton International, 2014; Gurdjian, Halbeisen & Lane, 2014; Kassotakis & Risk, 2015)**.** It is claimed these are a product of an awareness about the competitive advantage that board gender diversity brings (e.g. Badal & Harter, 2014; Catalyst, 2013; Dezsö & Ross, 2012; Joecks et al., 2013; Pellegrino et al., 2011; Wagner, 2011).

Many of these policies and practices currently being implemented with respect to women's underrepresentation at senior level, have their roots in 20th century feminist activism. More particularly, equal employment strategies were initially developed in organisations to identify and address discrimination towards women in workplaces following the second wave of feminism in the 1960s which opposed the patriarchal structure of society and demanded that women be treated equally in employment (Cobble, Gordon & Henry, 2014; Coleman, 2009; Thornham, 2001; Whelehan, 1995). Now, feminist perspectives on how equality may be achieved through equal employment opportunities (EEO) are broadly understood as liberal or radical. While liberal feminists focus more on providing equal opportunities, radical feminists focus on equal outcomes through removing structural barriers (England, 2017; Gray & Boddy, 2010; Jewson & Mason, 2011). Either way, EEO efforts have long been on feminist agendas and the ongoing low numbers of women in senior leadership is thus problematic from a feminist standpoint.

In the wake of the attention that early feminist researchers demanded regarding the gender gap at senior management levels, one response has been to look at mentoring as a way forward.

Mentoring

Indeed, the role of mentoring in assisting women overcome barriers to their career progression has gained the attention of researchers and practitioners for over three decades (e.g. Blake-Beard, 2001; Block & Tietjen-Smith, 2016; Burke & McKeen, 1997; Catalyst, 1993, 2001; Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; Irby, 2014; Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017; McKeen & Bujaki, 2008; Noe 1988a, 1988b; Patton, 2009; Ramaswamy, Huang & Dreher, 2014; Ragins, Townsend & Mattis, 1998). Within organisations, mentoring was traditionally understood as a more experienced individual contributing to the personal (psychosocial support) and professional (career support) growth of a less experienced individual (Kram, 1985). Mentoring can be provided by a range of people in or outside the workplace, including peers, colleagues, or supervisors. Research shows that an array of formal and informal mentoring opportunities (for example, peer to peer mentoring, reverse mentoring and mentoring networks) are available in organisations (Eby, 1997; Eby, Rhodes & Allen, 2007; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994). Evidence indicates that women who are mentored do better in their careers than their non-mentored colleagues (e.g. Fagenson, 1989; Headlam-Wells, 2004; Vinnicombe & Singh, 2003). In fact, mentoring has been considered a ‘must have’ and not just ‘good to have’ for women (e.g. Burke & McKeen, 1990; McKeen & Bujaki, 2008; Noe 1988b). However, despite the increase in managed mentoring interventions by organisations, the number of women in senior leadership positions continues to be low (e.g. Catalyst, 2013; 2014; Hewlett et al., 2010). An alternative has emerged, gaining increasing notice in more recent years, known by the term sponsoring or sponsorship.

Sponsoring

Sponsoring received attention in the academic and popular literature most notably following Hewlett et al.'s study (2010) conducted a study in large US organisations. Hewlett et al. (2010) reported that women did not progress in their career at the same rate as men, and remained frozen below the executive layer because although they had mentors, they lacked sponsors. They described a sponsor as a person in a senior position who facilitated a sponsee's career advancement to senior leadership positions through influencing promotion decisions, enabling networks with senior leaders and increasing a sponsee's visibility. While most published research prior to 2010 had considered workplace sponsoring to be a sub-function of mentoring, it was observed that sponsorship was not consistently provided in all mentoring relationships (Dougherty & Dreher, 2008). Hewlett et al. (2010) delineated sponsoring as a distinct and more powerful practice than mentoring, claiming that the advancement of women to leadership positions was dependent on sponsorship. Hewlett et al. (2012) conducted a comparable but smaller study in the UK, reporting similar findings. Sponsors were judged to be different from, and more valuable than, mentors to women for career advancement (Hewlett et al., 2010, 2012). Since 2010, some large organisations have also reported positive outcomes of formal sponsoring programmes (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2012).

Thus sponsoring as a concept received attention among practitioners and scholars as the missing catalyst for women since mentoring had seemingly failed to increase the number of women in senior leadership. However, there are two key elements that have received no or limited attention in the sponsoring literature, namely how sponsoring is experienced

by women and thus the potential diversity of these experiences, and an understanding of the sponsoring relationship.

Sponsoring experiences and intersectionality

Outcomes and benefits of sponsoring for women's career advancement through functions such as advocating for raises and promotions dominate the scholarly and popular literature (e.g. Followell, 2014; Foust-Cummings et al., 2011; Headlam-Wells, 2004; Hellicar, 2013; Hewlett et al., 2011; Paddison, 2013; Travis et al., 2013). As mentioned earlier, little is known about how sponsoring is actually experienced by women. Thus while the message that continues to be emphasised is that sponsorship had the potential to enable women to progress in their career (e.g. de Vries & Binns, 2018; McKinsey & Company, 2018), there is no understanding of how this might happen. Inherent in discussions to date are assumptions that all women experience sponsoring similarly, that it means the same for all women, and that the outcomes of sponsoring are likely to be the same for all women.

These assumptions overlook the diverse experiences and challenges of women. They fail to take into account the influence of characteristics other than their gender, such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality and age – characteristics that often see women being cast as a member of a minority group, creating preconceived notions about them in organisations and potentially exacerbating power imbalances (e.g. Ragins, 1997; Young, Cady & Foxon, 2006). Barriers to career progress that might result from such intersectional positions need to be identified and addressed in sponsoring programmes in order to

achieve equivalent outcomes for all women, given that the barriers are more pronounced for women of colour (e.g. Ibarra et al., 2013; Kim & O'Brien, 2018).

Because I recognise that factors other than gender influence the experiences of women in organisations, the concept of intersectionality informs my research and provides a conceptual tool to enable me to explore how the intersectional locations of participants may have influenced their experiences of sponsoring and the outcomes of those experiences.

Intersectionality is rooted within critical feminism. It focusses on how the intersection of identities for example, gender, ethnicity and age lead to complex and distinct experiences (e.g. Christensen & Jensen, 2012; Crenshaw, 1989; McCall, 2005; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010), creating further marginalisation within marginalised groups. These dynamics are largely overlooked in research where each dimension is considered in isolation (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). An intersectional perspective on women's organisational participation takes into consideration the fact that women have diverse experience, face multiple forms of oppression and not all of them have power taken away from them (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008). It also provides an understanding of how women's multiple identities influence their everyday lives and perceptions about themselves, their place in society and their behaviour (Thornton Dill, 1983). Intersectionality might explain how different forms of discrimination interact to produce inequality for women, and to varying degrees, among women as might be the case between white women and women of colour (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013; Choo & Ferree 2010; Christensen & Jensen, 2012; Davis, 2008; Mehrotra, 2010; Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz, 2013; Williams, 2009; Williams, 2013). But the notion of intersectionality is

complex. Several interpretations of intersectionality have evolved over the past two decades and intersectional studies have gone beyond the intersection of traditional class, gender and race to include other social statuses like age, religion, sexuality and ethnicity (Cho et al., 2013; Choo & Ferree 2010; Dy, Marlow & Martin, 2016; Love, Booysen & Essed, 2018; Ridgeway & Kricheli-Katz, 2013; Williams, 2009; Williams, 2013).

Feminist perspective

As mentioned earlier, intersectionality is influenced by feminist perspectives. Uncovering women's experiences has historically underpinned feminist writing, and research informed by feminism is driven by recognising that the collective voices of women have a powerful role in bringing women's issues to the forefront (e.g. Davidson & Wagner-Martin, 1995; Fine, 1992; Kaplan, 1990; Riger, 1992; Roberts, 2013; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996). I believe that my research is beneficial for women and thus there is a feminist agenda behind it. In the context of this research, a feminist perspective lies in being critical of the current understanding of sponsoring in neglecting to account for how women experience sponsoring and the characteristics that make the sponsoring relationship meaningful for women, and in identifying and highlighting women's concerns in workplaces both from the literature and from the findings of this research. I am guided by feminist research methodologies in listening to women's voices and experiences and taking into consideration diversity among women through an intersectional perspective (Beckman, 2014). In the absence of research on women's experiences of sponsoring, sponsorship is likely to remain poorly understood, limiting its potential to be an effective practice and to assist with driving change.

The sponsoring relationship

Similarly, despite recent attention given to sponsorship as the panacea for women's advancement into leadership, sponsoring has not been examined from a relational perspective. Thus, the characteristics of the sponsoring relationship, how it develops, its constituent interactions as well as any accompanying challenges and issues are unknown.

The idea of a relational perspective, derives from the Relational Cultural Theory or RCT (Miller, 1986; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991), which situates relationships at the core of human development and suggests that human beings grow in connection to each other (Fletcher, 2001, 2004). It highlights the importance of interdependence between individuals and the role of authenticity, empathy and empowerment in relational partnerships (Alvarez & Lazzari, 2016; Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; Hartling, 2008). Women have been said to prefer and display relational practices such as mutual empowerment, connectivity and interdependence in workplaces (Fletcher, 2001; Jordan, 2008; Miller, 1986), however these practices are often dismissed in organisations as expected feminine behaviours thereby remaining virtually invisible (Fletcher, 2004). Failure to draw attention to the relational aspects of sponsoring implies that its understanding as a beneficial practice for women is perhaps incomplete. This in turn could serve to limit the ability of organisations, practitioners and policy makers to promote sponsorship, and to optimise the potential it has as a tool for women's career advancement.

1.3 The New Zealand context

This current study of sponsoring is located in a New Zealand organisational milieu. Hence the ensuing overview of New Zealand as a nation and culture is designed as a contextual background to the research.

Demographics

New Zealand is a relatively small, geographically isolated nation. The population is 4.8 million (Statistics New Zealand, 2018a) of which around 71% of people are of European descent (Statistics New Zealand 2013). Māori, who comprise 14% of the population, are the indigenous people or *tangata whenua* of New Zealand and Te Reo is an official language of New Zealand, along with English and New Zealand Sign Language (Statistics New Zealand, 2013; Wilson, 2005). The people of European descent are known in the Māori language as Pākehā, a descriptive term widely used by New Zealanders. The Treaty of Waitangi, the constitutional document signed between some Māori chiefs and the representatives of British crown subsequent to colonisation is considered a founding document and by law Māori have the same rights and responsibilities as non-Māori New Zealanders (Orange, 2018; Wyeth, Derrett, Hokowhitu, Hall & Langley, 2010). This treaty and the relations between Māori and Pākehā have, since its signing in 1840, been debated by many people (Ministry for Culture & Heritage, 2018a).

New Zealand also has a significant population of Pacific peoples, also known as Pasifika. The Pasifika population originate from many different Pacific Islands, with Samoan, Cook Islands Māori, Tongan, Niuean, Fijian, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan and Kiribati being the eight main Pacific ethnic sub-groups in New Zealand (Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2018;

Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Collectively, they are the fourth largest ethnic group behind European, Māori and Asian. Samoans are the largest Pasifika group comprising close to 48% of all Pasifika people (Statistics New Zealand, 2013).

Another large population category is broadly referred to as 'Asian'. Asian groups in New Zealand include migrants from across Asia. The largest subgroup within Asian category are Chinese, Indian, Korean, Filipino, Japanese, Sri Lankan, Cambodian and Thai, together comprising 11 % of the total New Zealand population (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Other ethnic groups in New Zealand include Middle Eastern, Latin American, African (MELAA) (1.1%) and all others (1%) (Statistics New Zealand, 2013).

New Zealand women

Women comprise around 51% of the population and 64% of university graduates in New Zealand (Ministry for Women, 2018b; Statistics New Zealand, 2018a). However, they have greater unemployment and underemployment rates than men, are underrepresented in leadership roles and account for two thirds of those earning minimum wages despite making progress in the composition of women in the workforce, women in governance and women in senior leadership (Grant Thornton International, 2016; Hurst, 2017; Ministry for Women, 2017a; National Council of Women of New Zealand, 2015).

New Zealanders take pride in their status as the first country to give women the right to vote, known as Suffrage, in the late 19th century (1893) (Ministry for Women, 2018a). The recent 125 years of Suffrage celebrations provided an opportunity to reflect on the current position of women's rights in New Zealand. The overarching message was that women's

attempts for equality are still ongoing on several fronts, including the workforce (Ministry for Culture & Heritage, 2018b).

Women are still overrepresented in the unpaid workforce. Official labour force participation is 65% for women and 75% for men (Statistics New Zealand, 2018b); with a higher unemployment rate for women (4.7%) than men (4.3%). Māori and Pasifika women have the highest unemployment rate, at 12% and 11.7% respectively (Human Rights Commission, 2018; Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2018; Statistics New Zealand, 2018b). These broad classifications do not, however, take into consideration the diverse and unique ethnic identities within these groups, for example there are at least 13 languages and cultures among Pasifika people. Therefore, it is only when gender is considered together with other factors that the negative outcomes for young Māori, Pasifika and disabled women are highlighted (Human Rights Commission, 2018). This reinforces the urgent need to consider diversity beyond gender in the New Zealand context, recognising intersecting identities and how this impacts career progression for women in New Zealand.

Evidence of a gendered pay gap in New Zealand is well documented. This pay gap is currently 9.2 %, having decreased from 11.8 % in 2015 (Ministry for Women, 2018c; National Council of Women of New Zealand, 2015; Statistics New Zealand, 2018c). However, this gap is 20% for those on higher salaries and still exists despite the increasing numbers of women in higher education in New Zealand (Ministry for Women, 2017a). Reports also show that Māori and Pasifika women are paid less per hour than European women (Ministry for Women, 2018c) and disabled women are paid less than disabled men (Human Rights Commission, 2018). This further supports the notion that in

addition to gender other diverse characteristics (e.g. ethnicity) deserve attention in the New Zealand context. Yet gaining an understanding of this is challenging, because the data pertaining to leadership participation of women by ethnicity is limited or only available for specific sectors, such as the data for Māori and Pasifika women on school and state boards (Human Rights Commission, 2012, 2017) or in sports (Holland, 2012).

New Zealand women's career progress

Despite the growing number of women graduates (Ministry of Education, 2017), and women in the workforce, women report not being able to progress in their careers at the same rate as men (Parker, Taskin, Sayers & Kennedy, 2017). Reports suggest that over 40% of women consider that they are lagging behind men in terms of career progress, and more than 60% feel that their organisations could better support women's advancement to leadership positions (Parker et al., 2017). Desired support, it has been suggested, could be in the form of interventions such as mentoring or policies such as more workplace flexibility, along with a shift in culture which was considered to favour men in management positions. Indeed, 70% of respondents to a New Zealand survey of employee satisfaction and motivation among those in full-time employment, report that gender bias exists and men are preferred over women for managerial positions even when equally qualified (Ranstad, 2016).

Worryingly, women's representation in senior leadership positions in the New Zealand private sector decreased from 31% in 2004 to 18% in 2018 (Grant Thornton International, 2018). This compares with board directorships held by women in the top 100 companies by market capitalisation which in New Zealand stood at about 22% in 2017. The total

number of women as chairs of top 100 company boards has remained at seven in the past seven years (McGregor & Davis-Tana, 2017). Although the proportion of New Zealand businesses which has at least one woman on the board has increased by about 14 %, from 2017 to2018, the proportion of senior leadership roles held by women fell by about 4% (Grant Thornton International, 2018). These statistics possibly indicate the practice of tokenism when appointing women on boards rather than having a commitment to developing a critical mass of women who have a collective voice for making a difference (e.g. Eagly & Carli, 2007; Konrad et al., 2008; Torchia et al., f2011). Women in New Zealand are better represented in the public sector middle and senior management roles than in the private sector, perhaps because public sector organisations being obliged to demonstrate and measure gender equality (Human Rights Commission, 2012; Ministry for Women, 2015).

Research on women and leadership in New Zealand

Large scale benchmarking studies have been the primary source of information about New Zealand women in leadership (e.g. Human Rights Commission, 2012). Within these studies, characteristics such as ethnicity, class and race have not received much focus and the differences between and among women have generally not been highlighted in research (Fitzgerald, 2003). More particularly, there is limited cross-sector research that highlights ethnic differences across leadership experiences of women. Qualitative studies that have considered gender and ethnicity in the New Zealand context have focussed attention on specific sectors including sport leadership (e.g. Palmer & Masters, 2010) and educational leadership (e.g. Fitzgerald, 2003; Harris & Leberman, 2012; Jahnke, 1997; Jenkins & Pihama, 2001).

Similarly, migrant women's experiences in New Zealand have been documented, however this has not extended to their leadership experiences (e.g. Lewis, 2005; Kim, Hocking, McKenzie-Green & Nayar, 2016; Nayar, Hocking & Giddings, 2012; Philipp & Ho, 2010; Pio, 2005, 2007a). Māori women may have been somewhat better served by research, with studies into Māori women's experiences of leadership in the *iwi* (tribe) context (Forster, Palmer & Barnett, 2016; Hayes, 2003; Ruru, Roche & Waitoki, 2017; Ruwhiu & Elkin, 2016; Spiller & Stockdale, 2013) and in the broader New Zealand context (e.g. Brown & Carlin, 1994; Chamberlain, Fergie, Sinclair & Asmar, 2016; Henry & Pringle, 1996; Madden, 1997; Te Awekotuku, 1991; Wirihana, 2012; Wolfgramm & Henry, 2015). These studies have provided valuable insights into diverse leadership experiences of women and revealed that women may practice leadership in diverse yet equally effective ways, highlighting the benefits of avoiding a 'one size fits all' approach, and considering instead an intersectional approach to women's leadership. This approach is extended in my research on the sponsoring experiences of women of diverse ethnicities in New Zealand.

Cultural influences on leadership in New Zealand

Leadership in New Zealand has also been influenced by the Māori values such as *mana* and other values associated with Te Ao Māori or the Māori world such as *whanau* (family), *whānaungatanga* (kinship) *and manaakitanga* (support) even though the traditional understanding of leadership is evolving among Māori to accommodate the contemporary world (Goold, 2013; Hayes, 2003; Palmer & Masters, 2010). According to traditional Māori values, leadership is often bestowed upon individuals based on their *whakapapa* (geneology) or *whanau* (family) and may not always be based on titles like other cultures

(Goold, 2013; Mead, 1997). *Mana* is earned through behaviours such as responsibility, mentorship, sense of community, motivation and inspiration (Henry & Wolfgramm, 2015). Bad behaviour or bad leadership would lead to *mana* diminishing or being taken away (Henry, 1994).

Contemporary Māori leadership is suggested to be a balancing act between providing leadership underpinned by Māori values while managing the western leadership values which may often be conflicting (Mead, 2006). There have been attempts to generate a list of Māori leadership values and attributes which would potentially aid in managing this conflict, and include contemporary perspectives alongside Māori perspectives of leadership, all of which allude to the importance of *mana* in Māori leadership perspectives (e.g. Fitzgerald, 2003; Henry, 1994; Henry & Wolgramm, 2018; Katene, 2013; Pihama & Gardiner, 2005; Ruwhiu & Elkin, 2016; Spiller & Stockdale, 2013). Māori perspectives also emphasise affiliation with the collective group that they represent such as the *iwi, hapu* and *whanau* (e.g. Harmsworth, Awatere & Robb, 2016; Sibley & Haukamau, 2013). Thus, success is likely to be attributed to the collective rather than the individual and claiming individual success may be considered an arrogant position (Palmer & Masters, 2010). One consequence of this is that a managerial title may not necessarily be valued from a Māori perspective, thus impacting career definitions and career pathways.

Similarly, the leadership experiences of Pasifika people may also differ from those of people from other cultures. For example, research shows that the leadership models and methods utilised by Tongan people, a Pasifika peoples group, are distinct (Chong & Thomas, 1997) and the leadership experiences of Tongan women may be different from those of other women (e.g. Kailahi, 2017; Matapo & Leaupepe, 2016; Moodley, 2016;

Paea, 2016). Therefore, leadership may be perceived and exercised in various ways influenced by culture, indicating the need to pay attention to individual perceptions of career goals, success and leadership positions, especially in a multi-cultural context like New Zealand.

My own cultural background

Discussion of cultural context for this current research undertaking would be incomplete without acknowledging that my research is almost inevitably influenced by my personal cultural background and experiences.

I am an Indian woman. My ethnicity had not, however, been a subject of much personal reflection when I lived and worked in India. As a young girl I grew up in a family where women had the freedom to pursue education and work. Even though I worked for a global organisation for 10 years, interacting daily with people from across the world, I was not really aware of the ethnic differences that existed amongst us. Perhaps this was because I was living in a country where I belonged to the ethnic majority.

Somewhat paradoxically, I was nevertheless aware that my life was lived within a broader restrictive and discriminatory society – a society where girls were often not given the same opportunities as boys for education or other activities. While growing up, girls were typically expected to quit school to stay at home and look after their siblings, and sometimes considered a 'burden' upon the family which was responsible for 'marrying them off' into another family. Even when they were allowed to pursue education and work, girls were expected to stay at home after marriage to look after children. Thus, boys and men were privileged at home and in society.

Today I understand that my own, very different, experience of being encouraged to pursue higher education and graduating from medical school was atypical. Further, while the notion that men's voices are more privileged than women's in society was quite clear to me, I did not think much of the privilege that belonging to a certain class brought with it, such as opportunities for education and work. Perhaps this was due to the fact that I was privileged in that social setting myself. In fact, this privilege may have contributed towards my experiences as a young girl and partly explains why my experiences were quite different to those of other girls who did not have this social advantage. Utilising an intersectional perspective in this research has led me to think more deeply about my own position at the intersection of class and gender, and the impact of these factors on my life – and particularly on my work experiences.

So, I became aware of my ethnic identity as an Indian and as a woman of colour when I moved to the UK for higher education and when, for the first time, I was not like the majority of people around me. That experience was very different to my current experience in New Zealand. I am older, I am a single mother, and my career focus, my priorities in life, and the organisational and social context are all different. I had long been aware that women of colour faced discrimination and additional barriers to career advancement however, until forced to confront these issues through a structured research approach, I never questioned the dynamics between different ethnicities or thought deeply about those dynamics. Similarly, prior to the findings of this doctoral study, I had believed that sponsoring was a construct that included people helping other people in workplaces in different ways, without thinking deeply about the structural influences on these interactions.

Looking beyond gender: The case for New Zealand

My own social, cultural, educational and work history has heightened my interest in matters of gender and ethnicity and access to positions of power in organisational hierarchies. Increasingly there is evidence of an awareness of gender issues in organisations in New Zealand (Human Rights Commission, 2018). Although the focus of several reports in New Zealand has been on boards and leadership roles (e.g. Human Rights Commission, 2012), there are multiple barriers and forms of discrimination that women encounter at all levels (e.g. Bruce, Battista, Plankey, Johnson & Marshall, 2015; Fraser, Osborne & Sibley, 2015; McGregor & Tweed, 2000; Sin, Stilman & Fabling, 2017; Stronge, Sengupta, Barlow, 2015). Efforts to address barriers and inequities include advocating and encouraging equal employment opportunity policies, raising awareness about gender equality and benchmarking (Casey, Skibnes & Pringle, 2011). Recent media discussions of sexual harassment of women as part of the #metoo movement is indicative of this view, with increasing attention being paid to women's issues and their redress (e.g. Condie, 2018). The Ministry for Women (2017b) has also recognised that women are not a homogenous group in New Zealand: they have unique contributions and challenges (e.g. ethnicity and disability) and need a focussed approach for equal opportunities. The Gender Equal New Zealand campaign which was launched in 2017 by the National Council of Women of New Zealand is indicative of a more intersectional approach to thinking about gender (National Council of Women, 2017). These developments are consistent with my research approach, which values the diverse experiences of women and which aims to focus on diversity beyond gender (e.g. ethnicity), aspects in past studies that have provided valuable insights and supported

effective outcomes (e.g. Bach, Luh & Schult, 2011; Mohanram, 1998; Simmonds, 2011). Findings from my study will assist in understanding the barriers and conditions that continue to exist not only for the advancement of women into leadership positions in general, but also specifically for women of colour. Lending additional support to the relevance of this research is the projection that by 2026, about 60% of New Zealand population will be made up of Māori, Asian and Pasifika people all groups with a higher percentage of women than men (Statistics New Zealand, 2006; Ministry for Women, 2016).

1.4 My doctoral research

The prevailing understanding of sponsoring is reflected in the statement given below, and it influenced my thinking with respect to establishing research objectives.

> *"Sponsorship, done right, is transactional. It's an implicit or even explicit strategic alliance, a long-range quid pro quo." (*Hewlett, 2013, p. 20)

My research objective was to answer questions about the nature of the sponsoring relationship and its characteristics by studying how it is experienced by women from different ethnic backgrounds in New Zealand. Three specific questions guided the research:

- How do women experience sponsoring as sponsees?
- How do sponsors experience sponsoring?
- What is the nature of the sponsoring relationship?

My intention is to hold women's experiences centre stage, while being aware of and acknowledging the context within which they occur. Since the focus of my research is on the experiences of individuals, I utilised a qualitative research design with a phenomenological orientation to recruit sponsors (men and women) and sponsees (women) in New Zealand. Since prior research supports possible differences in the experiences of sponsoring between women of different ethnicities, participants from diverse ethnicities is a central consideration. The research is informed by an intersectional approach in highlighting diverse characteristics of women and how these characteristics influence their lived experiences of sponsoring as sponsees, and for some women participants, also as sponsors.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Having situated my research in the context of both my personal lived experience, and geographically in New Zealand, in the following chapter (Chapter Two), I review and synthesise the scholarship that informed this study, identifying limitations of the sponsoring literature and detailing the focus of my research (Chapter 2). Chapter Three details my philosophical position and research strategy employed. Here I describe the choice of semi-structured interview method, participant selection and how the research is informed by phenomenology. This chapter also details the data analysis methods and limitations of the research. In Chapter Four I introduce the participants through brief summaries. Chapters Five, Six and Seven are composite findings and discussion chapters. Each chapter details a key theme that emerged from an analysis of findings namely giving and receiving as a core feature of the sponsoring relationship (Chapter Five), the characteristics of the interactions within the relationship (Chapter Six), and the

differences in sponsoring experiences of people of colour (Chapter Seven). Chapter Eight introduces a re-conceptualised model of sponsoring based on findings of this inquiry's findings. Chapter Nine highlights the conclusions and implications of my research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this chapter I present an overview and synthesis of sponsoring literature to date. I highlight the manner in which it has been understood and identify under-researched areas of sponsoring. These form the basis of an argument for addressing the gaps in the knowledge with respect to sponsoring in organisations and provide a foundation for my research questions.

2.1 Background

In the 2012 special issue of the Chartered Professional Accountants, Canada' magazine, Rosalind Stefanac asked "Wouldn't it be ideal to have someone touting your merits in the workplace – especially in that exclusive inner circle of high-level management where key staffing decisions are made?" (Stefanac, 2012, p. 34). Her statement echoed the popular notion that sponsors fulfilled such a role and might be the missing yet critical link in career pathways of women striving to reach board positions. This view is also evident in the predominantly US-based academic sponsoring literature, which situates sponsoring as a 'must have' for women to move into senior leadership positions. Popular and scholarly publications have thus advanced this perception both within and outside the US. Such views imply, however, a clear-cut shared understanding of what sponsoring is and involves, and make the assumption that its value is similar across contexts and diversities such as gender and ethnicity (e.g. Ehrich, 2008; Foust-Cummings et al., 2011; Hewlett et al., 2012; Hewlett et al., 2011; Kambil, 2010; Paddison, 2013).

The reality is, however, that there is neither such confluence of opinion as to what sponsoring is, nor as to its operation within organisations. Quite early in the review process it became clear that there was limited research on sponsoring as a practice separate from mentoring. While it was important to consider the mentoring literature in order to understand how the notion of sponsoring emerged, it was apparent that there was no specific and well-organised link. The focus on sponsoring seemed to be quite haphazard, with the term being used both as part of and as separate from mentoring. That said, I was also able to elicit a picture of the various ways in which sponsoring is defined and understood in the academic and popular literature.

2.2 Sponsoring as a function of mentoring

Sponsoring has predominantly appeared in the scholarly literature as a sub-function of mentoring. This is likely due to Kram's (1985) seminal work that presented a model of mentoring that has been used most widely in various empirical studies (e.g. Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Noe, 1988b). In this model, workplace mentors provide two key types of functions to their protégés – career and psychosocial support. Sponsoring is among the array of career support functions that include protection from negative situations, increased visibility and providing challenging work assignments. The other support function, psychosocial support, included friendship, advice and confidence building (Kram, 1985). Role modelling was added later as the third dimension of the mentoring functions (Scandura, 1992; Scandura & Ragins, 1993; Scandura & Viator, 1994). Thus, sponsoring initially featured as a sub-element of conceptual models and empirical research on mentoring (e.g. Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz & Lima, 2004), and largely overlooked in formal research studies.

2.3 Early literature on sponsoring

Prior to Hewlett et al.'s study (2010), there is a dearth of literature examining workplace sponsoring and sponsors independent of mentoring – in fact the terms mentor and sponsor were used interchangeably (Speizer, 1982). This suggests either a lack of interest in delineating the two terms or a lack of empirical research focussing on the meanings attributed to these terms. For example, Roche (1979) noted that mentors or sponsors enabled individuals to make progress in their career and reach senior leadership positions faster, and that these mentored senior leaders in turn sponsored other non-mentored individuals. There is a sense that an individual was considered a mentor or sponsor depending on the functions that he or she provided, an early indication of employing a functional lens in understanding these two terms. The term 'sponsor', popular in the 1960s and 1970s and later replaced by the term mentor (Speizer, 1982), was used for older people within organisations who encouraged and supported the career progress of younger employees, enabled individuals to bypass hierarchical barriers to career progress and provided "reflected power" to high potential employees (Kanter, 1977, p. 181-182). Therefore, a sponsor was understood as an influential person responsible for the upward mobility of another more junior individual who then benefitted from the powerful position of their sponsor, a notion that has continued in the recent literature (e.g. Hewlett et al., 2010; Hilsabeck, 2018).

From early commentators, there is, however, some evidence of comparing sponsors with mentors with respect to their power and influence. Shapiro, Haseltine and Rowe (1978) suggested that sponsors belonged to a continuum of relationships for advice and support, with mentors at the highest end and peer networks at the lowest end, and sponsors

positioned somewhere in between as less powerful than mentors. However, this comparative assessment of the power of a sponsor is contrary to what has been suggested in more recent insights (e.g. Hewlett et al., 2010, 2012). These contrasting suggestions could be due to the contextual differences in understanding these concepts. Shapiro et al.'s notion of this continuum was part of their commentary on the lack of mentors and sponsors as one of the reasons that stifled women's career advancement. The researchers' discussion was in the context of considering the advancement of women in careers that were typically considered male professions, and they themselves were from the fields of medicine and technology, which may have influenced their opinions about mentors and sponsors. Medical residents and nurses, for example, have formally assigned professional mentors and may perceive their role as critical to course completions, examinations and promotions – matters more recently attributed to sponsoring functions within a range of organisational contexts (e.g. Hewlett et al., 2010). Nevertheless, these differences bring to attention the continued uncertainty in understanding and usage of the terms sponsoring and mentoring.

2.4 Delineating sponsoring from mentoring

Friday, Friday and Green's (2004) meta-analysis of over 200 articles published in both academic and practitioner journals, highlighted the lack of clarity in the understanding of mentoring and sponsoring. Foremost, the definition of mentoring did not always include sponsoring (e.g. Higgins & Kram, 2001; Hunt & Michael, 1983; Scandura, 1998; Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994; Whitely, Dougherty & Dreher, 1991) and sponsoring was not always a role intrinsic to mentoring (e.g. Hunt & Michael, 1983; Noe, 1988a, 1988b; Turban & Dougherty, 1994; Whitely et al., 1991). Indeed, Friday et al. (2004) suggested that

sponsorship was not viewed to be as powerful as mentoring because researchers considered sponsoring as a sub-function of mentoring (Jacobi, 1991; Kram, 1983; Shapiro et al., 1978). Moreover, they also argued that Kram's (1985) seminal model of mentoring included sponsoring as a sub-category because her research participants were in supervisory positions where mentoring included sponsoring, such as supporting promotions and raises. As a result, they argued that sponsoring was integral to mentoring for Kram's (1985) research participants.

Friday et al. (2004) were among the very first researchers to suggest that sponsoring might be an independent concept. They delineated sponsoring from mentoring, suggesting that sponsoring was more powerful than mentoring, and that it was a relationship involving the process of a sponsor proposing or supporting the promotion of a protégé. Their definition established sponsoring as a relationship distinct from mentoring, however the focus of most attention remained on the functions provided by the sponsor and the outcomes they generated.

2.5 'The Sponsor Effect', Hewlett, Peraino, Sherbin & Sumberg, 2010

In the years immediately following Friday et al.'s (2004) meta-analysis sponsoring research appears to have lapsed. It was Hewlett et al.'s 2010 study of over 4000 men and women in large US organisations (>5000 employees), that revived an interest in sponsoring, both in academic literature and popular media. Having used surveys, focus groups and individual interviews for data collection, Hewlett et al. (2010) reported that sponsoring was a distinct and more powerful phenomenon than traditional mentoring for the career advancement of women. This conclusion was in direct contrast to prior

characterisation that had presented sponsoring as a sub-function of mentoring. Instead, sponsors were described as people in senior leadership positions who ensured that their sponsees were promoted to leadership roles. Further, a lack of sponsors was suggested to be responsible for the paucity of women in senior leadership (Hewlett et al., 2010).

Additionally, in Hewlett et al.'s 2012 comparable study in the UK, participants took issues with the proposed definition of the term sponsor, indicating possible different interpretations of sponsoring between the US and UK. Previously, most scholars had implicitly assumed that the practice of sponsoring and what it means to people was globally consistent, although some had observed possible variations in the meaning assigned to sponsoring, in particular when comparing the US and non-US countries (e.g. Clutterbuck, 2009). Hewlett et al.'s (2012) research, however, provided empirical evidence that the term may be contested. Thus, Hewlett et al.'s (2010, 2012) studies strengthened a simplistic understanding of the concept of sponsoring, despite other research which shows that the understanding of sponsoring may be subject to different interpretations and understandings across different geographical contexts (e.g. Bhide, 2014; Bhide & Tootell, 2018; Clutterbuck, 2009) and professions (Shapiro et al., 1978).

However, Hewlett et al.'s 2010 and 2012 studies were underpinned by assumptions about what sponsoring involved and the functions of a sponsor. Only limited outcomes, such as promotions and raises, were measured and presumed to constitute evidence of career success. Consequently, these studies did not provide an insight into the nature of the sponsoring relationship or any other outcomes of sponsoring, including negative outcomes.

2.6 Differences in the perception of sponsoring across cultures and geographies

Clutterbuck (2009) made the point that the understanding of sponsoring in the 1970s and 1980s was different from the sponsoring sub-function of Kram's (1985) mentoring model, and that difference hinged on cultural dissimilarities with respect to power distance. During the 1970s and 1980s many US organisations set up formal programs for new young male recruits, where senior and influential sponsors supported the career progress of protégés in return for loyalty. Clutterbuck (2009) suggested that the US based model was popular in high power distance cultures such as the US, where subordinates display a high level of dependence on the manager, in contrast to low power distance cultures typical of some European countries which have a higher level of interdependence between subordinates and managers (Daniels & Greguras, 2014). Subsequently, this model was not suited to the Northern European countries where the established model depended on less directive developmental mentoring (Clutterbuck, 2009; Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999; Garvey, 1995; Hay, 1995).

A 'developmental mentoring model' emphasises a relationship where the mentee is expected to be responsible for his or her own career (Clutterbuck, 2009). Hence, the term 'mentee (one who is helped to think)' was used in this model instead of the term protégé which implied dependence. This semantic difference serves to indicate a level of cultural resistance in Europe to the idea of dependent developmental relationships (Clutterbuck, 1985; Clutterbuck & Megginson, 1999; Garvey, 1998; Hay, 1995). Indeed, in Northern European countries the 1990s and early 2000s saw a noticeable shift in academic interest from the sponsorship mentoring model to the non-directive developmental mentoring

model (Clutterbuck, 2009; Eby, 1997; Higgins & Kram, 2001; James, 2000; Kram & Hall, 1996; Stoddard & Tamasey, 2003). Meanwhile, in the US, interest in sponsorship was building, culminating in Hewlett et al.'s study (2010).

It may be that the apparent divergence in research emphasis between the two continents eventuated partly as a consequence of the prominence given to different elements of Kram's (1985) mentoring model. For example, researchers of European practices may have emphasised the non-sponsoring functions of the model (such as friendship), whereas in the US the emphasis was on the sponsoring functions of the same model – decisions that in turn were reflected in judgments about how sponsorship was conceived of and practiced. Another possibility is that perceptions have diverged because of different understandings of career success. In the US, for example, aspects such as career advancement, promotions and raises (all fairly 'objective' criteria) are considered indicators of success and are therefore factors likely to influence the emphasis placed on the various functions of a mentor in North America (Judge, Cable, Boudreau & Bretz 1995; Ng, Eby, Sorensen & Feldman, 2005).

While formal developmental mentoring may be the preferred Northern European model (Clutterbuck, 2009), some research in Europe suggests that sponsorship may actually be inconspicuous, covert, often not a result of conscious decisions and thus more common than accounted for (Clutterbuck, 2009; Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes & Garrett-Harris, 2006). For instance, in a UK based study, sponsoring positively impacted promotion decisions through role modelling (Garvey, 1995) and access to information (Merrick, 2009). While it is unclear how the term sponsoring was understood and defined in this study or how the sponsoring relations developed and led to career outcomes, the

study is indicative of how research findings on sponsorship differ across geographic context, and that the perceptions about sponsoring may influence whether it is overt and explicit, occurs inconspicuously through informal means or is hidden and occurs covertly.

2.7 My research on sponsoring in 2014

Prompted by evidence that organisational sponsoring in Europe might have a character distinct from that of the US, in 2014 I undertook an exploratory, Europe-based, qualitative research project into sponsorship (Bhide, 2014; Bhide & Tootell, 2018). In order to capture how participants from a range of backgrounds understood sponsoring, I conducted in-depth interviews with 11 participants from 5 countries. Some of the participants expressed uncertainty about the meaning of the term itself. Overall, however, findings indicated that sponsoring was simply thought of as a helping relationship associated with participants' career paths. Findings also revealed that people of colour may face unique challenges in developing sponsoring relationships because they feel that they do not have access to the same networks as others, and often feel restricted to networks which include people from similar ethnicity or race.

Of interest was that, for some participants, needing a sponsor for career advancement was considered a sign of weakness. This, I surmised, was perhaps due to the low power distance culture of Europe which encourages individuals to manage their own careers without depending on people in higher and powerful positions. Other factors may also have influenced how the participants perceived sponsoring. Viewed through a relational lens, for instance, when women perceive that a relationship does not involve relational skills and practices, it is not likely to be considered a growth fostering relationship and

they may even start to view it in a negative light (Fletcher, 2001). This is because relational skills – sometimes described as the ability for collaborative and supportive work – are viewed as feminine skills and are often devalued in organisations (Fletcher, 2001). Equally, relational practice has been characterised as leading to mutual empowerment and benefit rather than being one-sided, and its absence has been blamed for a lack of 'growth fostering relationships' (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Thus, when a sponsoring relationship was not perceived by a research participant as a growth fostering relationship, it may have been viewed negatively or as not significant enough to be termed sponsorship. What all this means is that sponsoring could actually be more prevalent than accounted for, but perceived differently by women than men, as was the case with some of the participants in my study (Bhide, 2014), thus challenging the notion that there is a defined, singular understanding of sponsoring.

Findings of my study (Bhide, 2014) also revealed that the powerful position of a sponsor could be viewed in a negative manner by sponsees. Some participants perceived sponsoring to be a relationship where the sponsor had 'power over' the sponsee as a result of their influential position, which sometimes resulted in an inability to leave the relationship if they wished to or to make career decisions that did not meet with the sponsor's approval.

2.8 Powerful position of a sponsor

The matter of sponsor power is a recurring theme in the sponsoring literature. On one hand, sponsors' elevated organisational status carries with it considerable ability to enable positive outcomes for the sponsee. They are able to support the career

advancement of their sponsees and influence promotion decisions (e.g. Foust-Cummings et al., 2011); act as a door openers and provide access to otherwise inaccessible resources (e.g. Ehrich, 2008); provide visibility and networking opportunities (Paddison, 2013); and provide learning opportunities with special assignments, protection from the consequences of failure, and provide any other resources needed to meet the challenges of new opportunities and roles (Kambil, 2010).

On the other hand, this powerful and influential position also leads to sponsoring being considered a reputationally risky undertaking for the sponsor. Their overt support of protégés to secure coveted assignments and promotions can be seen as professionally compromising and therefore carrying the potential to damage their own career (Ehrich, 2008; Foust-Cummings et al., 2011; Paddison, 2013). Therefore, contradictory perceptions and propositions that have emerged from studies to date have led researchers to question whether sponsoring is overt and therefore risky for the sponsor, or hidden and covert (Clutterbuck, 2009; Megginson et al., 2006), thereby mitigating some of the risk for the sponsor. It also indicates that perhaps sponsorship is likely to occur more in less formal contexts where it is indeed hidden, covert or even indirect. For example, men have been reported to receive more sponsorship than women due to their social and organisational networks, with much of it being in informal ways such as through playing sport with other men (Ibarra et al., 2010). Ibarra et al.'s (2010) observation highlights an inherent hazard of relegating sponsorship to informal networks that serve to perpetuate the social and organisational inequalities already in play. Therefore the organisational challenge, if women are to be equitably represented at higher organisational levels, is to mitigate the perceived risks on the part of the sponsor.

Published works relating to mentoring make direct and indirect reference to the powerful position of a sponsor for outcomes of sponsoring activities. For example, mentors are suggested to be able to provide sponsorship by advocating for their protégés when they are in positions of power and decision making (Ibarra et al., 2010). Thus, mentees with male mentors are likely to receive more of the career development functions of Kram's (1985) mentoring model than those with female mentors because male mentors are more likely to be in powerful decision making positions and able to provide sponsorship (Dreher & Cox 1996; Ragins & Cotton 1991; Ragins & Cotton 1999; Ramaswami, Dreher, Bretz & Wiethoff, 2010; Sosik & Godshalk 2000).

In summary, sponsoring took shape within the mentoring literature and was not empirically examined as a distinct practice until Hewlett et al.'s (2010) study. However, following Hewlett et al.'s (2010) study sponsorship has been conceptualised as a uniform and consistent practice across the globe, offering invariably positive effects on sponsees. Against this, research indicates that sponsorship may in fact be understood and practiced inconsistently across the globe, and produce a mixed range of impacts on sponsees. With this in mind, I will now focus on the sponsoring literature specific to women and elaborate on the background to the present study.

2.9 Women and sponsoring

Discussion pertaining to organisational sponsoring that explicitly focusses on women spans empirical studies (e.g. Carter, Foust-Cummings, Mulligen-Ferry & Soares, 2013; Foust-Cummings et al., 2011), white papers (e.g. CREW Network, 2011; Bruce, 2017), perspective papers (e.g. Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2013), popular media (e.g.

Harris, 2014; Jacobs, 2014; Marlow, 2014; Schulte, 2013; Von Bergen 2013) and scholarly articles (e.g. Paddison, 2013; Travis et al., 2013). Some of these works do not provide clarity on whether the so-called sponsoring is provided by a sponsor or a mentor. The literature nonetheless highlights a number of key themes: the need for sponsors; the lack of availability of sponsors; and the benefits of developing gender specific sponsor functions and sponsoring outcomes for women.

Need for sponsors

Commentators from a range of studies identify sponsors as necessary for women to move into senior leadership positions (Burt, 1998; Ehrich, 2008; Foust-Cummings et al., 2011; Hewlett's, 2010). Women are believed to be in greater need of sponsoring than men since they face gender discrimination and male managerial hierarchies, and lack informal networks for advancement (Tharenou, 1999, 2005). Further, some commentators (notably including practitioner based accounts) contend that women are unlikely to reach senior leadership positions without the presence of a sponsor (e.g. American Express Canada and Women of Influence, 2016; Foust-Cummings et al. 2011).

Mentoring literature has focussed on the need for mentors to provide sponsorship to help women break the glass ceiling (e.g. Catalyst, 2004; Giscombe, 2008). If women are unable to tap into informal workplace networks for career advancement, then sponsoring is promoted as an effective way to redress that situation. Women who had sponsors were reported to move faster into senior positions, while informal networks typically influenced men's career advancement (Burt, 1998).

Sponsoring is considered by some researchers to be essential for women wanting to increase their social capital and gain access to powerful networks to aid career advancement (Burt, 1998; Jackson, 2001; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). In addition, sponsoring has been seen to help address the double bind bias (Catalyst, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Hellicar, 2013) whereby a self-promoting woman is seen as self-serving and aggressive and thus penalised or, if not self-promoting, seen as lacking in ambition (Hewlett et al., 2010). What is unclear from the literature, however, is whether sponsorship is understood, conceptually and practically, as something that takes place independent of mentoring, how it happens, and whether sponsoring is solely responsible for these beneficial outcomes or whether there were other factors that played a role, especially since the studies often included individuals identified as mentors.

Lack of availability of sponsors

Researchers in the past 30 years have identified the lack of availability of sponsorship for women, either as a result of men in senior positions favouring other men or because sponsoring women was seen as an uncertain responsibility with a high chance of failure, even suggesting that perhaps sponsoring is perhaps provided because of a benefit to the sponsor (e.g. Ehrich, 2008; Hewlett et al., 2010; Hewlett, 2013; Ibarra et al., 2010; Kanter, 1977; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010; Paddison, 2013; , Riger & Gallangan, 1980; Sandler, 2014).

Kanter (1977) attributed the lack of availability of sponsorship to the fact that most mentors in workplaces were men and preferred to select other men to mentor and, as a result, women were excluded from such beneficial relationships. As previously

mentioned, formal sponsorship programmes advocated to redress the issue of women also being excluded from informal relationships in workplaces (Speizer, 1982). In fact, sponsorship may be even less available for women in comparison to men than previously reported and this may be due to gender-related differences in perceptions about sponsoring and mentoring. Even though both men and women report benefits from having mentors, in fact it appears that men describe the sponsoring relationship while women describe the mentoring relationship (Ibarra et al., 2010).

Gender stereotyping has been identified as the reason behind women finding themselves with mentors and men with sponsors (Downing, Crosby & Blake-Beard, 2005). Thus women are considered to be excessively mentored and under-sponsored, and the mentors that they do have are not in senior positions and hence not able to provide sponsorship (Ibarra et al., 2010). This interpretation is open to question. However, it has recently been proposed that when women manage women, the manager's approach is typically similar to the psychosocial functions of a mentor, such as emotional support (Hurst, Leberman & Edwards, 2017). This suggests that researchers may have overlooked women's voices regarding what is required for career progress, and the manner in which that support is provided – the focus has been on what is provided rather than what is sought.

Outcomes of sponsoring

Sponsorship thus far has been understood to mean a specific set of functions provided for a specific set of outcomes, with the implication in the sponsoring literature that people who are not in senior leadership are incapable of providing effective sponsorship.

Identified outcomes include: promotions to senior leadership positions; access to special assignments, resources and projects that generate recognition and visibility for senior roles (e.g. de Vries & Binns, 2018; Hellicar, 2013); developing skills, overcoming challenges and protection from the negative impact of situations (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010); access to information and career advice (Eddleson, Baldridge & Veiga, 2004; Ibarra, 1995; Metz, 2009; Schor, 1997; Timberlake, 2004); and increase in an individual's human capital (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2014) and social capital (Broadbridge, 2007; Jackson, 2001; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010) by tapping into the sponsors' networks (Burt, 1998), with the power in the relationship residing with the sponsor or mentor providing the sponsorship (Ehrich, 2008). Accordingly, the reported outcomes of sponsoring in the literature are predominantly linked to objective measures of career success such as promotions and pay increases (e.g. Boudreau, Boswell, & Judge, 2001; Burt, 1998; Judge, Cable, Boudreau & Bretz, 1995; Ng et al., 2005). However, there are limitations arising from the measures included in the studies (e.g. Hewlett et al., 2010) as they ignore the impact of sponsoring on any other aspect of an individual's career other than the outcomes reported.

2.10 Sponsoring – Benefits for sponsors

A review of the sponsoring literature is likely to lead to a perception that the emphasis has erred overwhelmingly toward the outcomes of sponsoring for sponsees. There has, however, also been a limited focus on the impact of sponsoring for sponsors. There is some evidence of sponsor benefits, such as an increase in satisfaction with their own career progression, especially when sponsors are people of colour, and also benefitting from the role as a source of information about what was happening in other organisational

levels (Hewlett, 2013). Rezvani (2014) points to another benefit to the sponsor, one that could be characterised as either obligation or reciprocity: when a sponsor is committed to the career progress of their sponsee, the sponsoring relationship may be based on an expectation of benefits in return to the sponsor. While an anticipation of personal benefits might affect the motivation to sponsor, this expectation of reciprocity may also be hidden (Bhide, 2014; Bhide & Tootell, 2018). Although organisations have been encouraged to implement programmes and incentives for senior management to sponsor women (e.g. Hoey, 2018; Huang, 2016, Rooney, 2011), the motivations to sponsor have not thus far been examined, nor have other characteristics of the sponsor such as race, ethnicity or age.

Figure 2.1 is a brief overview that identifies and summarises key features of the sponsoring literature drawn upon for this review. Table 2.1 chronologically positions the various research undertakings and highlights the broad characterisation of sponsoring to date. A complementary synopsis is to be found in Appendix 1, in which I present an outline of the literature on sponsoring and the various defining characteristics of sponsoring and sponsors. The summary in Appendix 1 also includes insights into the impact of the sponsoring literature on how sponsoring is currently understood.

Figure 2.1: Key Features of the Sponsoring Literature 1977 – 2018.

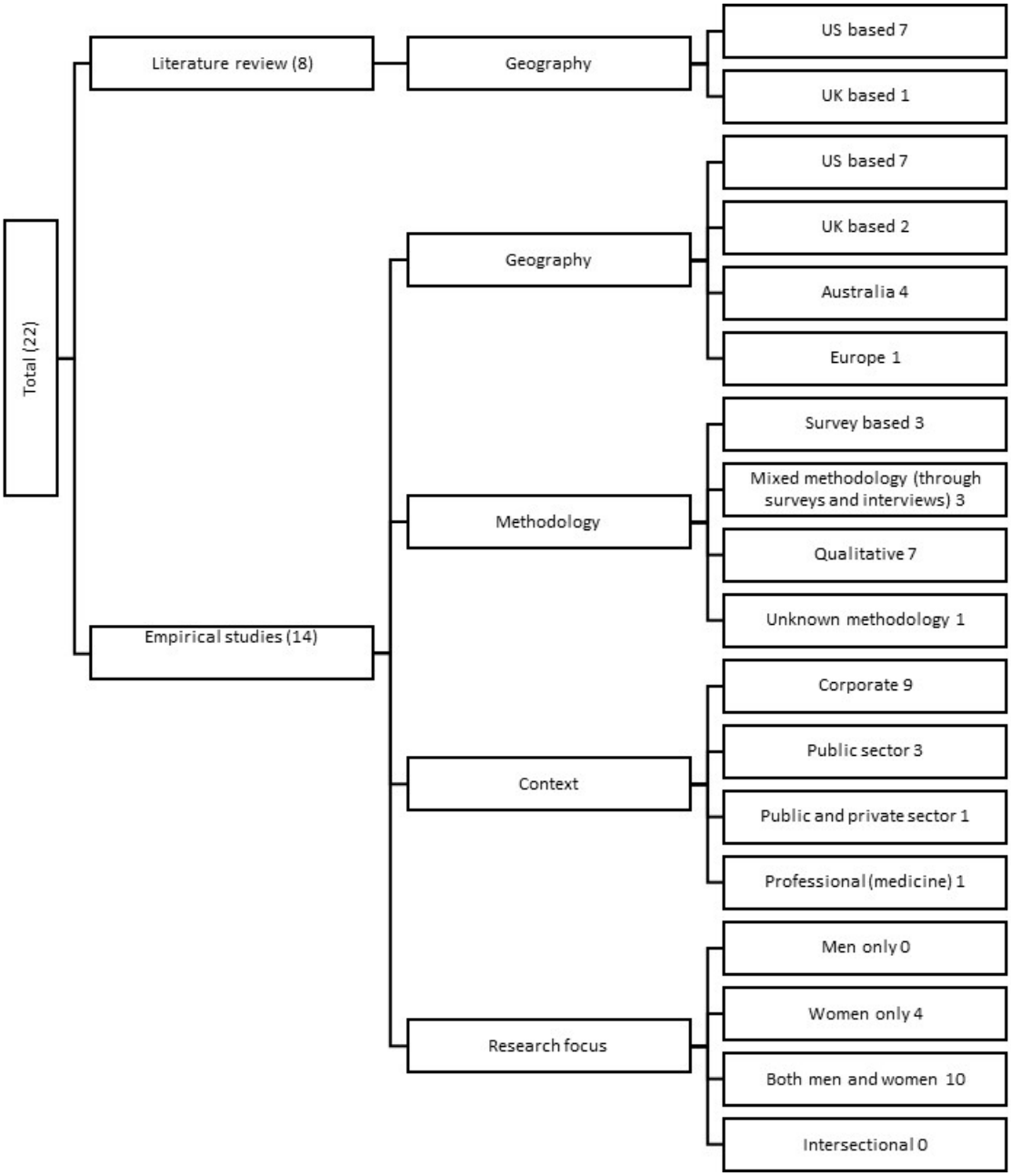


Table 2.1: Broad Characterisation of Sponsoring 1977 – 2018.

Year	Key Features
1977 - 1982	**Instrumentality and conceptual ambiguity** • The terms mentor and sponsor used interchangeably • Sponsoring not examined independently • Sponsors enable career and financial progress • Continuum of relationships for career advice and support, including mentors, sponsors, peers • Ambiguity in perception of power and influence of sponsors
1985	**Sub-category of mentoring** • Sponsoring considered inherent to mentoring and part of the career support function of mentoring
2004	**Attempts at conceptual demarcation from mentoring** • Sponsoring delineated from mentoring • Sponsors nominate or support a sponsee's promotion • Sponsorship is a relationship between sponsors and sponsees
2005-2008	**Examining power relations; instrumentality** • Sponsors are individuals in powerful organizational positions who enable their sponsees' career advancement • Sponsors remove barriers to career advancement for women, help break the glass ceiling • Sponsors provide special assignments, resources needed for special opportunities and visibility
2009	**Geographical and cultural differentiation; career outcomes** • Sponsorship mentoring is the preferred US model while developmental mentoring is the preferred model in Europe • Sponsorship mentoring positively influences promotion decisions • Career functions of mentoring enable women's career advancement • Influence of geographical location on perception of sponsoring, findings may differ across geographies
2010-2013	**Potential benefits & roadblocks** • Sponsors are in powerful organizational positions and able to influence women's career advancement • Women need sponsors, however they lack sponsors • Sponsoring leads to positive career outcomes such as promotions, raises, special assignments, protection by providing special opportunities, special assignment, visibility and advocating for sponsees' promotions and raises • Sponsoring may be beneficial to sponsors
2018	**Revisiting sponsoring versus mentoring** • Sponsoring is a component of mentoring and vice versa, and clear distinctions cannot be drawn between the two concepts **Exploration of complexities** • Sponsoring is viewed as the 'help' provided by a sponsor which has a positive impact on a sponsee's career • Sponsoring may not be limited to specific functions • People of colour have less access to sponsors and sponsorship is not available equitably to everyone • The reciprocal benefits of sponsoring for sponsors may sometimes be hidden • Sponsors draw upon their power and network to provide career advancing opportunities to sponsees

Having presented and critiqued major themes in the literature, in the next section I identify and outline perceived research gaps and outline how my current study is an opportunity to address these.

2.11 Gaps in the sponsoring literature

Limited understanding of the sponsoring relationship

The preceding literature review indicates that there is a fundamental gap in understanding the sponsoring relationship, resulting in vagueness surrounding the process of sponsoring and the benefits, challenges and wider outcomes of sponsoring for women. Sponsoring is a fluid term open to variable meanings and perceptual drift over time and across geographical territories. There is a dearth of research with respect to the sponsoring relationship, and outcomes of sponsoring besides promotions and pay increases have also been overlooked. Moreover, few studies have explored the mutual benefits and challenges of the sponsor-sponsee relationship and how issues of gender, race and ethnicity may affect that relationship. In the absence of empirical studies of these complexities, it remains unclear as to whether a woman can still be considered to be 'sponsored' if she does not have a mentor, and whether a woman who does not have a senior mentor will miss out on sponsoring. Additionally, if within the classical or traditional mentoring model a protégé usually received either psychosocial or career support, or they received support from different people (Ibarra et al., 2010), could a mentor provide just the sponsorship function and still be called a mentor or would they then be a sponsor? So it becomes evident that the progress that has been made by researchers into the concept of sponsorship and its practice stimulate as many questions as they provide

answers. Ambiguity about the nature of organisational sponsoring, and about the experiences of the sponsor and sponsee present challenges to researchers wishing to enhance our understanding of the sponsoring experience.

Assumptions and methodological limitations

Sponsoring research to date has included participants with board or senior leadership ambitions and it focussed on pre-determined criteria of career success such as promotions, raises and positions in the executive suite. Popular media and 'grey' literature (that which is distributed outside of traditional scholarly or commercial media) have contributed significantly to this perspective. However, there is plenty of evidence suggesting that women do not always define career success using objective criteria such as positions and earning (Dyke & Murphy, 2006; Lirio et al., 2007; O'Neill, Shapiro, Ingols & Black-Beard, 2013; Powell & Mainiero, 1992). They might equally assess success in terms of more subjective criteria associated with other aspects of career which they consider important (e.g. Hurst, Leberman & Edwards, 2017; Mayrhofer, Meyer, Schiffinger & Schmidt, 2008; Powell & Mainiero, 1992). Social, organisational and individual factors contribute towards these perceptions (Frisby, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Josselson, 1987). For example, when women perceive that objective criteria of success are unavailable to them they might choose to prioritise other criteria perceived as easier to achieve (Sturges, 1999).

Women might also choose to pursue different career goals to their male counterparts, finding senior leadership positions equally achievable but less desirable (Gino, Wilmuth & Brooks, 2015; O'Neill et al., 2013). In fact, some research indicates that the dichotomy

of objective or subjective criteria of career success (Heslin, 2005; Ng et al., 2005) does not explain fully the complex experiences that individuals have. This highlights the desirability of moving towards broader multi-dimensional criteria in understanding how individuals perceive career success (Dries, Pepermans, Carlier, 2008; Shen et al., 2015). This suggests that it is far from a given that women (or men) will set their career goals at the board or senior leadership level. In particular, this needs to be considered when reflecting upon sponsoring research that has to date focussed on large private corporations, management careers and board positions.

Perceptions of career success may also differ based on the profession or work sector involved (Dobrow, 2004; Heslin, 2003, 2005; Steinbereithner, Mayrhofer & Wein, 2003), as well as differences within professions (e.g. Brooks, Grauer, Thornbury & Highhouse, 2003; Heslin, 2005). These varied perceptions can lead to diverse, and possibly broader, sponsoring outcomes. Similarly, ethnic identity might influence the definition of career success (O'Neill et al., 2013). Further, research shows that both gender and ethnicity influence career goals (Cook & Glass, 2014b; Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2000) and interact to produce varying career paths (e.g. Combs, 2003; Livingston, Rosette & Washington, 2012). For example, in O'Neill et al.'s (2013) US based research, in contrast to white women, women of colour identified goals to do with personal relationships, outside interests and having children, collectively termed 'balance' goals, as more important than conventional goals such as senior leadership positions and financial progress. O'Neill et al (2013) also found differences among women of colour (Black, Latina and Asian) suggesting the need to consider individual definitions of career goals and career success even for similar status groups (for example, within similar ethnicities). The lack of

emphasis on such individual differences in the extant sponsoring research presents an invitation to further examine the range of influences of sponsoring on women and women's careers.

Methodologically, studies considering sponsoring as an independent concept are predominantly US based and empirical research has mostly been through large scale survey-based studies (e.g. Hewlett et al., 2010, 2012; Metz, 2009; Tharenou, 2005). Sample selection has been limited to high achieving and high performing individuals, and/or those already in the C-Suite, possibly missing sponsorship taking place at other levels of organisations (e.g. Foust-Cummings et al., 2011; Ibarra et al., 2010; Kambil, 2010). In several instances, the sponsoring literature has been opinion based or based on literature reviews rather than on empirical data (e.g. Ehrich, 2008; Giscombe, 2008). Further, in the absence of comprehensive methodological details there is uncertainty about the definitions of mentoring and sponsoring provided to participants and about the assumptions of sponsoring outcomes (for example, that all women consider promotions as indicative of career success), both of which may have influenced the findings (e.g. Foust-Cummings et al., 2011).

Lack of focus on diversity beyond gender

Finally, published sponsoring research to date demonstrates a lack of focus on diversity beyond gender, with US based exceptions focussing either on ethnicity (Castellano, 2012), race (Thomas, 1990) or gender, but not simultaneously addressing these dimensions.

To clarify my choosing to distinguish between ethnicity and race, I regard ethnic identity as an aspect of social identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007). It is a person's sense of belonging to social groups that signify certain values for them and are considered more positive by them (Tajfel, 1981), explaining issues like stereotyping, inclusiveness and discrimination, as people also favour those who are like themselves (Ruderman, 2010). Ethnicity is usually based on shared culture, history and ancestry (Byars-Winston, 2010). Racial identity, however, I understand to be based on some perceived common physical and hereditary characteristics (Byars-Winston, 2010). So, unlike race, ethnicity is a result of both the actions of ethnic groups as they structure and re-structure how they define themselves and their culture; as well as the impact of the external social, economic and political processes as they construct and re-construct ethnic categories (Nagel, 1994). Therefore, people may identify with an ethnicity, which is their ethnic identity, and this may be different from their race.

Research indicates that ethnicity influences the experiences of women and ethnic categorisation impacts their careers (Greenhaus, Parasuraman & Wormley 1990; Pio, 2008; Ross 2004). For example, women of colour have less access to mentors and are less optimistic about career advancement than other women (Giscombe & Mattis, 2002; McKinsey & Company, 2018), and activities that are not consistent with the ethnic and gender identities of black women limit their choice of opportunities (Goldsmith, 2003; Edwards, Bocarro, Kanters, & Casper, 2011; Ogbu, 2004). However, thus far these issues have not been explored in relation to sponsoring.

Socio-cultural expectations and norms can lead to discrimination on the basis of characteristics like gender and ethnicity that influence the formation of an individual's

identity (Dipboye & Colella, 2005). This discrimination is compounded when these characteristics are considered together. Gender based sponsoring research to date has tended to overlook factors other than gender and therefore cannot provide more nuanced insights into the diverse experiences of individuals placed at the intersections of characteristics (e.g. gender and ethnicity) which impact identity formation and, therefore, experiences and outcomes. An intersectional perspective that captures these characteristics sees individual experiences and perceptions as diverse and unique and adds texture to the already interesting sponsorship picture. In light of these possibilities, recommendations based on research findings that do not consider this diversity run the risk of being considered to be of limited value in a multicultural domain. Without acknowledgement of the inherent variety and complexities among women in the workplace, what may be understood and proposed as career advancement tools or initiatives for women may not actually be effective for all women, in particular women of diverse ethnicities.

Existing sponsoring research lacks an intersectional lens. An intersectional approach, by focussing on the intersection of individuals' multiple identities such as gender, ethnicity and age (e.g. Christensen & Jensen, 2012; Crenshaw, 1989; McCall, 2005; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010), can showcase how power is created and maintained and how the privileged, and the less privileged, experience the systems of oppression at various points of intersections, both for institutional structures as well as for individuals and groups (Christensen & Jensen, 2012; Syed, 2010; Zander, Zander & Gafney, 2010). With the evident benefits of diversity in workplaces (e.g. Catalyst, 2013; McKinsey & Company, 2015), there is a need to consider the differences among women without grouping them

under one category, in order to better acknowledge and address diversity. It is by understanding the experiences of different women in regard to sponsoring, that we can generate greater understanding of the sponsoring process and benefit future sponsoring initiatives.

2.12 Conclusions from a review of the literature

Today's understanding of sponsoring in scholarly and non-scholarly literature has taken shape over nearly two decades and it is understood as a practice with considerable potential for enabling women into senior leadership. However, it is also practised diversely across the globe, with potentially broader benefits than presently understood. The sponsoring literature to date displays problematic assumptions and methodological limitations and a narrow set of theoretical preferences. Sponsoring studies have assumed that all women *want* to reach executive positions, that women who are sponsored *will* reach executive positions and that all women experience sponsoring similarly. Further, the majority of studies are based within corporate settings in the US and Europe. In the previous discussion I presented a range of methodological limitations inherent in the body of knowledge pertaining to organisational sponsorship, including the use of pre-determined criteria of career success; pre-determined outcomes of sponsoring; pre-defined sponsoring functions; and a lack of focus on diversity beyond gender. Little or no published work is available that reports work has been done in New Zealand business, a context in which organisations tend to be markedly smaller than in countries so far targeted by researchers. To the best of my knowledge, the diverse lived experiences of sponsoring among women have not yet been captured, especially when considering diversity beyond gender (e.g. ethnicity), thereby missing the unique experiences and

challenges that women face at the intersections of multiple identities and points of oppression. Theoretically, with a functionalist focus, sponsoring is considered as a set of functions facilitating a set of career advancement related outcomes. Accordingly, the nature of the sponsoring relationship remains unclear, as do individual experiences of sponsoring.

To help remedy these perceived research gaps and/or omissions, the research objectives in my research explore the lived experiences of sponsoring among women (sponsees) and seek to understand the nature of the sponsoring relationship. Figure 2.1 illustrates how the process of reviewing the sponsoring literature led to my research focus and goals, examining New Zealand women's lived experiences of sponsoring across different professions and organisational levels.

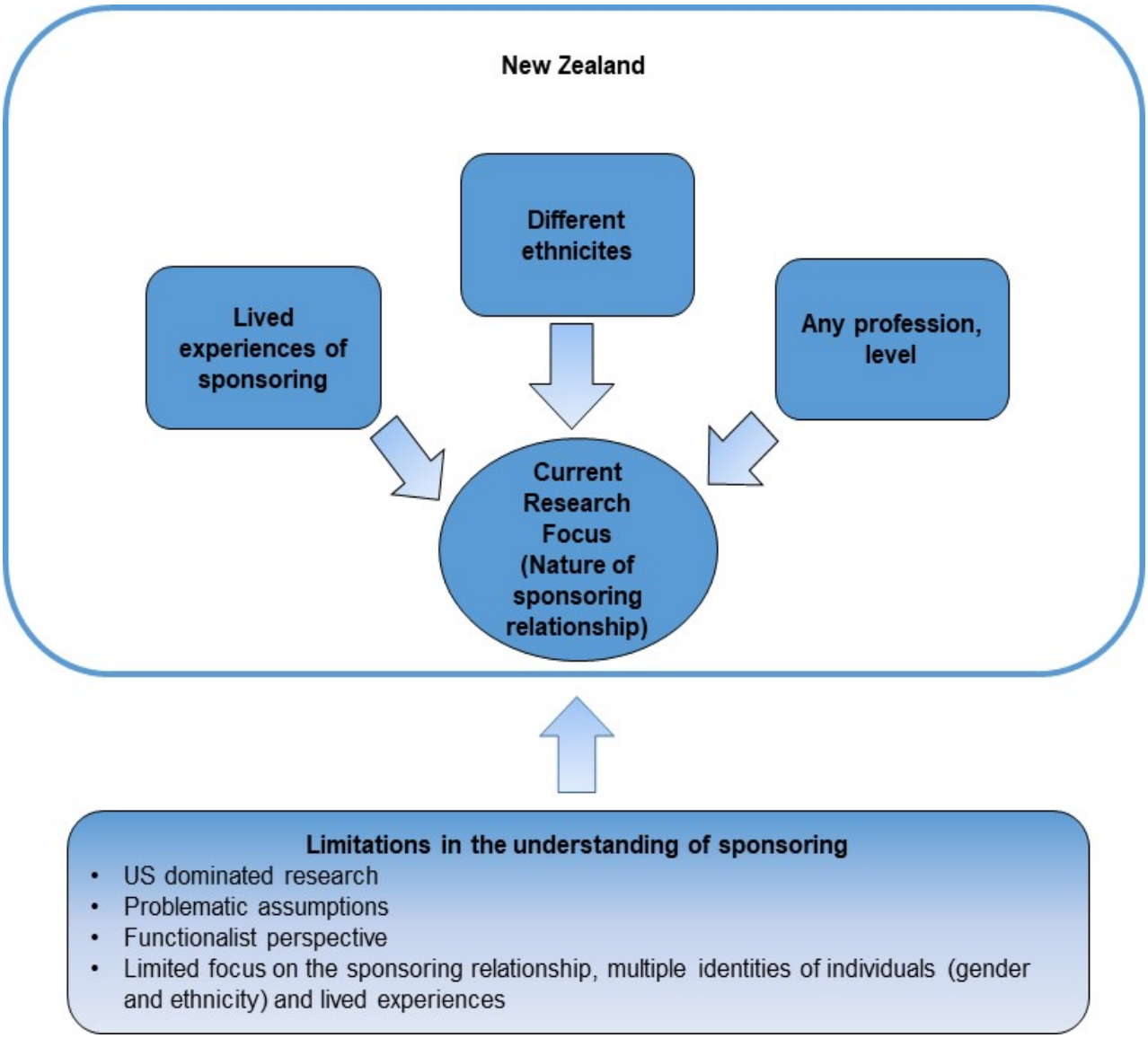
The research questions are:

- How do women experience sponsoring as sponsees?
- How do sponsors experience sponsoring?
- What is the nature of the sponsoring relationship?

Appendix 2 illustrates how the research questions were broken down into further sub-questions.

Having reviewed the sponsoring literature to date, in the next chapter I set out the philosophical and methodological foundations of my research.

Figure 2.1: Research Focus and Rationale

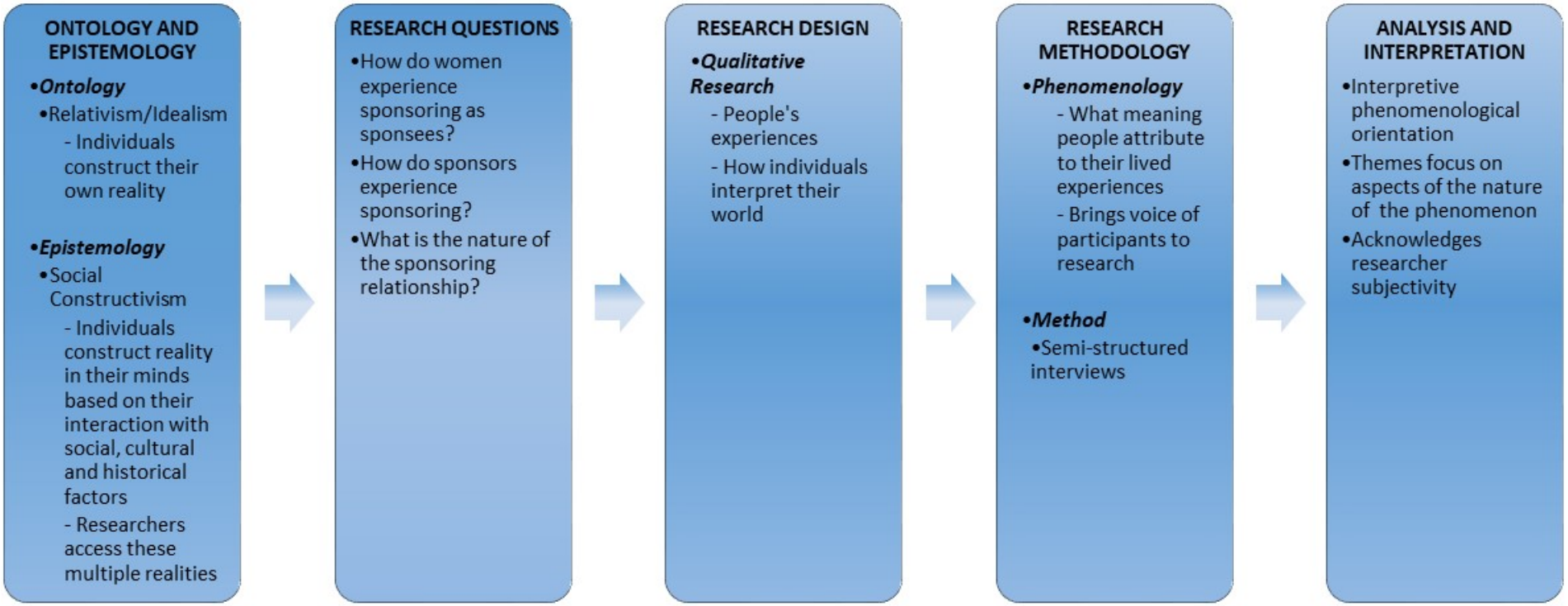


Chapter Three: Philosophical Underpinnings and Research Design

Research is influenced by the researcher's worldviews or set of beliefs (Creswell, 2014). Hence, it is influenced by philosophical assumptions that shape the researcher's position on the nature of reality (ontology), how we can know about it (epistemology) and the values informing the research (axiology). Strategies of inquiry, and methodologies which determine the procedures followed in the research as well as specific methods of data collection and analysis, reflect these philosophical assumptions and need to align with the research objectives and questions (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2005).

Accordingly, in this chapter I detail my ontological, epistemological and axiological position; the research strategy and approach taken, and the methods of collecting and analysing data applied in this research. The chapter also details the manner in which my own position on these elements has influenced the development of the overall research approach, as depicted in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Research Approach



3.1 Philosophy of science

A research paradigm comprises the set of beliefs and the philosophical position that the researcher brings to the research, including their ontological, epistemological and axiological position, to guide them and inform all stages of research (e.g. Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). My stance on these matters is situational, conveying a belief that philosophies and/or paradigms must be applied depending on the situation and context of the research, thus research approaches should take into account elements such as the research questions and context (Creswell, 2014; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013; Willis, 2007). A situational orientation also means that once decided upon, my philosophical position will guide all aspects of the research and I will work with the underlying ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions of the particular paradigm (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). Thus, there is a relationship between my research focus and questions and my philosophical stance in this research.

3.2 Ontology

My ontological position, meaning what I believe to be the nature of reality, is that of idealism, the notion that social phenomena are characterised by the meanings that people give to them. From this perspective, reality is the multiple representations of the external world constructed by individuals (Blaikie, 2009; Creswell, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Johnson, Dandeker, & Ashworth, 1984; Lincoln et al., 2011; Schwandt, 2001). I am also an interpretivist and believe that individuals construct their own social reality based on their experiences and interactions with others in society, realities which are specific to the individuals who hold them (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln et al., 2011). Hence, there are multiple realities and no one social

reality that can be discovered (Blaikie, 2010; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012). Therefore, individuals have subjective opinions that shape their world view, and such opinions may ignore objective facts, necessitating the need to accept that subjective perceptions are real forces shaping people's behaviours. What this ontological position means for me is that I place importance on producing knowledge that reflects the reality of the research participants (Lincoln et al., 2011). This position also guides my critique of sponsoring literature to date as failing to take into account the perspectives of those who experience sponsoring.

3.3 Epistemology

My epistemological stance, meaning my belief about how we can know what is true, is that of constructivism (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Neuman, 2006; Schwandt, 2001), which also aligns with my research objectives. Constructivism is my chosen subjective epistemological position where a researcher believes that people construct their own reality and meaning based on their interactions with their surroundings and it is these multiple realities to which I, as a researcher, have access (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln et al., 2011).

My research interest lies in the individual experiences of sponsoring. As a constructivist, I believe that each one of us makes sense of the world around us as conscious meaning-making human beings and each one of these meanings is worthy of research interest (Crotty, 1998). Further, since individuals develop meanings about their experiences, these meanings are subjective (Creswell, 2014). As a constructivist, I look for individually constructed meanings and try to capture them as reconstructions of people's realities. This arises through using open ended questions and making an effort to capture what is said carefully, while being aware that what I can know and

present is actually an interpretation of the meaning that the participants attribute to their reality (Crotty, 1998; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). In consequence, I focus on the meaning making activities of individuals and present an account of these varied, diverse and complex meanings in my thesis. At the same time, I am aware that a researcher's interpretation of the meaning that people make at the individual level is but one way of representing the social phenomenon (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 2001; Willis, 2007). Nonetheless, this interpretation also has the potential to reveal previously ignored issues, contributing to more in-depth and diverse knowledge and potentially benefitting practice. In this research I am interpreting individual meanings with a view to identifying common themes which help generate an understanding of the phenomenon under examination, namely sponsoring. Since researchers also construct realities based on their own experiences, my constructions will inevitably surface in the interpretation of the data and knowledge that is generated in this research (Lincoln et al., 2011). Hence, my research is acknowledged as subjective, but through transparent and systematic analysis of the data, every effort is made to ensure that my interpretations are not arbitrary, idiosyncratic or random.

Although constructivism is concerned with meaning making as an individual activity, individuals interpret their experiences in a social world, (Blaikie, 2009; Crotty, 1998). The findings of this research emerge from a process whereby participants recalled their experiences of sponsoring that occurred in a certain context (social, cultural, organisational and national) and at certain points of their careers. Through presenting an overview of the New Zealand context (Chapter 1) and through participant stories (Chapter Four and Appendix 3), I have attempted to capture and convey various dimensions of those contexts relevant to the participants' lived experiences. It is unavoidable that the social world I inhabit will in some way colour these descriptions

and interpretations, but my analysis attempts to capture the meaning that participants attributed to their activities as well as their understanding of other people's experiences of sponsoring (Crotty, 1998). I also recognise and have deliberated upon, how my own personal, cultural and historical experiences might influence my interpretation of participant accounts (Creswell, 2014). These reflections are presented in Chapters One, this chapter (Chapter Three), and in selected extracts from my research journal (Appendix 4).

3.4 Axiology

Related to these ideas is the subject of axiology, which focusses on the values that researchers bring to research, and which also shape the pre-suppositions accompanying philosophical perspectives and influence the selection of projects (Creswell, 2007). My axiological position addresses both what I value, and how I bring my own values and biases to the research and the interpretation of participant accounts (Creswell, 2007). I believe that all human beings are valuable and worthy. Therefore, I believe in making attempts to value the different perspectives of people. My axiological position means that the voice of individuals needs to be heard because an understanding of social life is incomplete without accounting for the point of view of people who inhabit it (Creswell, 2007). I am motivated by the idea that presenting the voices of participants, interpreting their perceptions, and constructing knowledge, understanding and interpretation of their lived experiences has potential to spur action that address the implications of this research (Blaikie, 2009; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln et al., 2011). This view is reflected in all the stages of the research process, including research objectives, questions and inclusion criteria for participants as well as in analysis. However, I am also aware that any second-hand account of

participants' experiences is actually a presentation of my interpretation of the participants' meaning making activities (Lincoln et al., 2011). By reflexively acknowledging my assumptions and biases and documenting them, I wish to demonstrate my awareness of how the research process is affected by my experiences and perception of the world, and I consciously invite attention to my own prejudices, assumptions and actions (Morrow, 2005). To be reflexive is to question what is being taken for granted and to examine the impact that this has (Cunliffe, 2016), a point addressed later in this chapter (section 3.9).

3.5 Research strategy: Qualitative research

As mentioned earlier, my epistemological and ontological beliefs align with a qualitative research strategy that focusses on how people experience and interpret their world, and make sense of their thoughts and experiences (Barbour, 2014; Bryman, 2004; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Morrow, 2005). Qualitative research empowers individuals by hearing their stories and bringing their multiple perspectives into research, which in turn also aligns with my axiological preference (Creswell, 2007, 2014; LeCompte & Shensul, 2010). Therefore, it follows that I would utilise a qualitative research design for the purpose of studying sponsoring from participants' perspectives. Likewise, a qualitative approach is also well suited for contextual studies because it enables a description of how the people involved interpret their experiences within the given context (Barbour, 2014). It thereby attends to my research objectives of exploring the sponsoring experiences of participants and understanding the subjective nature of the sponsoring relationship.

Overall, the choice of a qualitative research design was influenced by my constructivist epistemological perspective that emphasises a belief in the subjective and contextual

nature of meaning, and encompasses research methodologies such as phenomenology (Crotty, 1998). My epistemological view thus influenced why I selected a phenomenological orientation in this research, which is detailed in the next section.

3.6 Phenomenology

Another dimension of this research undertaking to consider is the notion of phenomenology and its emphasis on developing rich, multi-dimensional accounts, and hence generating better understanding of a phenomenon rather than theory building per se. As in my current study, information about the nature of a phenomenon is drawn from the perspective of the individuals who have experienced it first-hand, or, in other words, their lived experiences (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2002; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002, 2015; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013; van Manen, 1990; Willig, 2014). Phenomenologists aim to present a description of the phenomenon under study which includes both what was experienced and how it was experienced and the emphasis is on the experiences of individuals, not a theoretical explanation (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). Accordingly, the goal of phenomenology is not to generate or discover theory. Instead, phenomenology enables an in-depth understanding and insight into the nature of phenomena and the possibilities within that, thereby expanding knowledge (Matua & van der Wal, 2015).

One characteristic of a phenomenological approach is that a phenomenon can be viewed in different ways and the methods for understanding and expressing it can vary. (Taylor & Francis, 2013). Phenomenology can be regarded as a philosophy, a paradigm, as theory for interpretation, a perspective for analysis in social science research, a qualitative practice or a research framework (e.g. Creswell, 2014; Denzin

& Lincoln, 2018; Groenewald, 2004; Husserl, 1982; Hycner, 1999; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2015). My own phenomenological orientation regards phenomenology as a qualitative practice and a perspective for analysis in this research. Since phenomenology focuses on what it means to experience a phenomenon, this orientation fitted with my research objective of gaining an in-depth and insightful understanding of the nature of the sponsoring relationship as perceived by and experienced by individuals engaging in it. In addition, a phenomenological orientation was considered especially appropriate for this research since it can also help reveal previously unnoticed and overlooked aspects of phenomena (Matua & van der Wal, 2015).

Concepts and assumptions underpinning phenomenology

Phenomenology as a research approach aligns with the constructivist epistemological stance due to its focus on how reality is held to be the interpretation of the individuals' experiences, and knowledge is gained from these interpretations (Creswell, 2014). It is underpinned by the notion that the object is made the object, in this case sponsoring, by the conscious subject (Creswell, 2014), similar to constructivism where conscious individuals make sense of the world around them.

Phenomenology is the study of the lived experiences of people (Creswell, 2014; Husserl, 1970; Patton, 2015). Two broad variants of phenomenology exist currently – transcendental/ Husserlian/descriptive and hermeneutic/Heideggerian (Creswell, 2014). Underpinning both variants are three shared philosophical concepts: intentionality, description of the essences of phenomena and the lifeworld (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). Intentionality is the idea that lived experiences are conscious and reality is the meaning that an individual consciously

makes of them (Husserl, 1970; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). Essences are common features of lived experiences that are drawn from individual experiences to arrive at the 'essence' or core nature of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2014; Heidegger, 1967; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). In turn, the lifeworld is where individuals live and thus one which exists prior to when they start forming ideas about it (Husserl, 1970), constituting the background understanding that develops from common sense and is taken for granted, and determines knowledge and reality (Schultz, 1967; van Manen, 1990). Researchers have adopted these options for creating their own variants but with some procedural differences (e.g. Benner, 1985; Gadamer, 1975; Giorgi, 1997, 2012; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Smith, 2011; van Manen, 1990).

However, the two variants of phenomenology propose two very different perspectives as to how accounts of individual experiences are viewed by researchers and this influences the manner in which data are analysed and presented. A key component of the transcendental phenomenological approach is *epoche*, bracketing or suspending all prior assumptions, biases and worldviews about the phenomenon, thereby enabling the researcher to transcend from the natural attitude (one without any prior thinking) towards the phenomenological attitude (deliberately suspending prior assumptions, biases and worldviews) in order to describe the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; 2013; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Moustakas, 1994), the process of phenomenological reduction (Husserl, 1970).

Phenomenological thought and its influence on this research

Because of my ontological belief in multiple realities, along with my epistemological position of believing that it is only these multiple realities to which a researcher has

access, the transcendental approach was not an approach I was comfortable adopting. While transcendental phenomenologists focus on bracketing their previous knowledge of the world such that they might view the experience of the phenomena as presented to them (e.g. Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), a constructivist epistemological stance embraces subjectivity rather than setting it aside. It deems that it is not possible to entirely bracket one's prior knowledge and experiences nor even temporarily suspend prior beliefs (Creswell, 2014). My epistemological position supports an alternative stance where the researcher engages with the prejudices and biases that work behind the scenes and influence all aspects of their understanding and interpretations, and attempts to detail them, instead of setting these aside (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Seymour, 2006).

It is the hermeneutic phenomenological variant that aligns better with my own philosophical position and world view than does the transcendental variant. I consider individuals as necessarily being influenced by the world that they inhabit and this in turn influences their realities which I, the researcher, attempt to capture. From this viewpoint, phenomenological reduction is not possible, as one could never completely bracket his or her prior experiences and knowledge (Heidegger, 1967). Hermeneutic phenomenology proceeds beyond a description of the phenomenon and tries to understand how the lifeworld influences the subjective accounts of the lived experiences of participants and glean the meaning of these from the data (Creswell, 2014; Giorgi, 1997, 2012; Lopez & Willis, 2004).

This research is informed in particular by van Manen's (1990) version of phenomenology, in the manner in which I have approached the research, collected data and analysed it. van Manen's (1990) version of phenomenology applies various

concepts from other schools of thought in phenomenology and focusses on describing the meaning of the experiences of individuals as mediated by the researcher – hence the term “mediated description” (p. 25). The process and analysis is therefore informed by concepts from both descriptive and interpretive phenomenology. As researcher I set out to analyse accounts of participants who have experienced the phenomenon for meaning and to explore inferences as well as descriptions, while being influenced by my prior knowledge, assumptions and beliefs and experiences (Creswell, 2014; LaVasseur, 2003).

van Manen’s (1990) phenomenological approach focusses on six core activities – turning to the phenomenon of interest; investigating experience as it is lived; reflecting on the themes that characterise the phenomenon; describing the phenomenon; maintaining a focus on the research objectives throughout the process of research; and balancing the parts with the whole. A detailed description of this framework is presented in Appendix 5. These activities are not sequential and the researcher moves back and forth between these activities throughout the process of research (van Manen, 1990). Guided by van Manen’s (1990) phenomenology, I have presented the themes that emerged from participant descriptions and proceeded to interpret and analyse them in order to provide insight into the participants’ experiences of sponsoring. I have provided details of the individual contexts of the participants, which is considered a significant component of phenomenology with an interpretive stance such as van Manen’s (1990) approach, through the participant stories in Chapter Four.

Having discussed my philosophical position, research strategy and phenomenological orientation, I now proceed to outline the ethical issues that I considered and sought to

address prior to proceeding with data collection, followed by the description of the process and methods of data collection in this research.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations encompassed my concerns around participation, consent, privacy and confidentiality of research participants. Participants would ideally be freely willing to participate and to share their stories with me. I thus wanted to present comprehensive and clear information about my research and the broader benefits that I envisaged from it to potential participants. I was aware that there might be aspects of the stories which participants had not shared with anyone before. Thus maintaining confidentiality was critical and I wanted to take appropriate measures to ensure that publications ensuing from the research process would not in any manner reveal the identity of the participants and to prevent any potential harmful consequences to participants.

The research was deemed a low risk project with respect to the potential harm to respondents, the researcher or Massey University. The Low Risk Notification Form (Appendix 6) was completed and submitted in line with Massey University Human Ethics guidelines. No harm was anticipated, either physically or psychologically, for the participants in this research and participation was entirely voluntary. Measures were taken to ensure compliance with ethical practices of Massey University (which include informed and voluntary consent, privacy and confidentiality) using appropriate Massey University forms: Information Sheet (Appendix 7) and Consent Form (Appendix 8). These measures of ethical research included the following activities:

1. Complete background information was provided to participants including:
    - The nature and purpose of the project
    - Information about
        - Myself and the university
        - Confidentiality and anonymisation of subjects and findings
        - Destruction or appropriate storage of data at the end of the project
        - Details about how much time the interviews would take, how they would be recorded and transcribed
2. Written consent was obtained and participants were also informed that they could choose to withdraw from participation at any time they wished. This was reiterated orally at the beginning of the interviews.
3. Measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. Pseudonyms were used for participants and any other people that they talked about, and workplaces and organisations were not named.

3.8 Data collection

To explore and understand women's lived experiences of sponsoring and to understand the nature of the sponsoring relationship, I needed a range of sponsors comprising men and women to enable an understanding of sponsoring potentially from a gendered perspective, as well as women sponsees. I used snowball sampling and a purposive/criterion based sampling approach (Creswell, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morrow, 2005), which is also the suggested approach for phenomenological

studies, with the key criterion that all the participants should have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). Using a snowball sampling approach, and the allied purposive sampling, I was able to recruit participants who were willing to share information about their experiences of sponsoring, of the phenomenon under investigation (Morrow, 2005), and who were “key informants” (Warren, 2001, p. 87). I did not begin with a firm decision about the number of participants due to the snowball sampling approach, although the suggested number of participants in phenomenology ranges from 5 to 25, and 3 to 10 participants are considered appropriate (Creswell, 2007; Polkinghorne 1989). Rather, my main focus was on gathering rich information from relevant sources and I eventually interviewed 17 participants. In the wake of the interviews, one of the original participants objected to the use of her account for the purpose of this research (which she said was on the advice of her colleagues) and thus only 16 participants are included in this thesis.

Recruiting participants

The broad inclusion criterion for participants was to have experienced at least one sponsoring relationship in any profession or industry in New Zealand. Sponsees had to be women, while sponsors could be either men or women. Since I wanted to include women from diverse ethnicities, this was highlighted in the recruitment flyer as desirable, rather than a set criterion for participation (Appendix 9). Based on my previous experience with snowball sampling, I was confident of using my supervisors’ and my own networks, through LinkedIn and international mentoring program groups, to find research participants. My supervisors have access to several people and groups involved with leadership development and career development, and were a strong starting point. I also used online portals such as LinkedIn and Human

Resources Institute of New Zealand (HRINZ) for recruitment. In addition to the recruitment flyer (Appendix 9), I also prepared a video recruitment message that I posted on relevant social media and professional websites such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

Former research indicated that potential participants may not be aware of the term sponsoring and may be unclear about what it means (Bhide, 2014). Further, participants in Hewlett et al.'s (2012) research in the UK had objected to the use of the term ‘sponsor’ when talking about their relationships. Sensitising concepts in qualitative research guide the researcher and address the issue of trying to research a concept that may not be clearly defined (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Stebbins, 2001). Therefore, I prepared a summary of how sponsoring is understood in the literature, for sharing with participants if required (Appendix 10). However, I was also aware that sponsoring could simply be considered as a helping or enabling relationship and was open to varied meanings given the findings of my 2014 research (Bhide 2014). Therefore, in order to refrain from only including participants who understood sponsoring in terms of promotions and raises, the criteria for inclusion in this study were:

- Sponsees: women who worked in any industry, profession and position, and could think of at least one person who helped them significantly in their career.
- Sponsors: men or women in any industry, profession and position, who could think of at least one person who they had significantly helped.

I also prepared short definitions of ethnicity and race, two other terms about which participants may have desired clarification. A brief definition of sponsoring,

synthesised from various definitions in the literature, was included in the recruitment flyer, Information Sheet and video recruitment recording, all of which also explained the background to the research. In addition, I presented the results of my prior research in Europe which revealed that sponsoring was considered to be the help provided by sponsors that contributed significantly to sponsees' career progress. That information aside, I was careful to remain open to emerging concepts, definitions and terminology during the interviews (Patton, 2015) since the perceptions of sponsoring might be based on the participants' lifeworld. In the event, I was not asked for the definitions of sponsoring or sponsors, ethnicity or race by any of the participants.

Participant recruitment occurred in two stages. In the first stage, the recruitment flyer requested participation by both sponsees and sponsors. However, at this stage I only received responses from sponsees. My interview guide (Appendix 11) consisted of questions about experiences of sponsoring both as a sponsee and sponsor and, where relevant, I asked questions about participants' experiences both as sponsees and sponsors in order to gather information from both perspectives. I then asked those who had experienced being sponsored whether they thought their sponsors would be interested in participating in the study. However, I was only able to recruit two sponsors in this manner. Therefore, in the second stage of recruitment, I focussed my recruitment effort on sponsors and was able to recruit nine sponsors. In this stage too, I requested sponsors to consider contacting their sponsees as potential participants, but no further recruitment of sponsees eventuated.

Demographic details of participants are given in Table 3.1. All names have been anonymised and positions have been mentioned in the broader context of an industry, rather than specific professions. Participants' ethnicity was self-identified as part of the interview process. The ethnicity of the participants from the Pacific Islands and South Asia is not specific in order to protect those participants' privacy. The columns titled Sponsors and Sponsee indicate whether the participant spoke about their experiences as a sponsee, as a sponsor or as both. Note that the term 'Kiwi' is quite a common colloquialism used to refer to a New Zealander.

Inevitably, the experiences and perceptions of each participant occurred in the context of their life, some in the past (lifeworld), some current. In turn, in order to contextualise the findings of this research, I constructed a story about each participant, including their contextual information and segments of the story of their life and career,. These constructions, their stories, are a result of data gleaned from participant interviews, as well as my research journal notes. I have focussed on some aspects of their stories that are relevant to the research questions such as career aspirations, definitions of career success, their motivation to work, perception of what would be most helpful to them in their careers, opinions about gender and careers. Since my research was informed by hermeneutic phenomenology, these stories contributed towards articulating the individual contexts of participants (Creswell, 2014) and are summarised in the ensuing chapter.

Table 3.1: Participant Details

Participant	Gender (F/M)	Industry	Ethnicity (self-identified)	Sponsor Y/N	Sponsee Y/N
Teresa	F	Early Education	Kiwi	Y	Y
Jemma	F	Early Education	Māori	Y	Y
Linda	F	Professional Education	Pākehā	Y	Y
Melissa	F	Finance & Accounting	Māori	Y	Y
Paula	F	Business Consulting	South Asian	Y	Y
Faith	F	Healthcare	Pākehā	Y	Y
Rowena	F	Real Estate	Pākehā	Y	Y
Sophie	F	Higher Education	South Asian	Y	Y
Geoff	M	Finance & Accounting	Māori	Y	Y
Lorraine	F	Media	Māori	N	Y
Valerie	F	Higher Education	South Asian	N	Y
Nel	F	Information Technology	South Asian	N	Y
Jasmine	F	Business Consulting	South Asian	N	Y
Leah	F	Higher Education	Pacific Islands	N	Y
Kylie	F	Early Education	Pākehā	Y	N
Erica	F	Law	Pākehā	Y	N

Access and consent

Upon establishing contact with participants, dates and times for interviews were set, based on mutual convenience. Participants were asked to select a venue convenient to them and it was usually their office, a quiet cafe, or their house. This was important, since having the interview in a place where the participants felt relaxed and free to talk was considered vital to gathering rich information with insights into their life worlds and the meanings they ascribed to their experiences (Kvale, 2008). After the initial contact and exchange of emails, I arranged a pre-interview phone call with participants to establish a level of comfort and my credibility as a researcher with them. Prior to the interview I sent the Information Sheet, Consent Form and a Personal Information Sheet to complete. These invited each participant to provide details regarding their age, educational background and profession/position. Participants were also assured that I would send interview transcripts and the Transcript Release Forms (Appendix 12) for their validating signature upon completion of that process. I enquired about any permissions they would need from their organisations, which none of the participants required, while explaining that all individual names and names of organisations would be anonymised in any published outcomes from the study.

Semi-structured interviews

So as to gather rich and in-depth information about sponsoring from participants, I used semi-structured interviews with open ended questions, that were intended to be conducted in the same physical space, voice recorded and transcribed. Eventually, logistical situations led to two of the interviews being via skype, which was the preferred video interview mode for the participants. From my previous experience of

research where interviews were solely conducted via skype, this seemed an appropriate and effective option.

Semi structured interviews are considered especially valuable when studying the way in which people perceive and make sense of the topic under examination. I saw them as the preferred means by which to gather an understanding of the meaning that participants attribute to their lived experiences of the phenomenon under observation, with open-ended questions designed to capture the diverse perceptions of a phenomenon (Kvale, 2008). The purpose of the interviews clearly focussed on answering research questions. With the semi-structured interview format, I had a clear list of points to address while allowing enough flexibility to let the participants speak about any other ideas and issues of interest (Denscombe, 2014). I could also be attentive to any new meanings or issues that surfaced during the interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 1995), and was prepared to include, change or exclude questions based on new findings (Denscombe, 2014). Therefore, despite the drawback of dealing with a substantial amount of data, open ended questions gave participants the freedom to express their views and provide me the opportunity to explore how the participants experienced sponsoring (Denscombe, 2014). Questions in the interview guide (Appendix 11) aimed to elicit impromptu and detailed responses with maximum information from the participants without imposing too much structure. They focussed on participants' sponsoring experiences and perceptions about the sponsoring relationship (Kvale, 2008; Morrow, 2005). At the same time, this flexible, semi-structured format enabled me to ask probing questions or seek clarification where necessary.

In all of the interviews, I began by introducing myself and asked participants if they wanted to know more details about the research. None of the participants had any questions at this stage. I confirmed that they had understood the background information, and advised that they were able to interrupt me anytime during the interview for clarification or with any questions. I also made it clear that they could ask for the interview to end or to stop recording at any point.

The interviews flowed as smooth conversations, rather than just question and answers and were often interspersed with sharing of thoughts by participants that were ostensibly outside of the realm of the interview (for example, the weather, recent events and children's schools). It has been suggested that, especially when interviewing women, disclosure and sharing supports rapport formation rather than taking a distant position (Reinharz & Chase, 2002). My attempts to establish rapport added to the familiarity and warmth of the conversations and felt that I was always able to steer the conversation back to the central topic of focus. Therefore, although I was not controlling the interviews completely, and interviews were a two-way process of speaking and listening, I was conscious that the responsibility of steering it towards the central question still lay with me, and acted accordingly (Brinkmann, 2013; Kvale, 2008; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The shortest interview lasted 40 minutes and the longest 2 hours. All participants knew that I might need to interview them again or that I mightseek clarification. In the event, second interviews were not conducted for any of the participants.

To sum up, a qualitative interview is a result of the participant and interviewer having a conversation about a phenomenon of interest and, through this interaction, knowledge is created (Kvale, 2008). As researcher, I did not approach data collection

as if research interviews were a miraculous path towards seeking the truth. Rather I tried to make sense of the interview to obtain answers to research questions and accepted that these interpretations might be diverse (Alvesson, 2010). Therefore, the knowledge produced during the interviews was a result of my interaction with the participants based on how and what type of questions I asked, my rapport with them, the setting of the interview, and the participants' perspective (Alvesson, 2010; Schulze & Avital, 2007). Further, my own gender, race and ethnicity characteristics would have influenced the accounts produced (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) and another interviewer would have created different interactions with research participants (Seidman, 2013; Brinkmann, 2013; Kvale, 2008).

All the recorded interviews were transcribed by me and a thematic approach was taken towards data analysis. This process is explained in the next section.

3.9 Analysis of data

Qualitative data analysis presented a particular set of decision challenges. I was conscious that qualitative analysis can be a literal reading of the text; reflexive, focussing on how the researcher's orientation influences the interpretation of the text; and interpretive, where the researcher constructs their own interpretation of the data (Crabtree & Miller, 2000). Since, there can be more than one interpretation of data, I was acutely aware that my interpretation was inherently subjective and underpinned by my assumptions about the data's significance and what they can reveal (Patton, 2002; Schutt, 2015; Willig, 2014). At the same time, I applied quality criteria such as transparent coding practices, reflexivity, rich descriptions and participant checking in order to establish the merits of such research.

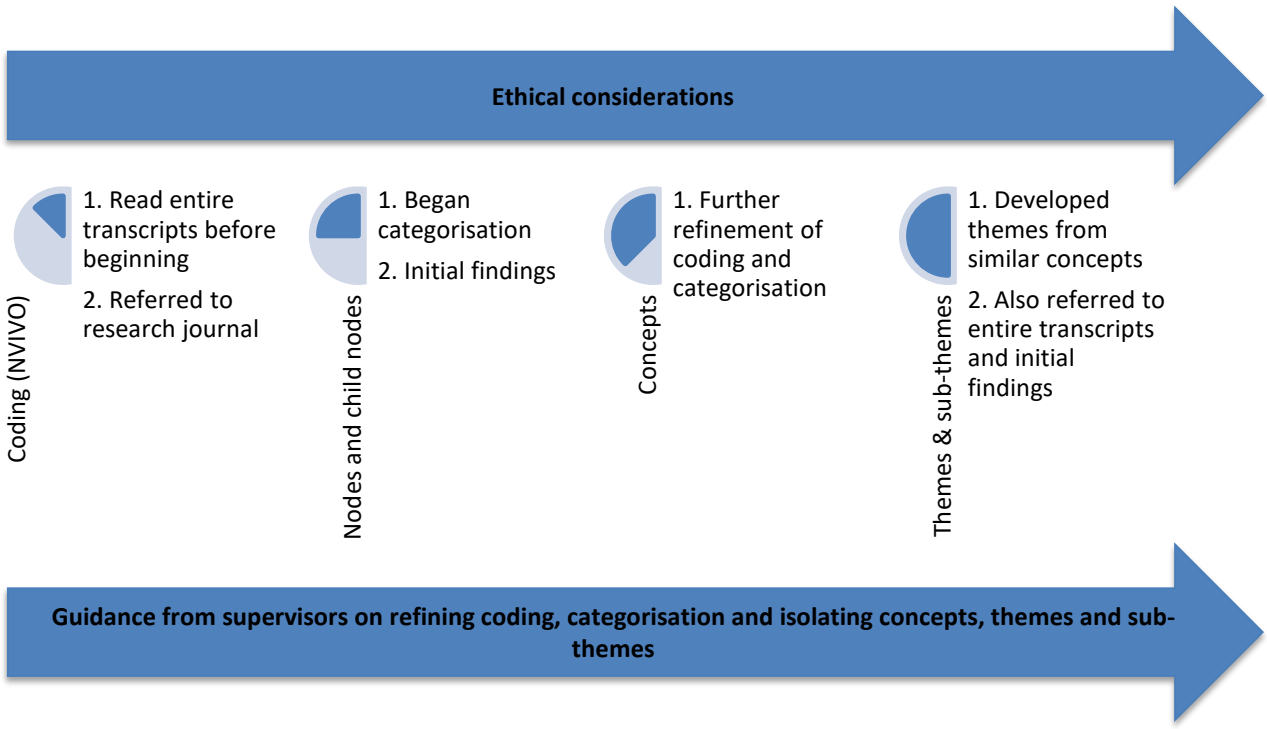
Alvesson (2003) has pointed out that a researcher's treatment of the empirical data from interviews depends on their position along a continuum from neo-positivist to romanticist, based on their epistemological assumptions. Neo-positivists view interviewees (in this case research participants) as experts and the interview as an instrument for gathering knowledge (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995), romanticists view the interview as a location for the construction of meaning, rather than for sourcing facts (Schultze & Avital, 2011), while localists take a middle position and view interviews are treated as conversations between an interviewer and interviewee that produce situated, context-dependent accounts in response to research questions (Alvesson, 2003; Kvale, 2008). Regardless, all these positions are associated with issues of representation and interpretation of participant accounts (Alvesson, 2011).

In analysing the participant accounts, I considered myself a "traveller" who presents an account of the sum of their experiences, rather than a "miner" who reports back objective reality (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 47). I sought to apply the reflexive pragmatist position offered by Alvesson (2011). This involves the researcher being both reflexively mindful of their own preconceptions and positionality whilst also being pragmatic. The first two, related, factors may be somewhat ameliorated by the researcher viewing the data from different angles and moving between different lines of interpretation. By comparison, pragmatism is an attempt to balance the reflexive ideals, which could be limitless, with the goal of producing knowledge. Thus, while I approached interviews with the goal of finding out about sponsoring, when I examined data I pondered and offered alternate lines of interpretation, supported by logical and well considered arguments. This resulted in findings which were "multiple in character" (Alvesson, 2010, p. 107) with several insights produced and questions raised. The three themes that emerged from the findings which focus on multiple aspects of

sponsoring are a result of such an approach, as is the re-conceptualised model of sponsorship (Chapter Eight, Figure 8.1).

I followed a thematic approach to data analysis informed by components of van Manen's (1990) approach to identifying themes in the data. This enabled me to gain an insight into the sponsoring phenomenon, while remaining aware that its features might include several aspects, layers and representations. Themes were thus the meaning making units that emerged from participant accounts (Creswell, 2014; van Manen, 1990). The process that I followed drew from the three levels at which data could be analysed in order to arrive at the meaning of sponsoring: considering the text as a whole (holistic); identifying statements or phrases that revealed most about the sponsoring phenomenon (selective or highlighting approach); and examining the document sentence by sentence. Figure 3.2 provides an overall summary of the data analysis process that I followed in this research.

Figure 3.2: Data Analysis



I imported all the transcripts into NVivo 11 qualitative data analysis software, which was used as a convenient technology tool for data storage, highlighting text, coding and for writing notes in transcripts (memos), to support data analysis and for ease of sharing data with my supervisors. There are some objections to the use of qualitative data analysis software in phenomenology such as not being able to generate phenomenological insight, and the automation of what is intended to be an intuitive process (Gilbert, 2002; Goble, Austin, Larsen, Kreitzer & Brintnell, 2012; van Manen, 2014). This automation is suggested to lead to dependence upon repetitiveness, rather than uniqueness when generating themes (van Manen, 2014). However, other researchers have pointed out that technology can often simply replace the use of a highlighter and handwritten notes, and be used as a data management package (Davidson & di Gregario, 2011; Woods, Paulus, Atkins & Rob, 2015). Therefore, what is termed as highlighting and note taking in van Manen's framework, could be termed coding in NVivo 11 in the manner in which I used it. This approach has been followed by qualitative researchers using phenomenological methods in the past (e.g. Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Kelly & O'Brien, 2015), and has been supported by others (e.g. Bergin, 2011; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Richards, 2005; Goble, Austin, Larsen, Kreitzer, & Brintnell, 2012).

Thematic analysis

I began the analysis process by reading each of the transcripts in their entirety. This enabled me to develop an idea of the participant's story as a whole, which was used to construct the participant stories presented in Chapter Four. At this stage, I worked with the real names of participants and I only anonymised the names of the participants after the data analysis as I wanted to capture the moments of the interview in my mind

while coding and looking for themes. This process enabled me to stay close to the interview, and, along with the notes I had made in the research journal, re-create the interview in my mind while analysing and interpreting the data. I also referred to my research journal to examine the notes that I had made before, during and after the interview, in order to recall my thoughts during that period. These thoughts included how the participants appeared during the interview such as happy or emotional, my reactions to participants' accounts, whether I felt deeply touched by something in particular, similarities with participant experiences and any surprises, and sometimes also why I may have felt that way. A sample is included in Appendix 4. Such an approach of considering the "social scene" of the interview including the physical setting, and the interviewee and interviewer characteristics has been encouraged as part of qualitative research (Alvesson, 2003; Shultze & Avital, 2011, p. 4).

I then highlighted statements or phrases in the transcript that I considered as revealing most about the sponsoring relationship, since I wanted to stay close to the phenomenon of interest while analysing the data (van Manen, 1990). These statements, phrases or parts of sentences were my codes in NVivo 11. However, there were some statements which were interesting and not related directly to the phenomenon under consideration. Initially, I coded such statements, that is I highlighted sentences or parts of sentences, but as I went beyond the first transcript and my thinking and understanding evolved, I coded them as 'other' or did not code them at all.

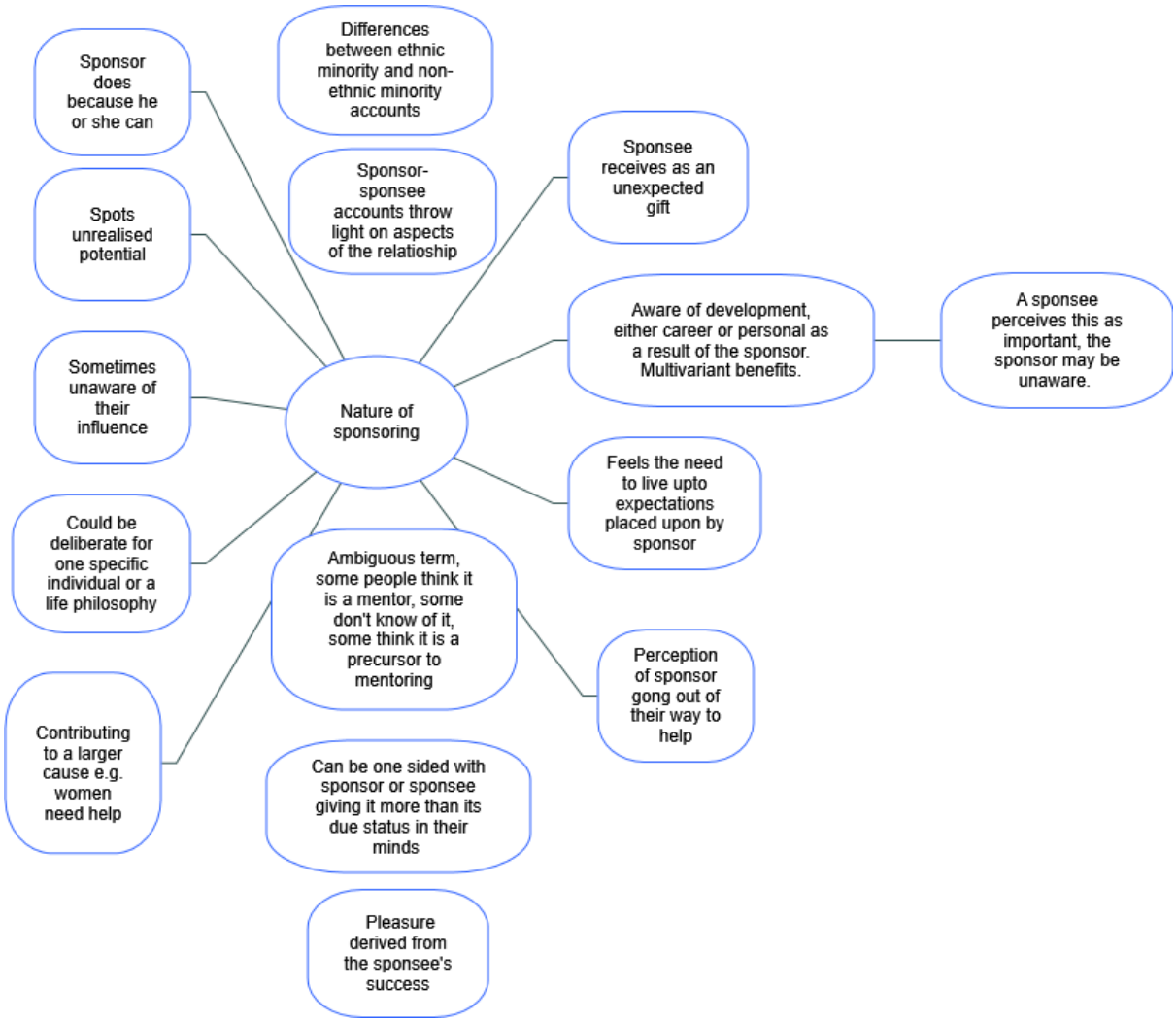
I had a large number of codes for the first transcript, however as I proceeded with coding, I was able to find similar codes and thus merge them and my improved understanding enabled me to have fewer codes before I proceeded to the next

transcript. My thinking continued to be refined as I progressed with coding across all the transcripts and I also revisited and applied newer and more refined codes to the older transcripts. These codes appeared as parent nodes and child nodes in NVivo 11, depending on whether the code was distinct enough to be an idea, thus a parent node, or was part of a larger idea or notion and hence a child node. This process was repeated for all the transcripts. I made notes where appropriate and at this stage I worked manually to arrive at the initial findings through a process of categorising similar codes to develop concepts. After completing the coding of all of the transcripts, I discussed the codes (codebook) with my supervisors and shared my initial findings (Appendix 13). Following discussions with my supervisors who raised issues and asked questions, I further refined the codes. I then proceeded to refine the categorisation of the codes which was influenced by deep thought, reflection and further discussions with my supervisors. I examined all the categories that had emerged from the analysis thus far, grouping similar categories together.

The participant statements in response to questions were made in the context of the whole interview or their whole story. Therefore, it was important to understand the whole and the place that the parts had within it, by considering the entire transcript – the wholistic approach (van Manen, 1990). This process involved looking at the entire transcript and trying to understand what the sponsoring relationship meant to the participants. Consequently, I read the statements that had contributed to each of the concepts as well as the entire transcripts again at this stage to understand how the concepts fitted into the whole interview for each transcript, to compare the meaning of the concept across several transcripts, and to identify what the participant accounts indicated about the meaning of sponsoring. This process led to the development of themes and sub-themes. Figure 3.3, a thematic map, is a visual representation of the

thematic analysis that I followed and serves to elucidate the development of themes.

Figure 3.3. Thematic Map



As I analysed the findings, and went through the process of coding, some of the participant accounts that contributed to a particular theme came from their perspective as a sponsee, and others from their perspective as a sponsor. Nevertheless, it contributed to a common theme. Throughout the process of data analysis, I had regular meetings with my supervisors to share initial findings, emerging codes and preliminary ideas for themes, and continued to develop the themes further.

All themes emerged from a composite of accounts from all the participants. Some participants' stories, however, dominate more than others under some of the themes. This is for two reasons: first, as the accounts of their sponsoring experience were gathered through open ended interviews, some interviewees talked about certain aspects of the relationship more than the others; second, the participants focussed on the sponsoring experiences that they felt were most significant in their personal careers, and these were different for each person. Additionally, while the themes themselves emerged from the participants' accounts, themes identified through analysis were likely to have also been influenced by the research questions, and my prior knowledge of sponsoring.

The range of responses from participants indicated the complex relational elements of sponsoring, and I was able to isolate three major themes from these responses: giving and receiving, the multifaceted characteristics of the sponsoring relationship and the influence of intersectional locations on the sponsoring experiences of ethnic minority participants. The emergence of these themes and analysis of them, will be explored in later chapters. However, it is necessary to here highlight an aspect of the research process that I had not foreseen, but which colours the progression and presentation of this account.

Modifications to research design

I had hoped the structured approach I took to this research study would lead to a logical unfolding of the ensuing research 'story'. However, in the event, the research data, and my interpretation of it, led me to feel the need to extend my analysis into fields that I had not foreseen. The initial findings steered me to the somewhat unconventional place where I was forced to expand my initial, focussed, literature

review (Chapter Two) to a number of areas that I could not have foreseen prior to undertaking the fieldwork. To this end, the succeeding findings chapters introduce and incorporate additional scholarship in relevant areas such as ‘gift-giving’.

On the face of it, this introduction of new literature, from outside my immediate field of study, could seem unorthodox. However, upon reflection it seems that the nature of my fundamental research design in fact makes such an apparent diversion one of the exciting potentialities. By remaining open to, indeed seeking, the previously unknown and unexpected, I have been offered some new and interesting insights into sponsoring in organisations.

3.10 Establishing quality of research

Throughout the process of this research, I was aware of the need for it to be sound in order for me to be able to convince the audience that my findings contribute towards the debate about sponsoring (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). The assessment of the value of qualitative studies depends on the underlying principles of the paradigm and acceptable standards within the discipline, with some quality criteria being more general across disciplines while others are dependent on the specific paradigms applied (Morrow, 2005; Morrow & Smith, 2000). Accordingly, the criteria for judging the soundness of research differ across various disciplines, epistemologies, paradigms, and studies depending on what may be appropriate, leading to various recommendations for evaluation of qualitative research (e.g. Bryman & Bell, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Hammersley, 1992; Kirk & Miller, 1986; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Morrow, 2005). I was guided by Creswell’s (2013) criteria for establishing the soundness of research and the ensuing discussion describes how I addressed these criteria in the current study.

Participant validation

Each participant received the transcript of their interview for checking. They were asked to identify any inaccuracies in data capture, with the goal of establishing quality through portraying an accurate impression of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants (Baxter & Eyles, 1997; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Creswell, 2014; Stebbins, 2001). However, with this approach there was a risk that participants may want to withdraw some of the information given earlier (Sandelowski, 1993). Indeed, one participant pexpressed reservations about using her account for published research and subsequently her interview was not included in the research.

Diverse perspectives

I made an attempt to involve a wide range of participants (for example varying professions, ages and ethnicities) such that a rich picture of sponsoring could be constructed based on the range of experiences and multiple perspectives of a diverse participant group (Morrow, 2005; Morrow & Smith, 2000; Shenton, 2004). Through the multiple data sources I sought to consider, value and describe diverse perspectives in order to support and build confidence in the research findings (Denzin, 1989; Flick, 2007; Patton, 2002).

Fairness

At the forefront of my data collection and, especially, data analysis considerations was the quality criterion of fairness. This is considered a key criterion for researchers using an interpretivist epistemological stance and focusses on whether the various constructions of reality have been captured and honoured in research accounts (Lincoln, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 2005; Morrow, 2005).

Peer review

I also involved my supervisors at all stages of the research and had regular meetings with them. They reviewed my progress and constantly guided me by raising questions and identifying any issues with the research approach, the research process and data analysis by reviewing and discussing my interpretations of it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2015). Thus, they acted as peer reviewers by raising relevant questions, and these reviews also contributed towards identifying some prior assumptions and prejudices that I carried into the research (Denzin, 1989).

Transparency and consistency

Qualitative research as a paradigm does not aspire to generalizability and is context specific (Morrow, 2005). It is open, however, to criticisms associated with lack of rigour. I was scrupulously aware of the need for transparency. To this end I have provided a detailed description of the research process followed and the manner in which I arrived at my findings. These findings are explained with the help of direct quotes from participants. In addition, I kept a record of my own experiences and position during this research, how I arrived at the research questions and my prior knowledge, assumptions and beliefs as well as maintaining a research journal, all of which contributed to an understanding of how the research process evolved at every step. Details of the research context, research process and participants have been outlined earlier. Further, my research journal documents insights as to how I saw myself in relation to my participants throughout the process, thus making transparent the interpretive lens that I utilised.

Reflexivity

Another criterion of research quality is reflexivity that closely accompanies constructivism in the belief that both the participants and the researcher are constantly reflexively monitoring their own constructions of the social world. A social world constructed by the participants and interpreted by the researcher must entail the same process, thus as a researcher I sought to bring reflexivity into the production of knowledge of this social world (Blaikie, 2009; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Reflexivity signals my belief about the impossibility of being detached from the research and the impact I as a researcher have on the research process from its inception to its application in the future. I believe that the subjective insightfulness that a researcher brings to data interpretation is a positive outcome of engagement, rather than working from a position of distance or disinterest (Flick, 2007). The use of my voice in this research as 'I', is indicative of that belief, communicated too in in my willingness to 'own' my perspective through the use of the first person rather than adopting a third person account (Patton, 2002).

Overall, this thesis is a reflection of my perspective, analysis and voice, which significantly influence the broad context for the research (Patton, 2015). In my research journal I have attempted to be open about the social, cultural, gender and personal biases that I brought to process. In the journal, I recorded my thoughts before and after each interview as well as during the entire research process, in order for these influences to be acknowledged and to document the frame of reference. The journal includes my experiences and perceptions prior to and throughout data collection and analysis stages, thus supporting reflexivity, and reveals my prior beliefs and knowledge about sponsoring as well as how it evolved over the course of the

research and developed during the analysis and discussion. A few pages from my research journal are attached in Appendix 4 as an illustration of this reflexive practice.

Privacy and confidentiality

Since the participants had shared their life stories with me and these included some personal information, I was conscious of the need to respect their privacy and confidentiality, which also contributes towards the quality of qualitative research (Howe & Eisenhart, 1990). I took measures to address this ethical component by anonymising the participants' names, using more general information of profession or industry and ethnicity such that the participants are not identifiable in the thesis or any other future work.

In sum, my account of the sponsoring relationship encountered in the course of this research is one among many possible accounts about social reality (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Hammersley, 1992). Further, the quality criteria that I used were an attempt to establish the accuracy of this subjective account (Creswell, 2007; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). Hence, although I adopted several strategies to aim for sound and rigorous research, I also acknowledge a number of constraints of the research, and these are detailed next.

3.11 Limitations

Since the focus of the research was on sponsoring experiences and the sponsoring relationship, my intention was to try to include as many sponsor-sponsee pairs as I could to enable views from both perspectives. However, due to time constraints this was not achieved to the extent that I had hoped. I found that sponsees mostly did not choose to refer me to their sponsors, even when there was an undertaking to do so.

Ultimately I had one sponsor-sponsee pair (two participants) and one sponsee and her two sponsors (three participants) and all five were included in the research.

I also intended to include sponsors who were both men and women to provide a gendered representation of experiences and interpretations. However, I was only able to include one man (sponsor). That said, I was able to conduct in-depth interviews and gather detailed information on the experiences of sponsoring of diverse female sponsees whose voices have not been heard before in a research context. Participants were also asked to identify their ethnicity in the pre-interview questionnaire, and I questioned them about the influence of their ethnicity on the sponsoring relationships as my earlier research in Europe had indicated challenges for ethnic minority sponsees. This questioning led to some rich data. Further, the participants in this research belonged to different professions and industries and that also helped me in addressing previous constraints within sponsoring research.

Some might claim that there are methodological limitations in my not using a range of data collection methods such as focus groups. This was a positive choice made because of the nature of the research questions. I believed that shared discussions among groups of sponsees or sponsors about a potentially confidential and personal relationship may not be feasible. This would not only compromise anonymity, but in focus groups participants might unduly influence individual accounts, or individuals might feel unable to share their opinions freely. Similarly, interviews with both the sponsor and sponsee present were considered but not pursued. In this case the decision was straightforward because of the poor response to recruiting sponsors through sponsees and vice-versa.

It is accepted that qualitative interviews are influenced by the similarity between the researcher and the interviewee and this may lead to limitations in sharing of information (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). Issues such as race, ethnicity and nationality can affect the interview process and create such an “interviewer effect” (Denscombe, 2010, p. 178; Warren, 2001). A specific limitation for me personally was the fact that I belonged to a certain ethnicity – Indian –, and had only recently arrived in New Zealand. This could have been a potential barrier to participants’ willingness to share information with me. Equally, the fact that I belong to a different cultural and workplace context to participants might be considered as a constraint to my comprehension of participants’ the intended meaning. This latter issue was ameliorated by the presence and guidance throughout the research of three supervisors, two of whom are New Zealand born and all of whom have spent most of their working lives in New Zealand.

I took appropriate measures to minimise such potential limitations and create a level of comfort by having the participants ‘know me’ (e.g. Allen, Poteet & Burroughs, 1997; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Warren, 2001). I began the interviews with a story about me and how I arrived at this topic to give participants a peek into the window of my life. I did not however discuss anything related to my experiences of sponsoring as I did not want to influence their thoughts or risk suppressing their voices as a result of my own perceptions. This sharing of life stories often continued even after the interview was complete and the recorder was switched off. My participants were interested in knowing more about me, where I came from, why I came to New Zealand and what I hoped to achieve through the research. I also used the pre-interview phone calls and meetings to establish rapport. I sensed that a rapport was indeed established through their willingness to learn more about me and engage with me outside of the boundaries of the interview. This engagement continued post-

interview as it often does with qualitative interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). A common interest in research on women and work also enabled me to establish rapport with the participants. I am still in contact with my participants, some of whom have become good friends, and some of whom I continue to interact with in other areas of life.

To sum up, this chapter detailed my philosophical stance and research methodology. The chapter included details of my research strategy and methods for collecting and analysing data, which were driven by my research questions namely to understand how sponsees experience sponsoring as women, how sponsors experience sponsoring and to provide insights into the nature of the sponsoring relationship. My ontological and epistemological positions align best with a qualitative research strategy. I was informed by hermeneutic phenomenology, and the thematic analysis of data gathered through open ended semi-structured interviews led to the emergence of three key themes.

Having provided a fairly comprehensive insight into the research design, I now switch focus to the actual findings. The following chapter acts as a conduit chapter between the ‘background’ chapters (introduction, literature review and research design) and those chapters I regard as composite ‘findings and discussion’ chapters. In Chapter Four I first introduce the participants by way of short descriptive stories that provide further background and context to the findings of this study.

Chapter Four: Participant Stories

4.1 Introduction

As already suggested, this chapter essentially acts as a transition point in the thesis. Here I introduce the participants through a series of verbal 'portraits' intended to capture key elements of their life stories. These stories were gleaned from the interviews and are thereby, in one sense, 'findings'. However, they also serve as contextual detail to help the reader 'get to know' the participants and better comprehend their worlds. Extended participant summaries are attached in Appendix 4.

4.2 Brief participant descriptions

Erica

Erica is in her 50s and runs her own law practice. Soon after graduating in her early 20s, she accompanied her then husband to a South Asian posting. She returned to NZ for her child's education and subsequently qualified as a lawyer. Being an older woman was challenging in getting a job after graduation. By then Erica was a single mother, struggling to get a job despite what she believed was a very marketable CV. When she did, she was paid less than her male colleagues: "*He wasn't a solicitor and his charge was more than [mine]. There was absolutely no difference except that he was male and we were not".*

As a single mother, Erica's day to day experiences while working were challenging, leading to her belief that men and women are not treated equally by employers, something she sees to this day. In Erica's view, this issue also leads to the under-

representation of women in senior leadership in law despite the larger number of women graduating from law school. This is a significant motivator for her sponsorship of other women. Erica considers herself a spiritual person and thinks that a positive karma ensues from helping others. But she only does things for people when she feels they will value and not take them for granted. She hopes to see the situation for women in society and organisations change in her child's lifetime. That is the reason that she said she wanted to participate in my women focussed research.

Sophie

Sophie is in her 50s and arrived in New Zealand looking for work more than 20 years ago, after completing her doctoral studies. With no specific career goals she pursued higher education as a means to bring about change in the world. She claims to have achieved her life goals in the little ways that she makes a difference in her field of higher education. The first gender issue Sophie encountered in her career was her inability to negotiate her first salary. The revelation that her ethnicity made a difference in the workplace came when she was in a senior leadership role. Sophie found that Pākehā colleagues were only nice and kind until she was not in a leadership position, and not when the roles were reversed. The situation left her "*deeply wounded and emotionally shattered"* and when she returned from a self-imposed healing break, she was much more deliberate in forming relationships, seeking relationships with non-Pākehās.

She is part of women only circles and these offer her opportunities to form relationships with people outside work. Membership has also made her realise the importance of networks in her life. Sophie believes her ability to help others is a natural progression of life "*a cumulative effort of life lived".* She wants to help others and when she believes

that she can make things better in any way, she does. Being in an influential position helps, Sophie thinks, but what is more important, however, are her many networks.

Kylie

Kylie works in a senior leadership position in early education. When she realised that business management roles were not making her happy, about 20 years ago, she decided to retrain in early education because of her interest in forming relationships with families and communities. She is clear that her career goals are not focussed on upward mobility, but on the type of teacher she wants to be. Since she is already in senior leadership and wants to continue working in the current workplace, upward mobility is not something that inspires her. Instead she focusses on relationships in the workplace and ensuring that everyone feels supported to do their best.

Kylie has strong views about the values and beliefs around teaching in early education and relationships are important to her. She hopes that when she builds these relationships and sponsors people, it is these core values that they imbibe. Gender has never been an issue for her in the workplace, since the gender balance is in favour of women in early education. What stands out most about Kylie is that she is very passionate about her work. She believes that her personal and professional goals cross over since she is very passionate about her work, and her family often say that she is *"married to her work".* It is the nature of her career she declares "*You've gotta put extra heart and soul into it".*

Rowena

Rowena began her career in commercial real estate in UK and now runs her own real estate consulting firm. She explains that the people who influenced her the most in her

career were those who role modelled for her. Rowena talked about her boss who showed her what it was like to be a female in a male dominated profession; a freelance technology consultant who showed her *"what an independent minded person could do and that was a career possibility"*; and a colleague who introduced her to the world of public speaking. She explained how these relationships had helped her since she never really asks anyone for help: "*mostly it gave me confidence that I could achieve some of the goals that I had and it also gave me ideas of pathways to success because my career path has been eccentric and non-conventional".*

Although she worked in a male dominated profession, Rowena does not consider gender as a barrier or that she is any inferior due to her gender. She believes that she has always used her strengths to push through any gender related issues. Rowena knows that she is able to help other people more since becoming an independent consultant because she has more control over time and resources. None of her staff have ever approached her for help. She thinks that people only ever approach her for getting a job in her firm and not for any other help.

Lorraine

Lorraine began her career in TV production which was something that she *"fell into"*, because she was asked to work for friends in that field. Besides these friends, she also talked about her aunty, another close friend, her stepfather and her partner as the people who have helped her in her career. Lorraine was not sure whether the term sponsoring could be used for these people because she felt the term had financial connotations as if there was some payment made for a service, similar to a business advisor or a planner, whereas with all the people she had talked about there was no financial payment for services type arrangement.

She explained how the biggest thing she needed in her work currently was networks and connections. Lorraine has a vast and diverse network because she has networks in film and media, as well as among Māori businesses. She felt that gender was not a barrier when securing new projects, but it was when working with men. Due to the nature of her work, Lorraine found herself working with Māori but she also mentioned how the process of the work would be the same for Māori or non-Māori but that Māori liked to work with other Māori in businesses: "*If I am looking for something I will probably look for a Māori business first to support that business".* Further, that a lot of Māori businesses had family and friends involved in the business which is the reason behind Māori seeking family members to discuss work related matters.

Valerie

Valerie is in her 60s and came to New Zealand to pursue a career in education. Her career ambition had been to work as a civil servant, but her conservative South Asian family's restrictions meant that she could not pursue that ambition, and subsequently also had to quit work when she had a baby following marriage. Her foray into the field of education was incidental but she quickly became passionate about working in the field and pursued further studies. Valerie's decision to move out of the social context in South Asia for the sake of her daughter whom she did not want to *"put through the same things"* motivated her to look for work outside and when she found out that New Zealand had the best to offer in terms of her career goals, she made that move.

Valerie stated how she came across ethnic stereotyping about South Asians in New Zealand, but, in contrast to South Asia, gender was never an issue. Her notion of sponsoring is that of giving a chance, of someone believing in another person enough to take a risk for them. She does not really have an opportunity to sponsor others due

to the nature of her job. However, she has been in situations where people have approached her for career or life advice, and she has been able to guide them. Valerie states that some of those people often came back to thank her and so she knew she had made a difference.

Geoff

Geoff is a Māori man in his 40s who runs his own accounting firm, a decision which was a result of wanting to work for Māori organisations and helping them as an accountant. His goal is to motivate other young Māori to take up accounting as a profession. Geoff believes that ethnicity played a part in how he experienced workplaces before he started his own firm. His own firm did not "*discriminate against them*" when other Pākehā business approached them, but generally they *"did not end up having a client relationship with them".*

He has worked for larger accounting organisations in the past, but held that they never understood his view about doing things differently when working with Māori. Geoff acknowledges that Māori men were privileged in the Māori social context as a result of their position in the Marae, but reiterates that gender is not a factor in the relationships he forms at work. He states that although the old boys' network exists for Māori men it is to a lesser extent than what it had been for non- Māori men in the organisations he had worked for earlier in his career. However, Geoff declares that he does not want to associate himself with those networks: *"it doesn't inspire me I don't learn from these people, I don't have anything to do with them, I don't have any business from them".*

Melissa

Melissa, a Māori woman in her 30s, always knew that she would be encouraged to pursue higher education following high school. This was a result of her grandmother and her mother's view around education. She believes that they were her first sponsors, and gave her that opportunity and acted as role models. She is now in a senior leadership position but explains how she never thought about herself in a leadership role: *"I think for cultural reasons as well, it is not all that common for a Māori woman to be a leader so I never had that in my thought processes back then".*

Melissa's experiences as a Māori woman have two dimensions: as a woman in the Māori social context and as a Māori woman in the workplace. In both contexts, Melissa feels discriminated against. The former led to her not really pursuing leadership roles, while with the latter she had the notion that she would never make it as a Māori woman in the workplace. Therefore, in her workplace, while the old boys' network meant that as a woman Melissa was not able to have access to the same networks as other men, being a Māori woman was associated with stereotypes. As a result of her experiences, she is keen to help other Māori women.

Jasmine

Jasmine is in her 30s and came to New Zealand following marriage. Having decided initially to just take a break from work for a while, she soon felt bored of not working. It was tough to find work as someone who had no experience of working in NZ. When Jasmine found one person who was willing to give her a job, she was grateful for the position that was actually created for her in that organisation. She considered that person her sponsor. It was not until she found out that another Pākehā woman in a similar role was getting paid more than her, that she felt discriminated against due to

her ethnicity. In addition, on a day to day basis there was subtle discrimination and stereotypes about Asian women which meant that not many people formed workplace relationships with her.

The other people who had helped Jasmine in NZ, her other sponsors, were those who helped her when she became an entrepreneur. However, the one person who Jasmine thinks could have helped significantly at this stage of her life did not do so, something she thinks was due to her ethnicity.

Nel

Nel is a South Asian woman. Sponsoring for her is something that happens all around and can come from any person because she considers sponsoring to be the help that enables a sponsee to progress in some way in their life. Thus, Nel counts her parents, who were role models for her in particular her father, among her first sponsors. She has since had other sponsors. Nel endeavours to make her sponsors proud because she wants to show them that they have done the right thing by sponsoring her.

Nel is aware of subtle ethnic discrimination in her workplace which made it difficult for her to make friends in the workplace. Gender has been an issue sometimes in the workplace, when she has worked in all-male teams: "*Truly I wished I was a guy just to get their attention and that kind of a talk".* She has been told that the old boys club exists in her workplace, and how for certain projects they prefer to have a man because the rest of the team is male and she would not fit in. Here, ethnicity added to the problems because Nel felt that nobody wanted to *"listen"* to an Asian woman in terms of giving directions anyway.

Teresa

Teresa is in her 40s, and a senior leader in early childhood education who identifies herself as Kiwi. Teresa grew up among Māori and their culture has had a deep influence on her. She explains how this means that she is able to connect with the Māori ways of being and doing things. She believes that relationships are at the centre of sponsoring and that both parties need to gain the trust of each other. Teresa considers herself a feminist and disagrees with the what she believes is the popular notion is society about sponsoring – that having a male sponsor is better than having a female sponsor for career progression. She thought that women could sponsor women through relationship building and act as role models for them.

Teresa believes that there is a need for *"confident women that are not gonna get crushed and rebel back when something gets sent to them",* in order for things to change for women in society, and that sponsoring is important for that to happen and for women to *"stay together and be strong moving forward".* She declares that she always tried to do that for the people who work with her in her workplace.

Paula

Paula is a South Asian woman in her 40s who migrated to New Zealand as a young girl under five years. She works in a senior leadership position in a private firm. Paula talks very emotionally about her sponsors who she believes were kind, benevolent and caring in their relationships with her. She explains that her being an ethnic minority woman created barriers to her career progression and how her sponsors' role had been critical in addressing those barriers and giving her opportunities. Paula also explains that when she arrived in New Zealand she was met with friendly and caring

people and it was only when she joined the workforce that the extent of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity became apparent to her even though while growing up she always felt different because she was "*brown".*

As a sponsor Paula cares for her sponsees, much as her sponsors had cared for her. She clarifies that she always has their back and that she often expected loyalty from them in return. Paula believes in helping other women whenever she can and in whatever way she can, something she believes not many women engage in because they *"are all competing rather than showing solidarity".* This type of support is something she wishes she had more of in her own career.

Leah

Leah is a South Asian woman in her 40s who migrated to New Zealand when she accompanied her husband. She thinks that her career progress would have been better in her birth country had she not migrated, because all her peers from her birth country were already in senior leadership while she was not. Her Māori and Pasifika sponsors were people with whom she shared the commonality of being an ethnic minority individual and talks about how they all cared for the rights of ethnic minorities. All reveals the jobs that Leah has had since moving to New Zealand were a result of informal meetings among ethnic minority groups which happened because *"You know we get invited to the same things".*

Leah occasionally feels a sense of envy towards her Pākehā sponsor because she believes that her organisational position would have been similar to the sponsor's had she been in South Asia. Being part of the Pasifika community and activity groups, Leah also involves herself with youth mentoring and developmental programmes. However,

while the recipients find it useful, she personally finds that her role there does not enable her to form relationships and deep connections similar to the ones she had with her own sponsors.

Jemma

Jemma is in her 50s, a Māori woman by birth and raised by a Pākehā mother. Jemma talks about how this meant that although she was actively trying to embrace her Māori side, she was "*biased more towards English way rather than the Māori side".* She explains how this is problematic for her because she is expected to behave like a Māori and sponsor other Māori, while she herself does not necessarily want to do that.

Her sponsor in her first job was also Jemma's manager and she states that her sponsor's constant support and encouragement pushed her to achieve goals. She also learnt about how leadership could be practised by observing her sponsor. Relationships are important to Jemma and she believes in being relational in her leadership style. She particularly values the "*sisterhood"* of colleagues and senior leaders who she believes are "*always there for her".* Jemma's spiritual values guide her in her day to day behaviour and she explains that although she is not religious she abides by the value of *"treating everyone with kindness and humanity".* As a result, Jemma states, she probably would not know if something she did for someone has influenced their career positively unless she is told about it.

Faith

Faith is a doctor in her 40s who entered the profession due to an interest in science and her mother's encouragement for tertiary education. Her medical career however was a result of taking what job she could get, rather than thinking through what she

wanted to do. She explains that it was child rearing that primarily influenced a woman's career in medicine and so they had to find a way of working around that.

In her current role as a senior consultant in public health, Faith is involved a lot in people's performance and promotions. It is in this aspect of her job that she had her first sponsoring experience as a sponsor. Faith talked about the two people who have influenced her career significantly: her mother and her supervisor under whom she was training. Her supervisor was a role model for her and encouraged the notion that a woman could be feminine and still be a senior leader. Faith reflects on how that relationship compared with the one she had with her own sponsee: *"they were both like more senior person supporting the junior person but I guess the thing was we are in different specialties. So with my sponsee there is more of a gap whereas I was always on the pathway to become like my sponsor".*

Linda

Linda is in her 30s and currently works in higher education in science. She explained how she ended up pursuing studies where she could rather than what she actually wanted to do, because of her grades. She said that she was aware of the need to "*play the game"* if she had to move up the career ladder, that and she played that game and this is where *"mentoring and other stuff came in"*. Linda said that gender had never been an issue in her work and believes that like men, women need to ask for things instead of waiting to get noticed. She believes that it is important for women to put their hand up, get feedback and learn to take critical feedback. She said that she did all that but having a supportive manager still made a big difference.

Linda explained how a sponsor's role was different in NZ academia than it was overseas, and that in NZ *"sponsors are more like your contacts, having that kind of*

connection, the networking is the sponsoring". However, Linda's personal opinion is that sponsoring is a dynamic relationship because while it started between two people one of whom was a senior and one a junior, once the junior person found their feet and became more confident the senior had to back off and be more of a colleague.

Having here provided the contextual background of the participants through brief stories (Chapter Four), the next three chapters (Five, Six And Seven) detail the three aforementioned key themes that emerged from the data: namely, giving and receiving in the sponsoring relationship; characteristics of the multifaceted sponsoring relationship; and the influence of intersectional locations on the meaning of sponsoring. These chapters are in turn synthesised in further discussion, culminating in the presentation of a re-conceptualised model of sponsorship in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Five: Giving and Receiving in the Sponsoring Relationship

This chapter focusses on a key theme that emerged from the data analysis: giving and receiving. In the following sections, I discuss four features of the dynamics of the giving and receiving within sponsoring relationships that emerged from participant accounts. Two dominant features emerged, namely, 'giving' and 'receiving in return'; and two less dominant features emerged, namely, 'receiving' and' passing on'. I begin with the two dominant features that emphasise notions of providing sponsorship as generous giving and receiving in return, indicating that reciprocity exists as a feature of sponsoring relationships. I then discuss two, in relative terms, non-dominant features focussing on how sponsorship is received and passed on.

Initial data analysis as earlier mentioned, highlighted a sense of benevolence, even altruism, in the sponsoring relationships: sponsoring was seen as a generous gift given to a sponsee. To provide insight, and meaningfully examine the nuances of this issue, in this chapter I also review the gift-giving literature. In turn this informed the development of a framework that highlighted giving and receiving within the sponsoring relationship. This framework drew on two perspectives of gift-giving: Mauss's (1954) concept of the gift exchange economy and Hyde's (1983) notion of gift-giving. The 'gift-giving framework of sponsoring' is elaborated in latter sections of this chapter.

5.1 Giving

Findings show that the motivation to sponsor was underpinned by a notion of benevolence which emerged in most interviews. Synonymous with generosity,

benevolence is the willingness to do something or give something for the benefit of others (e.g. Beauchamp, 2008; Chuang, 2015; Huei-Wern, Delston & Yi & Schweitzer, 2014; Nunney, 2000). While previous research (Bhide, 2014; Bhide & Tootell, 2018) had indicated that sponsoring was considered as 'help', the notion of generosity and kindness as the motivation behind this help was a new finding and a dominant theme that was evident in most participant accounts.

Benevolent sponsors

Paula's view appeared to reflect the sentiments of several other participants when she described her sponsors as *"benevolent".* She spoke about how all her sponsors had been benevolent in giving her a voice in a workplace dominated by men, which in her opinion, was a significant factor in assisting her career progress and enabling her to reach a leadership position. Paula's statement suggests that a sponsor was someone who not only encouraged her to speak but perhaps also had the authority to have the audience hear her opinions:

> "*I don't speak up as much as I should. To this day I still struggle to take that brave step and say something. Even though I might have the best opinion out there I don't express it. It is difficult and in a virtual world it's easier because you don't have the reality of them sitting there, them being the men. And the benevolent sponsors I have had have asked me to speak and that is another act of sponsorship".*

Providing such personal developmental support, where Paula's sponsor's role also included encouragement and confidence building, is consistent with what we know of mentorship (e.g. Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Ehrich, 2008; Kram, 1985; Scandura & Ragins, 1993). However, the focus on the notion of a sponsor doing something out of

benevolence is what was valued by Paula and the thing that came through as having made the relationship more meaningful. Her statement also indicates that she trusted that her sponsors were acting in her best interest, which may itself have contributed to considering them as caring or munificent, since benevolence has also been shown to have a direct relationship with trust (Burke, 2007). It is unclear which comes first, however: perhaps, when a trusting sponsoring relationship is established with sponsors, sponsees attribute them with a kind and selfless disposition. Either way, benevolence is a component of trustworthy behaviour, and positively influences relational strength in relationships (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). Given the claim that women prefer a more relational style of working (Fletcher, 2001), they may consider benevolence to be quite significant in sponsoring relationships.

Making a difference

When probed about what may have influenced the acts of generous giving, 'wanting to make a difference' was a theme that emerged in several guises. For example, Sophie (a sponsor) stated:

> *"It was intentional, in wanting to make a difference. The ability to influence is very important and so people don't necessarily have to directly reach out to me for me to try and influence things. If I detect that something is going on and I have the means to respond to it, whether by picking up the phone and speaking to someone or by casually dropping something into a conversation somewhere or if there are ways in which I can do something that would help someone or sort out a problem that has occurred, then I will.*

Not for any tangible reward, not because I can put it into my CV as something, not for any gratitude but because I can".

Sophie's statement indicates that while there is an awareness of the possible tangible or intangible benefits from providing sponsorship, sponsors may in fact not be driven or motivated by any of these reasons.

A desire to make a positive difference to someone's life with their sponsoring efforts was also espoused by two sponsors Geoff and Nel. For example, Geoff explained: *"You just hope you have made an impact on individuals in different ways".* Similarly, Nel claimed: *"I feel they are doing something better than before".* There is a sense of sponsors being deliberate in their sponsorship as well as a sense of being purposeful in wanting to make a positive difference to someone's life. This perhaps contributed to making sponsoring relationship meaningful for sponsors.

Wanting to help others (altruism)

Participants consistently indicated that sponsorship sometimes happened due to feelings of generous giving and simply wanting to help others without a focus on specific outcomes. Sponsors said that often they did not know they had made an impact upon someone's life as a sponsor unless told about. Although they wanted to help people and did so, they may never actually know when sponsoring happened. For example, Melissa stated that she would not necessarily be aware of sponsoring having happened specifically for anyone in particular: *"I don't know to be honest. I think that I've helped but I am not sure. I just encourage people to be the best at what they can be, whatever that is."* Similarly, Geoff considered the impact of sponsoring upon an individual may be hard to determine: *"You know it's hard to measure because people, for example, they come through our firm and they move on and you might*

have a passing email here and there but you hopefully made an impression on their lives. You can never tell. Sometimes you get feedback".

Role of values and beliefs

For some participants, benevolent behaviour was attributed to values and ethics rather than to predisposition and temperament. The worldviews of participants including their beliefs about spirituality, religion, values, and about what they considered was the right thing to do. This in turn influenced their desire to be 'giving'. Findings revealed that personal values and beliefs including spiritual beliefs may have an influence on both why individuals may provide sponsorship and why it is meaningful for them. This is noteworthy as it implies that some individuals may be more likely to provide sponsorship than others.

The following insight from Jemma exemplifies this type of response. Although she was raised by a Pakehā mother, Jemma pro-actively embraced her Māori heritage as an adult. She perceived that her values and beliefs were linked to her Māori culture and influenced her sponsorship efforts:

> *"I say I've helped them along the way and I am just being human. I don't believe in religion I just believe in treating people with humanity and kindness. That is sort of my religion. So I try to build people up not tear them down. I never put myself before other people. Being Māori, though my family is Pakehā, it is not ok for us to put ourselves before others".*

Similarly, Erica claimed that she engaged with sponsoring because it was the right thing to do, and it was thus part of a way of life that she practised. Her spiritual leaning was evident in her statement*:*

"I wouldn't necessarily say I get anything out of it. I would say I didn't do it for getting anything out of it. I guess there is that sort of karma aspect. I just think it's the right thing to do".

Paula was aware that she was deliberate in sharing her expertise through sponsorship because of her belief about influencing other people's lives in some manner:

"Truly what do we have in life? What do you take with you to the grave? That you have lots of money? Well maybe. The only thing that you can really say that you did was that you influenced other people's lives in some way. I have always had that benevolent feel".

Such claims also provide an insight into the personal, intrinsic, satisfaction individual sponsors gained from engaging with others through sponsoring at work.

Organisational contexts and constraints were also seen to influence whether sponsors were able to act upon their beliefs and values in their sponsorship. Rowena explained how she had not been a sponsor when working for other organisations, and this changed when she became an entrepreneur: *"I have helped more people now than I probably have helped before because now I have more control over my time and how I spend it and what I do with it. By just starting my practice and being a social entrepreneur".* Her statement indicates a sense of being restricted in her sponsoring efforts when she was working for other organisations, and perhaps also the absence of management or structural support for investing time and effort to engage in 'giving' behaviour:

As is already evident, research has shown that attributes and behaviours such as benevolence and altruism are often not recognised and valued in senior women

leaders (Heilman, 2001, 2012). Thus this might serve to affect whether or not senior women in organisations engage in sponsoring as much as they would personally like. In addition, benevolence may not be valued and considered important enough to support and encourage in workplaces unless it can be shown to directly impact on the financial outcomes of organisations (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). This rational perspective might explain why some organisations do not promote or support the practice of sponsoring which displays such characteristics.

Contribution to a larger cause

Some evidence emerged from the interviews that there was a broader motivation for individuals to sponsor. A prominent example of this was sponsoring as an outlet for the desire to contribute to a larger cause. For example, during recruitment, Erica mentioned that she was eager to participate in my research because it contributed towards research on women's work and leadership. This perception of contributing to a larger cause, such as the under-representation of women in leadership positions or crossing workplace barriers, was also a motivating factor for her to sponsor. This collectivist motivation to give, or the motivation to give for the welfare of a group, has been attributed to be a result of group identity (e.g. Snyder & Lopez, 2002; Tajfel, 1981; Turner, Oakes, Haslam & McGarty, 1994). Thus, rather than benevolence as the only or main motivating factor, here sponsoring emerges as a deliberate act of contributing towards the betterment of what was viewed as a sub-optimal situation for a group that the participant identifies with. In a number of cases 'giving' was accompanied by the fulfilment of the desire to contribute towards a cause, either at a social level (as Erica described) or at a personal or professional level. Geoff claimed his company was committed to developing accountants and that this led them to help

people who joined their firm, even if they then went on to work in other places. Thus the commitment was towards the profession and towards doing what they could to help develop people to excel in that profession: *"As an organisation we try to grow great accountants so we provide help to the people who come through our organisation".*

Similar personal and professional experiences

Perhaps as an extension of this shared professional or social identity and therefore responsibility, sponsorship was sometimes driven by the desire to make circumstances better for others, who were perceived to be facing similar issues as the sponsor had faced earlier in their career. When the sponsor identified strongly with the sponsee because they believed that their own past experiences were similar, they claimed to sense the type of support that would be needed. This motivation to provide sponsorship was highlighted by Erica:

> *"I could identify with the new grad. I realised that there are pros and cons coming out as a law grad at that age so I took it that I probably had something to offer and I knew that aspect of the world at that point. I was in that situation once and I wish someone had helped me".*

Sponsees valued this kind of sponsorship. Having similar experiences as the sponsee was considered very valuable and the sponsor was believed to have an understanding of what it meant to be in that position, as illustrated by Jemma's insight:

> *"We've got sisterhood that we all understand. This common understanding. It is a sort of sponsorship too that someone's been there before you and maybe moved up the ladder and they know where you have come from so*

she becomes your sponsor".

Thus, a perception of shared experiences made sponsoring meaningful both for sponsors and sponsees. There was also a view expressed that a man may not be able to provide this understanding because it was something unique to women. The notion of the sisterhood is understood in feminism as the idea of women supporting each other to challenge inequality (Balser, 1987; Lerner, 1993; Morgan, 2007; Tong, 2009; Whelehan, 2000; Wolf, 1994). Jemma's statement indicates that sponsorship from women is valued by female sponsees, and this implies that there may be some additional expectations that women may have from female sponsors compared with their male counterparts. However, research has shown that these expectations might (Arvate, Galilea & Todescat, 2018) or might not (Hurst et al., 2017) be consistently met in workplaces. The low number of women in senior leadership indicate that despite being in higher numbers than previously, hierarchically higher placed women may not be supporting hierarchically lower placed women in New Zealand (Grant Thornton International Ltd, 2015; Human Rights Commission, 2012; McGregor & Davis-Tana, 2017).

Comment on the qualities of giving

To sum up, my findings indicate that a sponsoring relationship involved giving by a sponsor. Wanting to make a difference, a sense of doing the right thing, contributing to a larger cause, identifying with sponsees' experiences, and being in a position to offer help all emerge as key motivators for sponsors' willingness to give to their sponsees. Sponsees, meanwhile, had a simple message: sponsors were benevolent and kind. Sponsoring was not only provided when asked for or when pursued by a sponsee. Instead, it was given without asking, with sponsors seen as being attentive

to sponsee needs. This benevolence was seen by sponsees as having a significant career impact, something which some sponsors also highlighted.

Sponsors were sometimes deliberate and intentional in sponsoring but they also recognised that they often did not know about the impact of their own sponsoring efforts unless told about it by sponsees. This latter point is notable as it suggests that there might well be a deficit in formal sponsorship programmes. Alternatively, it reinforces the notion that sponsors gain satisfaction and the motivation to persist with sponsoring from factors other than overt positive feedback.

Participants' statements indicated their belief about sponsoring as a selfless act, and it was somewhat surprising that this aspect had not featured in previous research. The act of selfless giving makes people happy and it is widely accepted that this might be why individuals engage in kindness and giving (Andreoni, 1989, 1990; Dunn, Aknin, & Norton, 2008; Grant & Sonnentag, 2010; Rucker, DuBois, & Galinsky, 2011; Rudd, Aaker & Norton, 2014). In workplaces, demonstrations of apparent benevolence might be intentional on the part of managers who wish to enhance their own performance outcomes. That is, managers who demonstrate benevolence have been shown to be more likely to secure employee trust (Cappelletti, Said, Noguera, Scouarnec & Fourboul, 2016; Lind, Tyler & Huo, 1997) and thus this may in fact motivate managers to act in such a way as to appear selfless. Alternatively, this behaviour and motivation might be personality-based or learned behaviour which is more general and directed towards humankind broadly (Eisenberg, 2014). Whether or not the perceived behaviour is deliberately self-serving or altruistic, the effect on the sponsee and the sponsor-sponsee relationship, appears to be positive.

Prosocial behaviours, those meant to help others, have diverse motivations and related theories focus on different explanations for such behaviour, such as reciprocity, empathy and altruistic traits in personality (Bierhoff, 2005; Eisenberg, Spinrad & Knafo-Noam, 2015; Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin & Schroeder, 2005). Such behaviour is influenced by both cognitive (thinking) and affective (emotions or feelings) processes (Bierhoff, 2005; Eisenberg et al., 2015; Penner et al., 2005). Findings of this study indicate that the reasons for the prosocial behaviour of sponsors are varied. Both thinking and feeling are factors that influence why people provide sponsorship. Sponsors' help could be due to emotions, feelings and/or empathy, all of which made the sponsoring relationship meaningful for the participants engaging in them. Behavioural manifestations of this 'help' were in the form of the acts of sponsoring such as giving advice or taking a chance and giving a new job or supporting a person in a new role.

Findings also indicate that current understandings of sponsoring may in fact be gendered. Motivations such as being kind, generous, and acting out of feelings and emotions, which are considered feminine leadership behaviours (e.g. Brescoll, 2016; Heilman & Eagly, 2008), may have not been identified or highlighted as driving sponsoring efforts because of a masculinised understanding of leadership (e.g. Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell & Ristakari, 2011; Madsen, 2017; O'Connor, 2015; Sczesny, 2003).

At an individual level, women are encouraged to seek sponsorship, and sponsees are commended for having identified sponsors, obtained sponsorship and advanced in their careers (Followell, 2014; Foust-Cummings et al., 2011; Headlam-Wells, 2004; Hellicar, 2013; Hewlett et al., 2010; Hewlett et al., 2011; Paddison, 2013; Travis et al.,

2013). However, this view does not take into account the meaning and value attributed to sponsoring relationships, as well as any challenges encountered, which from a feminist perspective ignores women's experiences especially since women have been shown to prefer relational interactions (Blustein, 2011; Fletcher, 2001; Jordan, 2008; Miller, 1986; Sias, 2009). The findings of this study challenge these gendered understandings, and indicate that there may be a number of reasons why people act as sponsors and potentially for people to seek others as their sponsors besides the more instrumental reasons, and that not all sponsorship is directly comparable.

5.2 Receiving in return

While the giving involved in sponsoring was seen as an act of kindness and generosity, closer examination of the data also revealed that reciprocity was a feature of some relationships: sometimes, sponsors received benefits in return from the sponsoring relationship. Such expectations by sponsors at times led to sponsees' feelings of obligations. This was a dominant feature of giving and receiving and emerged, in part, from answers to my questions about what sponsors thought they had gained from sponsoring, and what sponsees thought sponsors received from sponsoring. The findings reveal that while sponsoring was considered generous on the one hand, there was also a sense, on the other hand, of underlying expectations of loyalty, gratitude and accountability from a sponsee. Receiving a was not, however, a unidimensional theme.

Mutual benefits

Linda talked about the mutual benefits that resulted from the sponsoring relationship with her sponsor, her statement indicating that sponsoring efforts were perceived as, at least in part, transactional in nature: *"I could contribute to his work and he could*

contribute to my stuff and so it was sort of, I scratch your back, you scratch mine".

This transactional side of sponsoring was also evident in Melissa's account. Although Melissa initially stated that her sponsor did not have any expectation from her, on further questioning she said that her sponsor may have benefitted from her support with work:

> *"Oh I think in practical terms what he got was that I was able to handle workload. So from he was able to allocate stuff".*

While such reciprocal benefits were at an individual level for both Linda and Melissa, Geoff was aware of the value his sponsee brought into the organisation as a senior leader, which was what he received in return for being her sponsor: *"I mean she always had the skills, the commitment that I was probably looking for in a business partner, so that was a natural progression* [sponsoring her by making her a senior partner]".

Ongoing benefits and changing power balances

The reciprocal benefits to a sponsor were not necessarily immediate, thus there was a temporal element to such benefits. Jemma talked about the instrumental benefits of an older sponsoring relationship with her sponsee, which were now becoming evident to her:

> *"I am there for her when she needs a referee or when she needs counselling or advice. I think she uses me as a sponsor still. She sees I can mirror back or that I can give her feedback that she needs sometimes on an emotional level when she is not feeling so confident. So now she is becoming more of a peer. The help is now coming back to me. So it goes back and forth between us now because I have been out of the organisation. The power is*

back and forth between us".

Jemma's statement conveys that in a sponsoring relationship, a sponsor is thought of as the one with more power than a sponsee because the person giving help is considered more powerful than the person receiving it. Underlying this notion of a powerful sponsor is, therefore, the idea of dependency which others have identified as a source of power (e.g. Block, 1987; Emerson, 1962; Funk, Stajduhar & Purkis, 2011; Molm, 1991; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Additionally, Jemma's observation implies that a sponsor is considered powerful irrespective of whether they are providing instrumental or emotional support, and the notion of power in this case is not necessarily to do with a hierarchical or influential position.

Satisfaction

A sponsor did not always receive something tangible in return for sharing their expertise and support, with instances of intangible benefits also evident in the participants' accounts. The sense of satisfaction that arose from a feeling of having helped the sponsee was one such intangible element. This sense of satisfaction was evident when participants talked about why they had helped people as illustrated in the extracts from Faith: *"I think I want to see people achieve and if I can help them do that.",* and Linda*: "Seeing them achieve and seeing them feel confident in their skills and then seeing them settle nicely in another job* [in response to what she receives in return from sponsoring]".

Hence I suggest that, for some sponsors, inherent in the relationship was an expectation, or at least a hope, that their help ought to result in kind of progress in a sponsee's career, evident from the sponsee's achievements. The clear implication here is that, when a sponsee fails to achieve what the sponsor had expected, it could

result in the sponsor withdrawing their support. Extrapolating from that, one might expect a certain loss of confidence in future sponsoring participation.

From a sponsee's perspective, it was important to be able to showcase their progress following sponsorship. This was on their own account, but also, for Nel at least, the imagined sense of satisfaction that she hoped her sponsors may have obtained from helping her and from knowing that they had positively influenced her career:

> *"It's really nice to know the fact that they motivated me and I appreciated it, and how far I have come in my life. This makes them feel good. It's always the case right? If you motivate me and you see me doing well you feel happy. You feel good about yourself, about influencing somebody that way".*

At times, the feeling of satisfaction was not explicitly stated by a sponsor, although it was implied. For example, being trusted and depended upon to give career advice, long after her sponsee had stopped working directly with her, was satisfying for Faith: *"She will approach me when she is in some dilemma about career choices which is really nice".* While Faith derived satisfaction from having a role to play in her sponsee's career decisions and choices, Kylie, similarly, derived satisfaction from being her sponsee's referee. The instant positive and instrumental outcome of her sponsoring effort was key to her sense of satisfaction: "*"She asked me to act as a referee which I did and after a 30-minute conversation with the firm who was looking to employ her, they rang her and offered her the position".* The sponsor's own credibility had been affirmed and that appeared to have been a meaningful reward for her efforts.

The notion of having the ability, or personal and professional influence, to help someone was also satisfying for a sponsor, Sophie confided:

> "*It gave me a strong sense of the ways in which I could take play an active role in shaping other people's experiences and that I could be of assistance. It kind of conferred a sense of my own leadership in paving the way and changing things and mitigating things or making things better for people. It was the ability to reconfigure".*

Sophie's statement indicates that sponsorship may also be perceived as a component of leadership behaviour, where leadership is viewed as the ability to shape sponsees' lives. However, it is perhaps only satisfying when a sponsee's life has been shaped in a manner desired by the sponsor. Sponsorship then may be driven by the sponsor, and in fact sponsors may seek sponsees who are perceived as being open to such moulding of career direction. This may lead to sponsoring only being available to some 'more compliant' individuals.

Sponsor expectations

Gratitude could be directly expressed or indirectly implied by sponsees, Sponsors might interpret either approach as signalling their sponsee's thanksfor their sponsorship. But a sponsor might have expectations of more tangible benefits from their sponsee, whether or not they had ever been discussed. Paula was mindful of this expectation when she invited her sponsee to join her company:

> *"If I was honest with myself, yes it would have been a disappointment had they said no. An expectation? Yes, because I had brought them along to where they were. Of course, they can look after themselves, they can make the decision to go anywhere, but I was being a little selfish. I wanted them to come work for me because I had invested time".*

Thus, even though sponsoring may not appear to be instrumental, sponsors may in fact expect their sponsees to show 'return their investment' or to 'return the favour', whether or not the sponsee is aware of this. These hidden expectations could have a negative impact should the sponsee not benefit from the sponsor's requests. In my findings, the expectation of gratitude was sometimes concealed or only indirectly addressed and revealed when sponsors spoke about how they expected their sponsees to value their help. For example, Erica stated that seeing her sponsees appreciate her help pleased her, and she also expressed how she actually expected her sponsee to value her help:

> "*If they appreciate it then I guess it just makes me happy, because not only do I know that I am helping them but also that they value the help and that makes me happy, you know. I am not looking to see how they value me. It should be clear that someone is valuing it or not. I would not have taken it for granted, so if they are taking it for granted it is not a good attitude".*

Her statement suggests that had she viewed her help as not being valued, she would perhaps not help at all. There is also an expectation that sponsee's demonstrate their appreciation. Thus, the overt or hidden expectations of a sponsor could result in some degree of instrumentality and reciprocity within sponsoring relationships.

Although it appeared to sponsees that sponsors acted out of benevolence, some sponsors were also selective in choosing whom to sponsor, seeking to mitigate risks to themselves from someone who may not meet their expectations and/or effect their reputation adversely. Linda expected sponsees to "*be competent and they need to be mentally sound individuals. If they are feeling confident in what they wanna achieve, then that makes me happy",* Melissa argued *"What I need is a confidence in the*

individual's ability", while Faith's stance was that *"I certainly encourage people when they deserve it. I wouldn't be merely helping people though, to be honest, because I probably need to put my efforts where I feel it is really warranted. I have enough on my plate".* Arguably, this is a reasonable expectation as the advocacy role of a sponsor means that her own reputation is at stake. When the relationship 'worked', a sponsor's reputation would be strengthened through a high-achieving sponsee. Sponsors spoke of their sponsees deserving the help provided, which suggested an expectation of outcomes from that help, based on their assessment of the sponsee's potential.

Given that sponsoring can mean different things and that different kinds of help is provided to individuals, findings from this study suggest that sponsoring may not be available to everybody, despite there being sponsors willing to provide sponsorship and potential sponsees wishing for that support. A person would be likely to receive sponsorship if they were considered to have the necessary skills, were confident and seen by prospective sponsors as deserving of help.

Studies have shown that women may not necessarily speak up about their successes and experiences or make efforts to get noticed at work (e.g. Bowley, 2017; Haynes & Heilman, 2013). My findings reveal that this is a problematic issue with respect to formal sponsoring. Not only does this constrain women's opportunities to progress at work, but, importantly, it appears that this attitude might, as a consequence of sponsor expectations, serve to restrict the very availability of sponsorship for women. Further, that while there is also often a gendered expectation for women to be kind, understanding and 'giving' in workplaces (e.g. Eagly & Carli, 2007; Ibarra et al., 2013; Heilman, 2012; Oliver, Kraus, Busenbark, Kalm, 2018; Wood & Eagly, 2010), women

might be moved to provide sponsorship only following an evaluation and assessment of the recipient's potential and not entirely due to generosity. Hence early judgements are made about the potential of who might benefit from, and who will actually receive, sponsorship, excluding some women.

Pride

When sponsees met or exceeded sponsors' expectations, sponsors reported feeling proud of those achievements and considered themselves as having contributed to this success. For example, Faith stated*" I think in her case I am just so proud of her. Yeah, I was supportive, but in her case I feel I was instrumental in her progression",* Kylie also expressed pride in her sponsee, and in discussing the significance of the sponsee's achievements identified that *"because I always felt you gotta be an amazing teacher, so that has continued for her and some of the strides that she has made within her community and the things that she's done are really exciting".* Here too there is a temporal dimension, with sponsors observing and noting achievements and progress over time

Some sponsees were also concerned to make their sponsor proud and had ideas about what sponsors obtained from the sponsoring relationship, as illustrated by Jemma recognising (or at least surmising) that her sponsor gained from *"growing a young teacher to be a responsible functioning teacher that she can be proud of and move on the career ladder to be a senior leader. I think that's what she gets out of it"*.

Melissa also discussed her efforts to make her sponsor's contribution towards her success explicit, possibly seeking to enhance the sponsor's own reputation simultaneously:

> "*I would hope that what he got most out of it was pride and I grew as a result of his help. A lot of what I have done now is a result of his influence and I am not quiet about his contribution to my career, so hopefully he felt proud".*

Obligations and responsibilities

At times, sponsees experienced some pressure through a sense of obligation, accountability and responsibility to meet their sponsor's expectations, given they considered sponsors had shown trust in their abilities. Valerie, for example, said of the relationship: *"It is reciprocal as well, because they can't be just relying on belief and trust because then you have to deliver the goods".* Nel reported feeling a sense of responsibility to her sponsor:

> *"I kind of feel obligated that if they have given me an opportunity and they have put their trust in me to give me a critical project or a job, I need to make them proud. I make it a point to deliver in a way that makes them feel that they made a right choice by choosing me for their project. So that's my way of returning what they did for me. For every opportunity that they presented, I have made sure that I have leveraged it enough so that they realise they have made a right investment".*

Valerie and Nel's statements indicate that sponsees may actively work towards meeting the perceived expectations of their sponsors even when they are not explicitly stated and discussed between sponsors and sponsees. This dynamic also occasionally resulted in a sponsee continuing to seek to meet the sponsor's expectations.

Paula, for example, identified that securing her sponsor's approval mattered when accepting a job offer, suggesting a sense of loyalty, anxiety about obtaining such approval and possibly psychological dependence, reflected in the need for approval (e.g. Bornstein, 2009; Bornstein & Hopwood, 2017):

> "*He was so pleased, he said you should have done it last year. It was the first thing he said, I remember. He gave me a big hug and he said you are doing absolutely the right thing. I needed his approval. It absolutely mattered. Look, it brings tears to my eyes when I think about it".*

If sponsors expect to be able to grant such approval, sponsoring relationships may not be as beneficial for women, especially given that women often strive to seek approval in workplaces (Kanter, 1977; Sandberg, 2013).

Comment on the qualities of receiving in return

To sum up, the returns to a sponsor are varied and benefits are not always immediate. Findings reveal that while sponsoring was considered generous on the one hand, there was also a sense of underlying expectations of loyalty, gratitude and accountability from a sponsee on the other hand. Among those benefits sponsees might realise at a later date, is the recognition that they might have been able to support the sponsor's work and add to their reputation. Additionally, benefits are not always tangible, including, for example, feelings of satisfaction. Further, for the sponsor, these benefits could be at an individual (personal) level and/or an organisational (professional) level. In some cases sponsors were aware of what they had received in return, and the expectation of 'something' in return was made clear. However, sometimes the reciprocal benefits of sponsoring were hidden, and sponsors had not articulated them even though their interview statements were indicative of

expectations from sponsees, such as their help being 'valued'. Given the intangible, unspoken nature of some expectations it is not surprising that communication of the reciprocal benefits that research participants' perceived were not always explicitly stated but, rather, were inferred from their statements. Interestingly, some sponsees indicated they thought sponsors may have felt gratitude, satisfaction and more tangibly in some cases, received support with work, a retrospective insight that seemed to in turn reinforce their own sense of satisfaction.

5.3 Receiving

A counterpoint to the theme of giving, was that of receiving, although the two did not necessarily indicate reciprocity *per se.* It is notable that the theme of receiving was less prominent in the interview data than that of giving. Perhaps this is to be expected as, unlike the giving theme, it emerged spontaneously, rather than in response to any specific questions. Sponsees typically reported a sense of gratitude for sponsors' help, which was considered a generous act, and likely contributed to the development of deep emotional attachment or bond with their sponsor (Ainsworth, 1991; Bowlby, 1977). Even if they no longer worked with their sponsor or stayed in touch, for the sponsee this perceived bond continued over time. The sense of attachment and the perceived enduring nature of that attachment were not as dominant in the sponsor accounts, perhaps because sponsors did not necessarily know whether a sponsee was grateful unless told about it. Jemma recounted an experience she had as a sponsor: *"I said I treat everyone like that and she* [sponsee] *said no, not everyone is like you. So you don't realise what you give to people until you hear it back. You are who you are and it's not until you interact with someone and you get feedback that you know".* Also, the 'receiving' theme was particularly noticeable in accounts from ethnic

minority sponsees, where it was linked to workplace discrimination, employment opportunities, and migrant status, themes specifically examined further in Chapter Seven.

Gratitude

Gratitude, for sponsees, was either expressed overtly or was suggested more indirectly in the awareness of help received and appreciation some sponsees reported. As commonly understood, gratitude is derived from the Latin words *gratia* and *gratus*, which mean 'favour' and 'pleasing' respectively and the words that are derived from these terms represents the notion of thankfulness for favours received (Emmons & McCullough, 2004). Gratitude has been defined in several ways across various disciplines such as philosophy, psychology and theology (Bono, Emmons & McCullough, 2004; Gulliford, Morgan & Kristjannson, 2013). In my discussion, I refer to the psychological understanding of gratitude, which is partly reflected in its common understanding – as an emotional response reflecting thankfulness and appreciation for receiving favours and for all the positive material and non-material things in one's life (e.g. Bonnie & Waal, 2004; Clore, Ortony & Foss, 1987; Emmons & McCullough, 2003, 2004; Harned, 1997; Lazarus & Lazarus, 1994; McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002; McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons & Larson, 2003; McCullough, Tsang & Emmons, 2004). Gratitude may result from the generous giving actions of someone due to their kindness, and not necessarily because the recipient deserved or earned it or was seeking anything in the first place (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Emmons & McCullough, 2004; Fitzgerald, 1998). This means that although a person being thankful for kindness shown may be indicative of gratitude, thanking someone may not necessarily mean there are feelings of gratitude involved.

Teresa was grateful to her sponsor for the senior leadership job she currently had: *"I was getting bored in my career as a teacher and I needed something else. I said "oh my God it is real it could be happening" and so I was really grateful about my job and I love it now".*

Teresa's statement suggests that the help from the sponsor was somewhat unexpected, although Teresa was aware that something needed to change in her career. Its unexpectedness may also have influenced why Teresa was deeply appreciative of that help. Her statement also indicates that the gratitude may have actually increased over time since she now appreciated her current job. This suggests that the appreciation of help received from a sponsor may or may not occur immediately, and the value of sponsorship may not be determined straightaway, instead happening over the course of a sponsee's career. This temporal element of gratitude, as well as the unexpected help received, was also implied in Melissa's statement:

> *"He was pretty much the only partner in that firm who was willing to lend me some clients. So from my perception he took a risk on my being successful and as a result I can say now I am grateful".*

Melissa's statement also indicates the absence of people who supported her, and that the meaningfulness of sponsorship was perhaps linked to the notion of being supported by the one person who stood out. Further, her statement reflects the broader notion of how sponsoring a woman may be considered as risky (Foust-Cummings et al., 2011). This may have influenced why Melissa considered herself as a 'risk', even though her sponsor may have been acting out of recognition of her skills

and talent, exemplifying the gendered contexts in which sponsoring occurs within organisations where sponsoring women is viewed as a high risk non-routine activity.

While sponsees explicitly stated that they were grateful to their sponsor, not all sponsors reported that their sponsees had expressed gratitude for their help. Sponsors in most part described instances of being thanked and inferred that sponsees were thus grateful. Some sponsors indicated that their sponsees had directly thanked them as was the case with Faith: *"She has directly thanked me for that on many occasions*". Similarly, Jemma surmised that sponsees were generally grateful for the help sponsors provided in the workplace: *"The gratitude* [for help] *and identifying what you are doing right. That's what they remember of it".*

For sponsees, the expression of appreciation was also not always limited to a sponsor's help within the workplace. Leah acknowledged her sponsee's gratitude for the help Leah had provided in coping with a difficult personal situation: "*This young girl who was struggling with her marriage and just really needed some support and I talked to her about it. She has come out on the other side really thankful"*. Leah's statement suggests that once a sponsoring relationship was established, sponsorship occurred beyond the workplace and included sponsees's personal lives, and this aspect contributed to the meaning attributed to the relationship.

However, being thanked for favours received may not necessarily indicate gratitude or the presence of any emotional bonding. Further, people may feel gratitude without showing it as well as show gratitude without feeling it (Emmons & McCullough, 2004) Therefore, there may be other grateful sponsees who sponsors are not aware of. Similarly the lack of an outward expression of appreciation may not indicate an absence of gratitude. In terms of the former, Erica told of how she was thanked through

a mobile phone text message: *"He was really grateful for that help and when he left he sent me a text saying - you helped so much thank you so much"*. Here the sponsor clearly does equate the act of thanks as an indication of her sponsee's gratitude, although being thankful is also not necessarily the same as being grateful (Emmons & McCollough, 2004). Gratitude has been shown to positively influence relationship building (e.g. Bartlett, Condon, Cruz, Boumann & Desteno, 2012; McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001). It can be inferred that gratitude might have contributed towards the enduring relationships that sponsees described with their sponsors, since gratitude was explicitly identified and articulated by sponsees. However, this is not clearly evident in the sponsor accounts. That said, while identifying gratitude and its influence upon the sponsoring relationship is complex, my research findings are indicative of gratitude as an element of the sponsor-sponsee dynamic and gratitude should not be overlooked as a possible influence on the formation of meaning in the sponsoring relationship.

5.4 Passing on and paying it forward

The idea of 'passing on' knowledge and expertise highlighted another possible motivation encouraging some sponsors to provide sponsorship to others. Sponsees' suggested that they were motivated to help others in similar ways, possibly as a gesture of gratitude and/or way of repaying the help they had themselves received. Indeed, experiencing benevolence and kindness has been shown to motivate an individual to in turn be kind towards others as a consequence of a sense of gratefulness for the kindness received (e.g. McCollough, Kimeldorf & Cohen, 2008). The experience of receiving help from her benevolent sponsors spurred Paula to think about continuing to take that benevolence forward: *"That is probably a theme that*

runs through my career, those acts of benevolence. That benevolence has flowed through".

Sophie explained why she was deliberate in her sponsoring efforts, her statement indicates the influence of help received in the past upon her motivation to provide help to others: "*I could guide and I could mentor, so that not only was it possible for me to feel like I had support but I could give support".* In particular, the use of the term 'mentor', within the context of describing her sponsoring relationships raises some issues for this study. It could suggest conceptual merging of the ideas of sponsoring and mentoring, perhaps implying that mentoring is considered a component of 'helping' or that sponsoring could also include being a mentor.

A sponsor could also have an expectation that their sponsees would carry forward the kind of support they receive. Erica, for example, stated "*I also think that hopefully in the future they will do it to somebody else. They will say well, somebody helped me and that was really good and they help other women and pull them up".* Such an expectation, even if not explicit, might lead to behaviour that implies a future 'duty' or expectation of the sponsee – to others rather than directly to the sponsor. The expectation of the sponsees also exemplifies the widely held belief that women should be expected to support other women as a career development strategy in workplaces (e.g. Ely et al., 2011; Ibarra et al., 2010; O'Neill, Hopkins & Sullivan, 2011). Indeed, some women might provide sponsorship expecting and hoping that female sponsees will themselves sponsor other women in future.

While I was aware of this notion of 'paying it forward' as motivation for mentorship (e.g. Bartlett, 2013; Clutterbuck, 2005; Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Walker & Yip, 2018), it was not something I necessarily expected to find with respect to sponsoring. Although

this featured as a theme, data in support of it was not prominent, nor was it evident across the majority of interviews. However, the fact that it emerged spontaneously in various guises in nine of the sixteen interviews means it is worthy of attention. The theme reinforces that the notion of sponsorship as passing on the help that was given to a person at some point in their own career makes the practice of sponsorship meaningful. Overall, the idea of passing on suggests that sponsorship activities will 'feed on' past activities and that formal sponsorship programmes are more likely to flourish if this added informal expectation is present.

5.5 A gift-giving perspective

Having presented the findings which highlight the giving and receiving in sponsoring relationships, in this section I discuss Mauss (1954) and Hyde's (1983, 2007) gift-giving theories, and the gift-giving framework of sponsoring that I, in turn, developed. In the context of this study, I use the term 'gift' to mean something that is given freely and spontaneously by a sponsor to a sponsee. This then establishes the basis for the discussion on how sponsors' and sponsees' accounts highlight gift-giving as a key feature of sponsoring, whilst also revealing diversity within such gift-giving. As part of this, I consider claims made about underlying motivations and expectations behind sponsoring.

A gift, in this case sponsorship, is something, whether tangible or intangible, that individuals give willingly to others for free, and gift-giving has gained scholarly interest for a number of decades (e.g. Arrow, 1972; Beatty, Kahle & Homer, 1991; Belk, 1996, 2010; Chan & Mogilner, 2017; Mauss, 1954; Noonan, 1984; Sargeant & Woodliffe, 2007; Sherry, 1983). Gift exchanges have been recognised to have social, cultural and economic dimensions, and gift-giving has been considered significant for social

relationships and the expressions of feelings in society (e.g. Bell, 1991; Camerer, 1988, Joy 2001; Komter, 2005). Thus gift-giving is a complex practice with the need for a nuanced understanding of its social, cultural and psychological influence. Research on gift-giving behaviour is cross-disciplinary, with insights provided through anthropology, sociology and psychology over several decades (Chan & Mogilner, 2017; Komter, 1996; Mayet & Pine, 2010; Otnes & Beltramini, 1996).

Consistent with research showing that gift-giving may not always be underpinned by either pure altruism or pure self-interest, often comprising of a blend of both (Komter, 1996), not all giving and receiving in this study was found to be without any expectations in return, and/or without receipt of anything in return. The previous discussion demonstrates that sometimes sponsors received tangible or intangible returns, and occasionally there were either overt or hidden expectations in return by sponsors from their sponsees. Thus, some sponsors revealed expectations such as gratitude in return for sponsoring, contrary to sponsees' perception of purely altruistic giving by the sponsor. I briefly discuss Mauss (1954) and Hyde's (1983, 2007) theories of gift exchanges below, followed by a discussion of the sponsoring framework.

Mauss's (1954) gift exchange economy

Mauss's (1954) concept of the gift exchange economy is based on pre-modern societies who engaged in systems of gift exchange in the absence of money or currency. Here, gift exchanges were the primary means of distributing goods and services, and resulted in establishing social bonds among those engaging in the exchange. Giving, receiving and repaying were the major features of these exchanges, which were underpinned by moral contracts that outlined the processes constituting these exchanges (Mauss 1954, 1970; Roberts, 1990; Sahlins, 1972). This was in

contrast to the market exchange economy that is dominant in modern western societies, typified by commodity exchanges and profit maximisation.

Of relevance here, Mauss's (1954) notion of gift exchanges highlights that various other factors impact the action of seemingly free gift-giving, such as indebtedness and obligations, and offered a means to understand some of the contrasting findings about the perceived motivation to sponsor in my study. Specific concepts such as *prestations* — seemingly generous and spontaneous on the surface, but were made out of obligation and self-interest; and *potlatch* — gift-giving driven by a competition to give according to status, enabled me to comprehend differences arising within sponsoring relationships viewed from a gift exchange perspective. For example, prior sponsoring research has demonstrated sponsor expectations are often hidden (Bhide, 2014; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). The concept of *prestations* can help explain why sponsees can inadvertently be tied into feeling obligated to their sponsor and how a sponsor's self-interest, such as gaining loyal followers (Hewlett et al., 2010), can influence sponsorship. Similarly, having their own sponsees succeed by advocating for their raise and promotion, which are conventional, albeit gendered, criteria for career success, could be considered akin to *potlatch* - an assertion of the sponsor's status and influence, given that moving to senior leadership is viewed as a visible and objective criteria for career success (Judge et al., 1995).

Additionally, Mauss's (1954, 1970) work was debated by scholars in other disciplines (e.g. Derrida, 1994, 1997; Godelier, 1999; Strathern, 1988; Weiner, 1992) who raised several issues, which informed the development of the sponsoring framework I propose in the ensuing sections, such as: motivations behind gift exchanges other than generosity or altruism (Komter, 1996; Rose, 1992); the simultaneous presence

of both types of exchanges without mutual exclusivity (Bloch & Parry, 1989); the presence of a continuum of exchanges (Carrier, 1991; Thomas, 1991); and, the impossibility of the existence of a pure gift (Derrida, 1994, 1997).

Hyde's (1983) notion of gift exchange

Hyde's (1983, 2007) gift exchange framework, inspired by Mauss (1954), focussed on intangible elements, such as feelings and emotions, and how they motivate, move and inspire individuals and drive their gift-giving behaviour (Hyde (1983, 2007). Hyde's (1983, 2007) work focussed on art and artists, however, the understanding of his framework can be extrapolated to the thought process behind other forms of gift-giving and, hence, has relevance to understanding sponsorship. For example, Hyde's (1983, 2007) gift exchange framework comprises a three step gift-giving process, which informed the sponsoring relationship framework that I propose in the latter sections of this chapter, the gift being sponsoring in the case of this study. Similarly, gift exchanges in Hyde's (1983, 2007) framework resulted in the formation of psychological bonds among people, which appeared similar to the bonds which sponsees perceived with their sponsors in this study (Hyde, 1983, 2007).

Hyde's (1983) gift giving model draws attention to the notion that people make emotionally-grounded decisions, which can be applied to an understanding of how individuals behave in relationships where giving and receiving is involved. For example, the benevolent motivation behind sponsoring and helping a sponsee to make their situation better can be likened to gift-giving as proposed in Hyde's (1983, 2007) concept of gift exchanges.

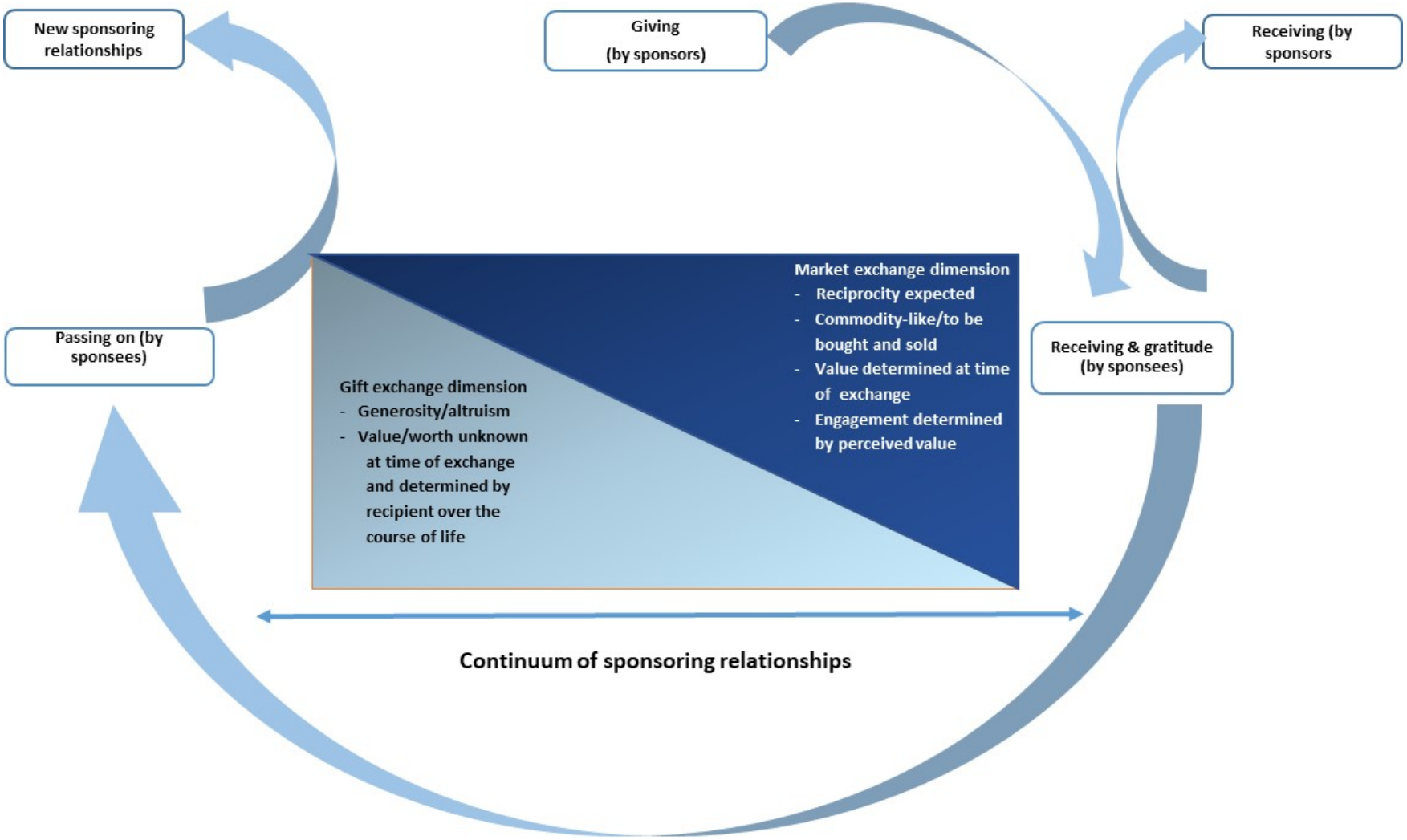
The term 'gift' has been used in the context of mentoring in the field of education without any specific link to a gift-giving framework (e.g. Kamvounias, McGrath-Champ

& Yip, 2008; Schwartz, 2013). Hyde's (1983, 2007) framework was used by Gerhke (1988) to theorise mentoring relationships as gift-giving relationships, where the mentor is able to motivate the mentee to achieve their full potential from an altruistic position, and to call for research on mentoring from this perspective. However, thus far the relevance of Mauss (1954) and Hyde's (1983, 2007) work for understanding sponsoring has not been explored.

The gift-giving framework of sponsoring

Having examined both Mauss (1954) and Hyde's (1983) theories of gift exchanges, I was able to identify various elements that relate to my findings. More particularly, I used my understanding of these elements as well as the idea of market exchanges to develop a preliminary sponsoring framework (Figure 5.1) that incorporated ideas such as the perception of generous giving, sponsees's perception of sponsor's expectation of reciprocity and, confirming such perceptions, some sponsors' expectation of reciprocity from sponsees. This framework proposes that sponsoring relationships are located on a continuum of exchange relationships, ranging from pure gift exchanges to pure market exchanges, and is explicated further below.

Figure 5.1: Gift-Giving Framework of Sponsoring Relationships



Based on my findings and Mauss (1954) and Hyde's (1983) conceptualisation of gift exchanges, there are four processes in sponsoring relationships from a gift exchange perspective. These comprise in the first instance *giving*, where the gift is given by a sponsor. Next is *receiving*, where the sponsee receives this gift and feelings of gratitude are evoked within them. These are likely sequential, however the remaining two processes could arise at any point following the giving and receiving processes. These involve *passing on* the gift, when sponsees pass on the gift of sponsoring to another person through themselves becoming a sponsor and *giving in return* by the sponsee to the sponsor. This latter process is activated by notions of reciprocity and obligation, akin to those proposed in Mauss's (1954) conception of gift exchange, and results in tangible and intangible benefits for sponsors. This model emerged from analysis of participant accounts and the various dimensions are illustrated in the preceding commentary and analysis.

The gift-giving framework of sponsoring provides a conceptual lens through which we can understand why someone may be motivated to sponsor others and why the sponsee may then themselves become a sponsor, thereby passing the gift along and keeping it in circulation. In an ideal gift exchange relationship, the gift – in this case the sponsor's help to the sponsee – is sustained and passed on from person to person, with the potential for sponsoring to expand exponentially through network effects. However, in reality sponsoring relationships are complex. Therefore, given the findings of my research and scholarship regarding gift exchanges and market exchanges, in my gift-giving model of sponsoring, I propose that sponsoring relationships have two components: a gift exchange component and a market exchange component. Sponsoring relationships display varying degrees of these two

components — gift exchange and market exchange, spanning across a continuum, with pure gift exchanges and pure market exchanges at either end.

This continuum provides a useful means of envisaging (or imagining) some of the differing characteristics and complexities of sponsoring relationships, where giving, receiving passing on and giving in return, can be conceptually located at various points. The gift exchange component of the sponsoring relationship is characterised by generosity and altruism and the worth of this gift has enduring value to recipients. The market exchange component is characterised by an instrumental commodity-like approach akin to buying and selling. Here, the value of what is given and received is determined at the time of exchange and engagement in the relationship is determined by the perceived value of the commodity being exchanged. This market exchange component may be more prevalent in organisational programmes where specific outcomes from sponsoring are sought.

Given the complexity of determining the underpinning dynamics of gift-giving, the two extreme positions of a pure gift exchange or market exchange relationship are perhaps unrealistic (Thomas, 1991). Further, both gift exchanges and transactional market exchanges can occur simultaneously and the presence of one does not preclude the other (Bloch & Parry, 1989; Carrier, 1995; Thomas, 1991). Correspondingly, the characteristics of a sponsoring relationship are influenced by the degree to which the gift exchange and market exchange components operate. Individuals engage in sponsoring relationships that may involve giving or receiving or both, and may or may not involve passing the gift on and giving in return.

While the notion of help, value, worth and other such things related to perceptions and feelings are subjective and unique to each individual, I was guided in my analysis by my epistemological position and the accompanying belief that the participants attributed meanings to their experiences, and that these meanings were constructed through interaction with others (Creswell, 2014). Thus the value of the help provided within sponsoring relationships was constructed by the participants, through interactions between sponsors and sponsees, and not in relation to any specified standard. These perceptions are evident in the features of giving and receiving that emerged from the findings of this research. At the same time, since I was informed by the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, I have interpreted those constructions and indicated what they may point towards (van Manen, 1990).

Current conceptualisations of sponsoring

When viewed through this framework, present conceptualisations of sponsoring come across as predominantly instrumental exchanges, wherein a sponsor advocates for the raise or promotion of an individual in return for loyalty or other benefits. Such comprehensions situate sponsoring relationships at the market exchange end of the continuum. This perspective emphasises the transactional and instrumental nature of the relationship, similar to a commodity, and does not account for non-instrumental dynamics in sponsoring relationships. Accordingly, the common practice of measuring career progress through promotions, raises or other objective criteria for career success is reflected in such interpretations, which in turn likely also influence how career development practices are evaluated (e.g. Greenhaus, 2003; Gutteridge, 1973;

Hall, 2002; Heslin, 2005; Judge et al., 1995; Ng et al., 2005; Poole, Langan-Fox & Omodei, 1993; Sullivan, 1999).

Such a limited view of sponsoring is problematic in more than one way. Firstly, since sponsoring is proposed as something that can be, and ought to be, obtained to advance to senior leadership (e.g. Hewlett, 2013), its value and associated expectations are preconceived at the time of the exchange, thereby missing other significant beneficial aspects of this relationship. Secondly, it fails to recognise that sponsoring can transcend a market exchange yet still have the potential to lead to beneficial outcomes. Thus, such 'other' types of relationships and their benefits risk being ignored or undervalued. Finally, when sponsoring is viewed as a commodity from a market exchange perspective and a value is placed on it beforehand, there is an expectation of something equivalent or more valuable in return from the other party. Thus, a sponsor may decide whether to engage in a sponsoring relationship based on the value of the commodity (sponsoring) being exchanged. Women have been known to have fewer sponsors than men because they are considered a risky proposition (Ehrich, 2008; Foust-Cummings et al., 2011; Paddison, 2013), a finding which indicates that a transactional conception of sponsoring may be commonplace.

5.6 Conclusion

Findings discussed in this chapter focus on the giving and receiving involved in sponsoring relationships. They suggest that in sponsoring 'giving' is associated with generosity and spontaneity. Attribution of such motivations contrasts with the notion of instrumentality whereby sponsoring is considered as merely a set of actions such as advocating for raises and promotions leading to a set of tangible outcomes. This

latter view dominates the current sponsoring narrative. Sponsor generosity arose for a number of reasons, including their disposition, values and beliefs. Data analysis revealed a sense that ‘receiving’ in sponsoring was accompanied by a perception of selfless motivation behind the giving, along with a sense of gratitude by sponsees. Sponsees thought of sponsoring as something that was given to them out of generosity and, ostensibly, was not accompanied by an expectation of reciprocity. Therefore, findings indicate that not all sponsorship is instrumental and that career benefits ensued for participants of this research from what was considered ‘generous giving’ within sponsoring relationships.

At times however, while sponsees attributed sponsorship to sponsor benevolence, this giving might have been due to the sponsor’s calculated assessment of the sponsee’s skills, potential and capability. Regardless, sponsorship was consistently seen to benefit sponsees’ career progress, while individual meaning varied. The recognition of benefit was sometimes delayed and unforeseen, when sponsees, with the benefit of hindsight and their own intervening organisational achievement, could better comprehend the contribution of their sponsor.

Similarly, findings showed that altruistic giving is not the sole feature of sponsoring relationships. There can also be reciprocal benefits to sponsors, as well as expectations from sponsees, even when these are not explicitly stated. Thus, there were unstated subtleties within relationships routinely characterised by participants as being grounded principally, if not exclusively, in generous giving and grateful receiving.

Examining the participant accounts of this study has enabled an understanding of the sponsoring relationship as a complex blend of altruistic and instrumental dynamics.

So, it is imperative to consider factors such as sponsor predisposition and values, issues of commitment to groups (such as women in general or a profession), and explicit feedback from sponsees to sponsors rather than just implied gratitude, for fulfilling sponsor-sponsee relationships.

In the next chapter (Chapter Six) I explore in further detail the type of interactions that constitute a sponsoring relationship in order to better understand what comprises giving and receiving in sponsoring.

Chapter Six: Characteristics of the Multifaceted Sponsoring Relationship

This chapter focusses on aspects of the sponsoring relationship other than giving and receiving – in particular, features I refer to as connectedness, caring, nurturing, friendship and outcome focussed interactions. Findings highlight the diverse interactions comprising sponsoring relationships, which emphasise its multi-faceted and complex nature. Associated with this complexity is the suggestion that sponsors and sponsees experienced the sponsoring relationship as a meaningful connection. However, there were gender differences in how sponsees and sponsors experienced their relationship, and in the expectations of male and female sponsors. A deeper examination of the findings also suggested possible underlying disempowering dynamics within sponsoring relationships, challenging the notion that sponsoring is unequivocally empowering.

6.1 Connectedness

The first characteristic of sponsoring relationships addressed in this chapter is that of connectedness between sponsors and sponsees. It was a key finding and expressed by all, but two, participants. The theme of connectedness was variously communicated as “bond”, “partnership” and even the metaphor of “marriage”.

When asked about their sponsoring relationships, participants generally recounted how they had connected with their sponsors or sponsees at a deep level. These connections were sometimes discussed as part of a larger reflection upon the

relationship, and in some cases to explain how the relationship developed and came about, rather than in answer to a particular question. The sense of a deep connection was significant and quite central to the sponsoring relationship. However, the reasons behind considering these relationships as deep connections were varied. Thus, the notion of connectedness in the sponsoring relationship surfaced in diverse ways.

When a person has a close relationship with someone, they sometimes mimic or adopt their behaviours (Bandura, 1977), symbolic of a type of referent power. Accordingly, a sense of connectedness in the relationship was evidenced when sponsees described how they had taken on their sponsor's behaviour, which they were at the time possibly unaware of, as exemplified by Teresa: *"I did not realise how much of her I had taken on board subconsciously until it was me. It's like - oh that's why Jemma did that. And I have more of a depth of understanding now".*

Another way in which participants implied that sponsoring was a deep relationship was by contrasting it with networking which was considered an instrumental exchange that was comparatively superficial and inauthentic. The implication was that networking did not create meaningful connections while sponsoring involved connectedness, Linda observed:

> *"I think here* [in New Zealand] *sponsors are more like your contacts, but for me sponsoring suggests that you have a deeper relationship with the person, you have a better understanding of who they are, whereas networking is purely – do you know this person and do they seem like a good person? Like name throwing and I think that's often how it is used".*

Declaring deep affection for a sponsor also suggested connectedness in the relationship. Paula expressed warm regard for her sponsor:

> *"You have these managers that just make you want to come to work and he was one of those and he was so positive. You could walk into his office at any stage. He had one of those open door policies, he would put anything he was working on down and he would give you his attention. You know I really loved that about him".*

The depth of emotion was apparent in the tears that accompanied her statement. Bodily reactions such as tears are a physiological response to both happy and sad emotions, and an indication of recreating the depth of feeling when talking about someone (e.g. Drenger, Mikulincer & Berant, 2017; Kottler & Montgomery, 2012; Vingerhoets & Bylsma, 2016; Vingerhoets, Cornelius, Van Heck & Becht, 2000).

Paula's statement indicates that she valued being able to interact with her sponsor every day and this frequent communication contributed towards the connectedness with her sponsor. The notion of affection could be a result of deep appreciation of the attention from her sponsor, which made the relationship meaningful for Paula, perhaps a result of not experiencing this often enough in her workplace. This is, in turn, indicative of broader organisational contexts where women sometimes feel 'invisible' (McKinsey & Company, 2018).

Connectedness was also evident when sponsorship was viewed as a bond between a sponsor and sponse, and was sometimes facilitated through shared ideologies. Kylie's statement suggested that the sense of bonding may be driven by a sponsor, in this case Kylie, emphasising the implicit power imbalance in the sponsoring relationship. Further, such bonds may discontinue if the ideologies of a sponsee no longer match those of the sponsor:

> *"I think a lot of those connections with philosophy and ideas and passion about what we're doing, that binds us together. A common goal, a common way of doing things perhaps or seeing how teaching can be. In other times I've been told that they respect the way I teach and that they would like to learn more from that".*

The connectedness in a sponsoring relationship was also evident when participants compared sponsoring to other familial relationships, which is often the case when human beings try to make sense of workplace relationships (Dattner, 2011). For example, Geoff likened the relationship that he had with his sponsee Melissa, who was a partner in his accounting firm and a few years younger than him, to a marriage: *"You know partnership it's a bit like being married really".*

However, while Geoff's comparison of sponsoring to a marriage indicated the closeness in the relationship, other women participants did not use terms such as marriage or partnership. This may be because gendered organisational and social beliefs make it acceptable for men to utilise terminology related to intimate relationships in the context of workplaces, while women do not use such language to describe their own workplace relationships as they are often concerned about cross-

gender workplace relationships being misunderstood (e.g. Bhide, 2014; Elsesser &Peplau, 2006; Feist-Price, 1994; Hurley, 1996; Mehta & Smith, 2018; O'Neill & Blacke- Beard, 2002).

Associating a sponsoring relationship with a close relationship like marriage, where both parties have responsibilities, may also involve expectations such as loyalty from the other party. Loyalty can sometimes be restrictive within sponsoring relationships as observed in my prior research because it can prevent the sponsee from engaging in other sponsoring relationships or concluding an existing one (Bhide, 2014). Further, marriage symbolises society's attitude towards gender and women, and one view is that traditionally marriage is between a man and woman, with women being involved to a greater degree than men in housework and childcare (e.g. Dent, 1999; Desai, Chugh & Brief, 2014; Kay, 2003; Krause, 2000). Thus, the use of terms such as marriage and motherly, a term used by female sponsees and explicated further in the ensuing section, not only highlights gender differences in workplaces but also contributes towards the gendered contexts (Rosenbury, 2013). From that point of view, a marriage analogy is potentially problematic.

6.2 Caring and nurturing

The second key characteristic of the sponsoring relationship was that it was, in most cases, reported to involve caring and nurturing. The term 'caring', in this context, implies kindness, compassion and concern, and the term 'nurturing' refers to a focus on encouraging the development of another individual. Some participants used the terms nurturing and caring, while other participants talked about concern, development, encouragement and support which drew attention to the caring and

nurturing involved in the relationship. However, this was accounted for in several different ways, and the meaning attributed to care was different across the relationships.

Context

Care was not always limited to the workplace. It often crossed organisational boundaries and was perceived both in the work and non-work contexts. For example, simply 'being there', or being emotionally available, for support and advice, both at and outside work was considered as providing care by Leah whose sponsor brought soup for her when she was sick, a sign of care and hospitality which held significant meaning for her. The sense of support and dependability thus contributed towards the notion of being cared: *"Every odd thing like you know knew she is just an email away. She has also been that person who when I was sick brought soup home".*

Similarly, Teresa's statement about her sponsor alluded to support, development and dependability in diverse contexts:

> *"She is kind of like the person who sits on my shoulder and she is always available for me, when we have been on professional development courses, when we drive past her place. So you know it is definitely a connection and even though I don't specifically ask her questions all the time just the things that she tells me inspires me and knowing that she supports me. I know she is there for me."*

Gender differences in perceptions of care

Findings revealed gender differences in what was perceived as caring behaviour based on whether care was provided by a man or woman, and directed towards a man or woman. Caring was perceived as motherly when it came from a woman. This view reflected the gendered expectation that women provide care and nurturing (e.g. Catalyst, 2007; Clerkin, Crumbacher, Fernando, & Gentry, 2015; Ellemers, Rink, Derks & Ryan, 2012; Ely et al., 2011; Fletcher, 2012; Guilllen, Mayo & Karelaia, 2018; Rhee & Sigler, 2015; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Nevertheless, the motherly feelings of care from a female sponsor may have supported the establishment of a social bond with the sponsee because their sponsor reminded them of their own mother as Paula expressed:

> *"She was like the ones who see right through you, like steel and can tell you exactly what it is that you need to be doing. So she is a very direct person however the amount of times I have cried with her, you know the amount of times that I haven't known what to do and she has just been the opposite of that. She reverts very easily to her caring role, her encompassing role which reminds me so much of mum*".

Paula's statement indicates that she most likely had a good relationship with her mother. If an individual's relationship with their mother was not positive, they may perhaps not describe their female sponsors as 'motherly'

The experience of nurturing also gave the sponsoring relationship involving women a parent-child like dynamic. Jemma described her relationship with her sponsee as "*kind of nurturing",* while Faith's statement indicated both closeness and a parent-child

dynamic to the relationship with her sponsee, despite also seeking to disavow the gendered connotations of such terms: *"She was one of my babies whom I have nurtured and she blossomed. I think of it as nurturing and I don't mean to stray into that sort of the gender associated language. So a special place in my heart so to speak".*

Only one of the ten sponsees who had a male sponsor (Linda) considered her sponsor as a male parental figure: *"He was again a grandfather figure like my first professor back at undergrad, so I felt comfortable going to him and if I felt out of my depth or I needed some advice I could go to him*". This view could be a reflection of any of the ideas she may have of grandfathers, such as potentially older people with patience, encouragement, being non-judgemental, willing to listen, empathetic and generally affectionate amongst other things. Perhaps, there was a sense of comfort which made the 'grandfatherly' sponsor approachable and thus supported the establishment of a social bond. However, Linda also used the term 'grandfatherly' for her other male sponsor indicating that she may also have considered these relationships 'safe to pursue' and less likely to be misconstrued, a notion reported by women in past research (Dijksterhuis & van Knippenberg, 1998; Elsesser & Peplau, 2006; Kawakami, Young & Dovidio, 2002).

Indeed, while the notion of care and nurturing was related to being motherly in the case of female sponsors it is notable that it was not described, by most participants, as parental when it involved male sponsors. A male sponsor was considered 'caring' for other reasons. For example, when they focussed on an individual's personal development in the midst of organisational responsibilities, with no identified reciprocal organisational benefits as Paula said: "*He fully supported me to carry on studying even*

though it was a disadvantage to him and his team, he allowed me to continue, which was costing his unit. He was one of the most caring people that I will ever have the pleasure of working with". Paula's statement suggests that support was perhaps not always available. When personal support was provided, despite what was a disadvantageous proposition for her manager, she felt cared for and this contributed towards making the sponsoring relationship meaningful, at least for her as a sponsee.

Supporting and facilitating an employee's career development is often considered expected human resource practice delegated to line managers and broader organisational benefits are expected from providing professional development for employees (e.g. Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Currie & Proctor, 2001; Guest & King, 2004; Krivkovich, Robinson, Starikova, Valentino, Yee, 2017; Maxwell & Watson 2006; Perry & Kulik, 2008; Renwick & McNeil, 2002; Shockley & Allen, 2007). It was noteworthy, therefore, that such support was perceived as 'care'. Research shows that men have more opportunities to discuss their work with senior leaders, be more visible and receive more feedback on their work, than women (McKinsey & Company, 2016). Perhaps, when women feel they have attention paid to them in workplaces, it is considered unusual and, therefore, even special. It is possible that, at times, organisational benefits and improved productivity might be the prime concerns underpinning the actions of sponsors, yet these actions can be framed by sponsees quite differently. Indeed, evidence indicates that when managers act out of routine managerial expectations, for example providing guidance and advice to their employees, it is sometimes perceived as caring behaviour (Gabriel, 2015).

Nonetheless, the actions of sponsors signalled that they took an interest in sponsees and their personal goals. There was a sense of being cared for, which constituted a meaningful connection for those receiving the care and influenced them positively. Past research indicated that the perception of being cared for by supervisors and organisational leaders results in organisational benefits such as increased employee engagement (e.g. Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey & Saks, 2015; Bakker, Demerouti & Euwema, 2005; Hansen, Byrle & Kiersch, 2014; Kroth & Keeler, 2009; Plakhotnik, Rocco, & Roberts, 2011; Rhoades, Eisenberg & Armeli, 2001; Saks, 2006). Finding it in this study signals the need for organisations to recognise the significance of this aspect of sponsoring. However, this could be problematic if female sponsors would also need to meet other gendered expectations, such as nurturing or being motherly, in order to be considered a caring sponsor. This issue is explored further in the next section.

Unconscious gender bias

The gender differences observed in the perception of caring and nurturing in the sponsoring relationships could be a result of the tendency to stereotype women as providers of care (Bear & Glick, 2016) and indicate an unconscious gender bias. Female sponsors were predominantly characterised as caring and motherly in their sponsorship, while male sponsors were considered to provide sponsoring in a multitude of ways. These perceptions also reflect sponsees' expectations from male and female sponsors, and raise some issues to consider. Firstly, women are expected to provide sponsoring in a certain way which is motherly and feminine, which means that a woman is expected to be caring, non-aggressive and accommodating (e.g. Ellemers, 2018; Heilman, 2001; Heilman & Eagly, 2008; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993;

Rudman & Glick, 2001). This could be problematic both for women who do not display caring and nurturing in a motherly way or men who are more motherly in their interactions with sponsees.

Disturbingly, research shows that women who consistently display transactional behaviour may in fact not be considered authentic and worthy of trust (Gipson et al., 2017; Liu, Kutcher & Grant, 2015; Stempel, Rigotti & Mohr, 2015). This may influence the characteristics that women are attributed as 'ideal' sponsors, and how women are viewed as sponsors more broadly. Secondly, if mostly older men are approached for sponsoring, it may be problematic for younger men when establishing sponsoring relationships with female sponsees because of the fear of the relationship being misconstrued as having an ulterior motive or hidden agenda. This potentially relieves them of any sponsoring responsibilities, preventing them from sponsoring opportunities or results in missed sponsoring opportunities for female sponsees. Either way, it would result in women potentially missing opportunities for developing positive career enhancing relationships.

Influence of attachment styles on sponsor and sponsee behaviour

At an individual level, attachment theory (Bowlby, 1977) enables an insight into sponsor and sponsee behaviour, and can assist in understanding the relationship dynamics revealed in the participants' accounts. Attachment determines the enduring feeling of connectedness between individuals in a relationship, and the theory proposes that infant-caregiver dynamics lead to the formation of attachment styles in individuals' minds, around evaluating future adult relationships (Bowlby, 1977; Gabriel, Carvallo, Dean, Tippin, & Renaud, 2005; Horowitz, Rosenberg & Bartholomew, 1993;

Hudson, Fraley, Chopik, & Heffernan, 2015; Lopez & Brennan, 2000; Rholes`, Simpson & Friedman, 2006; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2007). Attachment theory focusses on the bonds between people in relationships, and the lasting influence of those bonds (Bowlby, 1977). It has been extended in the context of leadership, workplace relationships, mentoring and workplace wellbeing (Ainsworth, 1978; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 2015; Frazier, Gooty, Little & Nelson, 2015; Geller & Bamberger, 2009; Hazan & Shaver, 1990, 1994; Holmes, 2014; Popper, Amit, Gal, Miskhkal-Sinai, & Lisak, 2004; Richards & Hackett, 2012; Yip, Ehrhardt & Black, 2018; Wu & Parker, 2017).

Of relevance to this study is that when people recall a supportive relationship it activates the representation of that attachment state in their mind (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Mikulincer, Gillath, & Shaver, 2002). Accordingly, when a person receives care, which they associate with their mother, it activates a representation of a parent-child relationship in their mind. In addition, when people have existing stereotypes in their minds, they are more likely to believe and retain information that is consistent with those stereotypes, dismissing any information to the contrary (Schneider, 2005). When they encounter people who depict those stereotypes, they selectively gather information which results in their original stereotypes becoming even stronger (Schneider, 2005). Therefore, having a woman manager would increase the likelihood of the sponsees selectively processing information about women managers (such as caring or motherly) which further strengthens their original stereotype. Similarly, when women prefer to pursue professional workplace relationships with older men, because they are considered safe and less likely to be misunderstood within the workplace, it could further strengthen the perception of their stereotype

about older men as ‘safe’ to engage in a sponsoring relationship with (Dijksterhuis & van Knippenberg, 1998; Elsesser & Peplau, 2006; Kawakami et al., 2002). This will then influence their choices about similar relationships in the future. Linda’s statements about two of her sponsors being grandfatherly may indicate the progressive strengthening of such a stereotype.

Based on attachment styles, a secure attachment style in an individual is related to the perception of a leader as benevolent (Frazier et al., 2015). In the hierarchical relationships in this research the perception of the benevolent sponsor, as discussed in Chapter Five, might thus be a result of sponsees’ attachment styles. Further, sponsors’ attachment style in leadership positions may also influence how they behave in their sponsoring relationships (Eldad & Benatov, 2018; Hinojosa, McCauley, Randolph-Seng, & Gardner, 2014). For example, secure attachment styles result in increased concern for the development of their followers (Doverspike, Hollis, Justice & Polomsky, 1997; Popper & Mayseless, 2013). Thus, the participants concern for their sponsees may have stemmed from their innate attachment style. This is relevant within hierarchical relationships found in my research and indicates that the perception of the relationship and of sponsors may have been influenced by the attachment styles of those involved. Thus, the diversity in the experiences of sponsoring may also be underpinned by differences in attachment styles of the individuals involved, warranting future research on attachment styles in sponsoring relationships.

Perception of care and connectedness

When an individual perceives being cared for by another individual, there is a fulfilment of the basic human motivation for forming interpersonal relationships or the 'need to belong' (e.g. Baumeister, Brewer, Tice & Twenge, 2007; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Leary & Baumeister, 2017). The perception of being cared for is central to fulfilling this need to belong and when a person feels cared for, the need to belong is fulfilled and a social bond is established (e.g. Bowlby, 1977; Epstein, 1992; Guisinger & Blatt, 1994; Myers, 1992). This close social bond may have contributed to the sense of connectedness, which has been discussed in the previous section of this chapter (5.2). Hence, finding that sponsoring relationships involve a perception of care also provided additional support for the idea of connectedness that participants expressed.

6.3 Friendship

The third key characteristic of the sponsoring relationship to be addressed in this chapter is the sense of friendship between sponsors and sponsees, which seems complex. While some sponsoring relationships were described as personal friendships, there were also some participants who expected more of a friendship, such as frequent socialising outside of work, and who found it difficult when sponsors kept a distance. However, sometimes sponsors deliberately maintained distance in what was also described as a friendship. Such friendships had vaguely defined or hidden boundaries and were only described by female sponsors. They were a result of the notion that these were workplace friendships, which were expected to have a certain professional tenor and not involve the personal lives of individuals.

Kylie spoke about the relationship with her sponsees, which did not include frequent informal socialising:

> *"I don't think we did socialise. I think of them as friends, but we have very different lives. But I think we have a connection and respect and understanding of each other. I think it's just something that we built. A good respect and mutual understanding and friendship, not friendship in the traditional way necessarily like have a coffee all the time".*

Sponsee's friendships with sponsors were also sometimes described as being limited to the workplace as Linda stipulated: *"Jeremy who has now retired, he took me under the wing as well and was very very supportive of my progression. He was really funny because he was friends only at work and he made that very clear".* However, while Linda found it strange that her sponsor could be friends at work and not outside, she displayed a similar mind set in her own sponsoring efforts. This could be due to preconceived ideas about appropriate sponsor behaviour, or more broadly, what appropriate workplace relationships between managers and subordinates needed to reflect because Linda's sponsor was also her manager: *"You need to be friends but you can't be really. It is ok to be a guest at their wedding but it's probably not ok to be their bridesmaid or maid of honour. There does need to be a work distance".*

Distance in workplace friendships

Workplace friendships are understood in a multitude of ways, as relationships of mutual concern that people enter into voluntarily, rather than from the positional roles they occupy (e.g. (e.g. Bader, Hashim, & Zahamin, 2013; McBain & Parkinson, 2017;

Berman, West, & Richter, 2002; Boyd & Taylor, 1998; Bridge & Baxter, 1992; Chen, Mao, Hsieh, Liu, & Yen, 2013; Kahn, 1998; Morrison, 2008; Riordan & Griffeth, 1995; Sias, Heath, Perry, Silva & Fix, 2004; Sias, Smith, & Avdeyeva, 2003; Song, 2006; Winstead, Derlega, Montgomery, & Pilkington, 1995). Workplace friendships are distinguished from other workplace relationships in involving a level of caring and concern, and have been suggested to benefit individuals within organisations, by providing emotional support; information; or help with countering workplace bullying (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2011; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2016; Sias, 2005).

Of relevance here, workplace friendships are distinguished from non-workplace friendships in being dualistic, as a friend and as perhaps a colleague and/or a boss. They are accompanied by the added responsibilities of the workplace alongside being a friend and thus involve managing two relationships simultaneously (Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2016). Kylie's and Linda's accounts above highlighted these tensions in managing workplace friendships.

Friendships have also been understood in several ways. However, all of them have some common elements, namely, that individuals enter into them voluntarily, that they are reciprocal, and that there is a notion of affection within the relationship (Morrison & Cooper-Thomas, 2016). However, friendships can also have different meanings in different contexts (e.g. Adams, Blieszner & de Vries, 2000; O'Connor, 1998; Patterson, Bettini & Nussbaum, 1993), and an authentic friend in a workplace could mean something different from a friend outside of work. The distance that Kylie and Linda described could be a result of comparing the friendships with other friendships outside of the workplace involving social contact (having coffee) and closeness (being a

bridesmaid). Similarly, the influence of broader organisational ideologies around workplace friendships in hierarchical relationships may have influenced perceptions about appropriate professional behaviour as a sponsor (Dillon, 2014), which is also implied by Rowena's statement: *"I do not make friends with my staff".*

Close friendships

Meanwhile, some of the friendships between sponsors and sponsees were considered close and personal. Here, there was no evidence of the boundaries and distance that was revealed within professional friendships by other sponsors, as illustrated in Paula's statement: *"You talk to Roger who works in the office with me. He is probably a smart basket case but he is one of my closest friends*.".

In these relationships, friendship traversed into the personal domain, where roles as colleagues probably did not matter as much. For example, even though Paula's reference to her sponsee friend as a 'basket case' could have been used as an endearing term, it could also indicate his less than stellar performance at work. Her statement implies that this was not a consideration for her friendship, even though the relationship began in the workplace. These personal friendships were also enduring and could continue after the individuals involved did not work together anymore, as exemplified by Rowena's observation: *"We also became personal friends. She would stand out from the early days in my career".*

Thus, personal friendships that developed in the sponsoring relationship were able to move beyond the workplace when they were not limited by the expectations of a workplace friendship. It could also be that the tension between being in a dualistic and

hierarchical relationship was resolved when sponsors and sponsees no longer worked in the same organisation and in reporting positions.

Power imbalances and perceived distance

Deliberate attempts to maintain some distance in hierarchical sponsoring relationships are likely to have contributed to maintaining a power imbalance between sponsors and sponsees. People consider equal power friendships to be of higher quality, that is, more satisfying, rewarding and enjoyable (Viniegas & Peplau, 1997). Therefore, in the context of a low power distance country such as New Zealand (Hofstede, 1980), an attempt to not pursue such friendships might be considered unusual for the Pakehā participants.

The intentional distance could be the result of the notion that bosses must not be friends with subordinates, and that being friends with employees limits a manager's ability to manage, not display favouritism and make tough decisions (e.g. Dillon, 2014; Laitin, 2016). Empirical studies support the existence of these challenges (Morrison & Nolan, 2007; Sias et al., 2004) and popular literature has strengthened this notion, with limited focus on the positive benefits of managers being friends with employees (e.g. Rath, 2006). This notion is ultimately beneficial for organisations because it is believed to result in better managers (e.g. Dillon, 2014; Laitin, 2016). Further, managers have certain powers by virtue of their roles and responsibilities, such as being able to hire and fire, do appraisals and take negative action, which subordinates do not have over

their manager. Therefore, it can be argued that there is already an existing power imbalance which is simply sustained by creating boundaries in the friendships which involve managers and employees. Since these boundaries were found within hierarchical sponsoring relationships examined in this research, the hierarchy may have influenced why the participants deliberately created and perceived this distance in the relationship as reported by Linda and Kylie, respectively.

Influence of gendered organisational contexts

Where sponsors and sponsees were women, there may also have been additional influences on the distance between them, which were based on the gendered organisational contexts that deem close friendships between women inappropriate. Such friendships are perceived as a sign of being unprofessional and weak, and an expression of femininity or favouritism, and these perceptions shape what is considered appropriate in workplace friendships (Mavin, Williams, Bryans & Patterson, 2013). So, women might create boundaries in their workplace friendships in an attempt to negate any perception of weakness or unprofessionalism (Mavin et al., 2013). Since this was observed within hierarchical relationships in this research study, this behaviour may have been a result of trying to mitigate any perception of favouritism or unprofessionalism.

Meanwhile, these very same gendered organisational contexts enable such close friendships to occur between men resulting in associations such as the ‘old boys clubs’ (Mavin et al., 2013), which was mentioned by Melissa, and refers to socialising that occurs outside of the work context and after work hours. There is evidence of an evolving ‘old girls’ networks’ in organisations along with an increasing number of

women in senior leadership (Kogut, Colomer & Belinky, 2013). However, the ‘old boys’ networks’ have been shown to work towards inhibiting women in advancing to senior leadership based on gendered beliefs, an effect that has not been observed in ‘old women’s networks’ or only observed to a limited extend (Shaw, 2006, Dean, 2009). Thus, ‘old girls’ networks’ have been deemed to be weak (Acosta & Carpenter, 1992; Grappendorf, Burton & Lilienthal, 2007; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Hoffman, 2011; Lovett & Lowry, 1994; Moore & Konrad, 2010; Quarterman, Dupree, & Willis, 2006; Shaw, 2006; Young, 1990). Research also suggests the presence of a ‘queen bee’ syndrome that refers to women who hinder rather than support other women’s progress (e.g. Derks, Van Laar & Ellemers, 2016; Sheppard & Aquino, 2013).

Thus, despite prior research suggesting that men look for career benefits in workplace friendships while women look for emotional and social support (Morrison, 2009), gendered organisational contexts are responsible for women missing out by drawing on ‘homosocial’ friendships or close workplace friendships with other women, which can contribute to career progress (e.g. Gruenfeld & Tiedens, 2010; Holgersson, 2012). Women’s close friendships have also been suggested to represent resistance against the gendered patriarchal workplace practices and the exclusionary consequences of male homosocial friendships (Andrew & Montague, 1998; Hammeran & Johanssen, 2014; Madsen, 2017). Therefore, from a structural perspective, the findings around women’s friendships with boundaries suggest a continued system of dominance by men in organisational structures, and not engaging in such friendships is a missed opportunity. The beneficial outcomes for men who are sponsored by other men may be more than those for women who are sponsored by other women, due to the gendered contexts in which these relationships operate.

6.4 Outcome focussed interactions

The fourth key finding addressed in this chapter is that a focus on outcomes was also a component of the sponsoring relationship. This characteristic illustrated that not all the experiences of the sponsoring relationship are considered in terms of feelings, emotions, deep connections, caring, nurturing and friendship. Participants described transactional and outcome focussed interactions such as goal setting, evaluating progress or getting a new job which occurred within some of the relationships. These interactions were mostly provided by the caring and nurturing sponsors who participants had talked about earlier, however at other times this was the only interaction that made it a sponsoring relationship. In these interactions therefore, the relationship seemed more instrumental, with a focus on certain desired outcomes. These interactions occurred in most part within formal manager-employee roles and to a lesser extent outside these dyads, such as securing a new project through friendships and acquaintances.

Highlighting the value obtained from sponsoring relationship indicated the focus on outcomes as exemplified by Faith:

> "*Oh she was really good to talk to and she was just a real positive thing. I think because she gave me such a push and personal encouragement it was just perfect for me at that time. I just thought she was amazingly good value and a really cool person and she is really fun to be with anyway".*

Instrumentality was suggested when sponsees approached their sponsors for advice and guidance with decision making, and/or used them as a sounding board when needed. Melissa and Sophie explained how they approached their sponsors, with

whom they had close relationships, for guidance and advice. Sometimes sponsees approached sponsors with whom they had a prior sponsoring relationship as Melissa emphasised: *"To this day I ask him for his opinion and if I need advice I will give him a call. He is certainly a very important person in my life".* At other times, these interactions led to a sponsoring relationship later on, as Sophie highlighted: *"Whenever I needed advice and guidance he was the person I would turn to".*

Paula's sponsor was the person who gave her the opportunity to move from working in the public sector into private consulting, which was financially hugely beneficial for her. She identified this person as her sponsor primarily due to the fact that he had offered her this job, an outcome focussed perception, without any of the other characteristics such as caring or nurturing, that Paula mentioned about her other sponsors:

> *"Having come from being in public service, going to consultancy was something I hadn't really considered. But I did it. So I took the leap and I thought wow! He said that he could not offer me security but he could give me a career. I was in my late 30s. I had my first child. I could have a career. I could not be dependent on anybody. Up until then I was only earning a middle of the road sort of salary, my husband was also working at that stage, times were tough financially".*

A further finding is that when sponsees focussed on the outcomes of sponsoring for themselves, the reciprocal benefits which accrued to sponsors were often not considered nor discussed by sponsees. For example, Paula's sponsor may have

benefitted from her skills and talent, and had thus convinced her to leave a secure job which according to Paula was extremely important to her. Paula did not discuss this reciprocal benefit and was perhaps not aware of it, or intentionally chose not to focus on it.

That said, the benefits to a sponsor in these instrumental, outcome-oriented interactions were sometimes revealed upon further questioning. For example, while Melissa's sponsoring experience facilitated her career progress, she also alluded to how her sponsor may have benefitted from her ability to work independently in senior leadership, by having her share his work:

> *"If he didn't have the confidence in me to perform and therefore allocate me a book of clients, I would still be working with someone else and doing the record-keeping, while someone else did the board presentations and stuff. I was able to do jobs, I was able fill in for him if he had to go to meetings where he was unable to.".*

Having discussed the findings focussing on the multi-faceted interactions and characteristics of sponsoring relationships, in the next section, I explore the relationship between empowerment and sponsoring.

6.5 Sponsoring relationships may not be consistently empowering

One reason for considering sponsoring as a helpful intervention for women's careers was that women associated work with both economic and social empowerment, hence, any intervention that impacted upon the ability to work or earn more was significant (Bhide, 2014). An examination of the findings in this study, however, reveals

that sponsoring relationships may not necessarily be empowering for sponsees. The findings which focus on the friendship with boundaries, the constructive push given to sponsees, and the parent-child dynamic in sponsoring relationships support this argument.

Conceptualisation of power and empowerment

Before delving into the discussion of empowerment and sponsorship, it is important to explain the manner in which I use the term. The concept of power is complex and there are several scholarly debates around power, therefore, empowerment, which has developed from the concept of power, can also be understood in several ways (e.g. Afshar, 1998; Batliwala, 2007; Fahy, 2002; Foucault, 1979, 1982; Gaventa, 1980; Kabeer, 1999; Rowlands, 1995, 1997). In this study I am informed by Rowland's conceptualisation of power and empowerment, which is detailed in Table 6.1.

Rowland's (1995) concept of power is influenced by gender theory and focusses on an individual's perception, as well as their ability to act and influence the world around them. According to this framework, one way to understand power is by examining how power is expressed in relationships through a lens that focusses on four scenarios of expression of power: 'power over' meaning the controlling power through the ability to coerce; 'power to' through access to realising potential; 'power with' meaning power from working together; and 'power within' meaning power from individual awareness (Luttrell, Quiroz, Scrutton & Bird, 2009; Rowlands, 1995). An understanding of empowerment can thus be based on these four ways of expressing power.

Table 6.1: Rowland's Conceptualisation of Power (1995)

Rowland's conceptualisation of power (1995)	Expression of power	Empowerment – Individual: Sense of self, self-confidence – Close relationships: Ability to influence the nature and decision making in the relationship – Collective: Working together for widespread impact
Power over	Through ability to coerce	Increase participation
Power to	Through access to realising potential	Right to making decisions
Power with	From working together	Mutual empowerment (through relational practice)
Power within	From individual awareness	Building self-esteem

When the notion of empowerment is based on the 'power over' view, there is a desire to increase participation, a focus on 'power to' emphasises the right to making decisions, and 'power within' focusses on building self-esteem (Luttrell et al., 2009). A feminist approach supports the 'power with' view, which is different from merely taking away power from someone to give to another such as with the 'power over' approach (Rowlands, 1995). While the source of empowerment in the 'power within' view is the self, through self-worth and agency, the 'power with' approach focusses on mutual empowerment and on strengthening the power of others rather than decreasing it (Rowlands, 1995). The notion of relational practice which has been demonstrated to be the preferred way of interacting by many women, is underpinned by this approach, and results in both parties growing as a result of relational interactions (e.g. Fletcher,

2001; Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; Surrey, Jordan, Kaplan, Miller & Striver, 1991; Miller, 1986).

Power is also multi-dimensional, and depending upon the dimension in which it is operating, can lead to different scenarios of empowerment (Rowlands, 1995). Empowerment can occur in three dimensions namely individual, close relationships and in collective scenarios, such as villages and institutions (Rowlands, 1995). Individual empowerment refers to the notion of developing a sense of self, capacity building and confidence, and reversing any effects of internalised oppression which is a result of social norms. In close relationships, empowerment is the notion of being able to influence the nature of the relationship and the decisions made within the relationship. Collective empowerment refers to individuals working together to achieve more widespread impact. Thus, overall Rowlands' (1995) understanding of the expression of power provides a lens to understand empowerment for women in organisational settings and in developmental relationships such as sponsoring, even though it is situated within the field of development policy and practice.

Empowerment in friendships

As discussed earlier in the chapter, structural reasons might have been responsible for some female sponsors creating boundaries in their friendships with female sponsees. Sponsors may feel compelled to uphold such boundaries as a result of social and organisational norms about what is acceptable behaviour in workplace hierarchical relationships. However, by not interacting in ways often preferred by women, this behaviour results in the loss of opportunities to engage in mutually empowering relationships through 'power with' behaviour which is responsible for the

evidenced benefits of relational practice for women (Fletcher, 2001). Thus, both the sponsees and sponsors are affected by such behaviour from an empowerment perspective. Moreover, this influence spans across more than one dimension. In the individual dimension, empowerment is incomplete because it does not address reversing internalised oppression, and in the close relationship dimension there is lack of empowerment in not being able to influence the nature of the relationship.

Empowerment and decision making

When sponsors encouraged sponsees to achieve goals which are a result of talent spotting and the result of an agenda set by the sponsor, it resulted in sponsees, as was the case with Leah, pushing themselves in directions not necessarily set by them or perhaps even desired by them: *"She has been like the guiding light telling us look this is what you need to do. You need to play the game. She really pushed me to do things that I would never have thought of pursuing or pushing. Yes, pushed me and really saying look you know if you gotta make it in academia you gotta do this, you gotta do that".* From a sponsor's perspective, this 'push' was evident when Jemma described how her interactions with Teresa, her sponsee, influenced Teresa's career: *"She has a load of talent but she was always saying I can't do that or I am not ready for it and she had been a teacher a long time. I just vocalised and gave her words the self- belief that she could do it. I just verbalised that someone else believed in her talent".*

Viewed from a 'power to' perspective, a sponsee is empowered by sponsors acting to motivate the sponsee to reach their full potential, and without the sponsor losing their power in the process (Rowlands, 1997). Simultaneously, empowerment also includes

the processes that lead to the perception of being able to make decisions, and the ability to make career related decisions for oneself (Rowlands, 1997). Findings suggest that in these hierarchical relationships the sponsees viewed the constructive push received from the sponsor as being for their own good as reflected in Leah's statement above, influencing the sponsees' perception of being able to make decisions. As a result, sponsoring may not have been entirely empowering for the sponsee. Describing the 'push' towards career progress and noting that a sponsee was 'not ready for a career move' may be indicative of gaps in the empowerment process. Thus, sponsoring relationships may involve different forms of power, some of which may be empowering, while others are not.

Empowerment and the parent-child dynamic

The notion of a parent-child dynamic in a sponsoring relationship also reveals an implicit power imbalance, which was evident in the hierarchical relationships in this study. One view of leadership characterises leaders as parent-like figures whose job is to take care of their dependent and less powerful followers (Game, 2008; Kahn & Kram, 1994; Keller, 2003; Popper & Mayseless, 2003). The parent-child dynamic found in this study suggests that the sponsors were perhaps seen as the more powerful leaders taking care of those less powerful within hierarchical relationships. This parent-child like dynamic sometimes also resulted in expectations of loyalty in return or the difficulty for a sponsor in letting go, which is often part of parent-child dynamics (Hendry & Kloep, 2010), as was the case with Paula: "*That the little chick should leave the nest, that's my insecurity not theirs"*.

In addition, an ethic of care perspective suggests that special care must be exercised towards those who are dependent upon an individual, such as a parent towards a child in a parent-child relationship (Cockburn, 2005; Held, 2006; Kittay, 1998). If sponsoring mirrors parent-child dynamics, the desire to exercise care and the ability to provide this special care lies with the sponsor, generating a power imbalance and contributing to the sponsees' dependency. Further, using terminology that indicates a parent-child dynamic, as was the case with some sponsors, can indicate the wish for continued dependence upon them. In that case, sponsoring which would have an opposite effect to empowerment, with the sponsee becoming dependent on support rather than on empowering themselves.

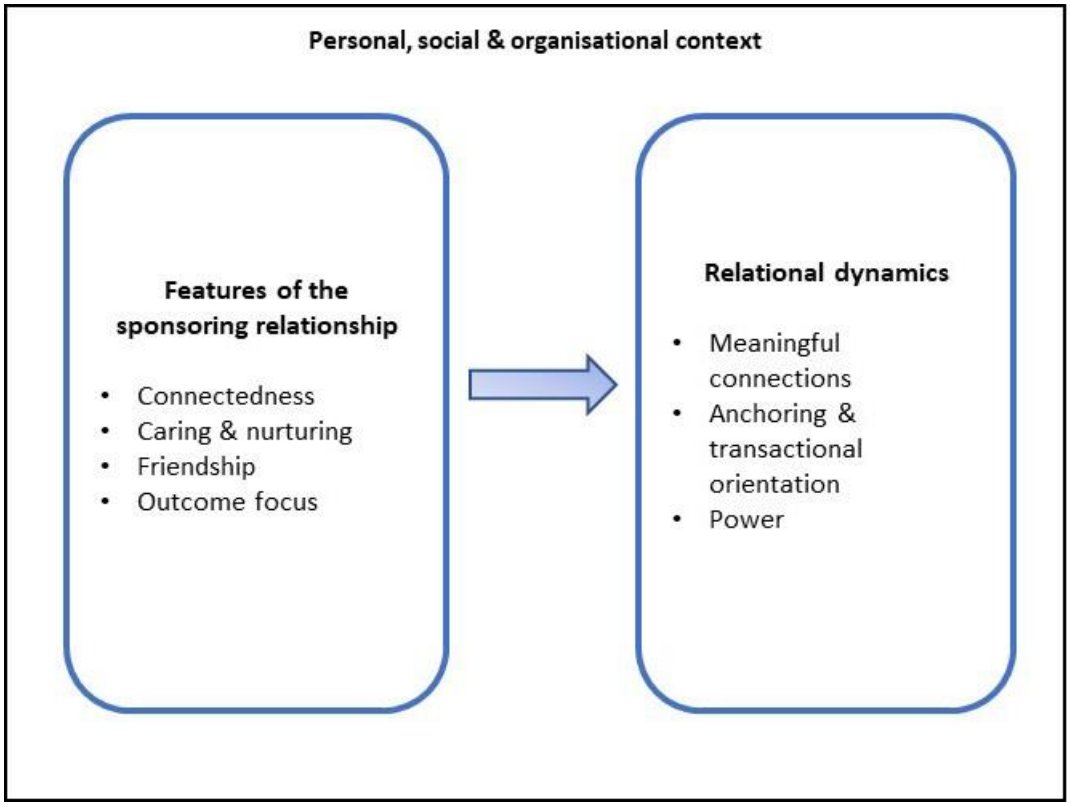
Thus, a closer examination and analysis of participant accounts in this study, and a more nuanced perspective, suggests that even though sponsorship was experienced as caring, nurturing, friendship and a deep connection, it may not have always been empowering for the sponsee.

6.6 Multifaceted sponsoring relationships

The findings discussed in this chapter highlight that the sponsoring relationship is characterised by a sense of connectedness, caring, nurturing and friendship, while also including more instrumental career focussed interactions, supporting the proposition that the sponsoring relationship is a complex relationship with several dimensions. These characteristics in turn influenced the relational dynamics of sponsorship, with participants largely experiencing sponsoring relationships as meaningful positive workplace connections, with significant perceived career benefits. Figure 6.1 draws together the various characteristics and the relational dynamics of

the many-sided sponsoring relationship.

Figure 6.1: Multifaceted Sponsoring Relationship



Meaningful connections

Meaningful connections can span across several dimensions (Kahn, 2007) from the more instrumental task-based connections (e.g. goal setting for Jemma), career development (e.g. increased visibility with Melissa), to sense making (e.g. navigating the world of research for Leah), provision of meaning (sense of being valued such as for Geoff), and personal support (such as personal friendship for Rowena). People draw on various aspects of meaningful connections as required and when they perceive strong connections in any of these aspects, they feel connected to work.

In this chapter, I have illustrated the positive feelings that these meaningful

connections evoked in the participants and, significantly, that these connections were reinforced by a perception of care. Therefore, the nature of the interactions within the relationship, rather than just the outcomes achieved, also determined whether the relationship was considered to be beneficial. That said, findings reveal that sponsoring relationships may involve emotions and feelings, or a transactional orientation, or both, highlighting the complexity inherent in the relationship. This complexity in the sponsoring relationship also reflected in varied power dynamics, wherein some sponsorship was empowering while this was not the case in others.

Anchoring and transactional orientation of workplace relationships

Two types of relationships that have been suggested to occur in workplaces with co-workers or managers: anchoring relationships and those with a transactional orientation (e.g. Bain & Parkinson, 2017; Davidovitz, Mikulincer, Shaver, Izsak & Popper, 2007; Kahn, 1998, 2001; Popper & Mayseless, 2003; Ragins, Ehrhardt, Lyness, Murphy & Capman, 2017; Winstead et al., 1995). Relationships with a transactional orientation are those which are superficial and do not include a sense of care, involving exchange of benefits for efforts (e.g. Cropanzano, Li, & Benson, 2011; Dirks & Skarlicki, 2009; Sherony & Green, 2002). On the other hand, anchoring relationships involve emotions and attachment, which develop as a result of the sense of caregiving (Kahn, 2007). Thus, they have emotions invested in them and create the conditions for relational work. , which results in improved self-esteem and confidence (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; Kahn, 1998, 2001).

Relational work or relational practice is explained by relational theory (Miller, 1986) which postulates that growth occurs through relational interactions which are mutually

empowering, where individuals approach the relationship with both the desire to grow as well as the responsibility to contribute towards the growth of the other person (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). Relational theory explains how relational skills and practices lead to experiences of development (Buttner, 2001), and is noteworthy in the context of women's experiences since research suggests that women's development in particular is underpinned by a notion of connectedness with others (e.g. Harter, Waters, Pettitt, Whitesell, Kofkin & Jordan, 1997; Surrey, 1985; Miller, 1986).

When social bonds are experienced as a result of the perception of care, and the need to belong is met in relationships, it leads to the development of anchoring relationships (Kahn, 1998, 2001). My findings suggest that when participants perceived a sense of being cared for in a relationship, the resulting social bond and meaningful connection possibly led to the development of relationships which were similar to anchoring relationships. Such high quality interpersonal interactions have been shown to be especially significant for the mental and physical wellbeing of women hence such sponsoring relationships could have wider benefits than those involving solely instrumental exchanges (Kahn 1998, 2001; Kahn, Barton & Fellows, 2013; Ragins et al., 2011; Reis, Wheeler, Kernis, Spiegel & Nezlek, 1985). This has implications for practice.

At the same time, the more outcome oriented interactions illustrated in the accounts of the participants above, also resembled relationships with a transactional orientation. There were perceived benefits from both these types of relationships which were considered helpful by the research participants. Thus findings suggest that these distinctions may be blurred within sponsoring relationships, as also suggested in the

gift-giving framework discussed in Chapter Five, and that the characteristics of sponsoring relationships often include relational and transactional elements.

Gendered social and organisational contexts

Findings also indicate that there are gender differences in how the sponsoring relationship is perceived based on whether it involved men or women as sponsors and sponsees. When sponsors were women, they were often considered motherly or as people who reminded a sponsee of their own mothers. Similarly, women (sponsors) emphasised that their workplace friendships with other women (sponsees) were different from close personal friendships, while the one male sponsor discussed enduring close workplace friendships both with men (sponsors) and women (sponsee). The gender differences in how caring and nurturing is perceived and expected in sponsoring relationships highlight the gendered contexts and ideologies in which these relationships were established, wherein the notion of care was associated with motherly or feminine care. Moreover, perceived benefits to be gained from female sponsors were that they were more nurturing and relational, while this was not so with men.

This suggests a possible unconscious gender bias wherein the expected behaviours from men and women are different. Findings also suggest that not all sponsoring relationships are empowering for women. Gendered institutional and systemic biases influence how sponsors and sponsees behave and interact within a sponsoring relationship, and sponsoring is not always practiced in a relational way which research suggests is more empowering for women.

6.7 Conclusion

Findings discussed in this chapter focus on the complex and multi-dimensional character of sponsorship, and draw attention to the relational dynamics underpinning sponsorship. Findings suggest that the sponsoring relationship was experienced as a meaningful connection, and considered largely beneficial by the participants of this study. While some relationships were transaction focussed, others had a more relational orientation. These meaningful connections occurred both within and outside workplaces, but were entrenched in gendered social and organisational contexts. The gendered contexts sometimes created varying relational dynamics, which in turn, resulted in some sponsoring relationships being empowering for sponsees, while others were not. The multi-faceted sponsoring relationship model presented in the chapter (Figure 6.1) illustrates the complexities inherent in the relationship.

Having presented the various characteristics of sponsoring relationships revealed in this study, in the next chapter (Chapter Seven), I explore the dynamics of sponsoring relationships involving ethnic minority participants, and the influence of their gender, ethnicity and migrant status upon their sponsoring experiences.

Chapter Seven: Intersectional Locations and the Meaning of Sponsoring

This chapter focusses on the intersectional locations of participants. In particular, it is here that I draw attention to the influence of intersectional locations on the meanings attributed to sponsoring, highlighting the role of sponsoring in overcoming career barriers perceived to be due to gender, ethnicity and migrant status. The participants whose stories come under the spotlight in this regard, include four people who identified themselves as Māori, one man and three women; one woman who identified herself as Pasifika and five women who identified themselves as South Asian. Findings reveal challenges, both within and outside their workplaces, which participants perceived were a result of their intersectional identities of gender, ethnicity and migrant status. Sponsors who helped to overcome those intersecting challenges were valued, although the meaning attributed to sponsoring in the midst of these challenges varied. In addition, the experience of barriers to career progress that were perceived to be a result of ethnicity or ethnicity and gender, appear to motivate ethnic minority participants to provide sponsorship to others who were of similar ethnicity and hence perceived as having similar experiences.

I begin by explaining the terminology and presenting some background insights into ethnicity within a New Zealand context. Further, I delve into the implication of these for data interpretation.

7.1 Background to 'intersectional' interpretation of the findings

There are some key terms used in this chapter that need explanation: ethnicity, ethnic majority and minority, and intersectional locations.

Ethnicity, the first of these 'technical terms' used in this chapter, refers to group patterns and is defined in terms of common culture, nation of origin or language (Quintana, 2007). It also refers to the cultural practices of groups of people that make them different from others (Giddens, 2009), while ethnic identity implies acquiring the patterns of that group (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987). Therefore, individuals can acquire the group patterns of more than one ethnicity which results in their ethnic identity, and it is self-determined rather than determined by others (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996; Nagel, 1994; Phinney, 1989).

Participant accounts of sponsoring in this study led to the complexity of ethnic identity becoming evident. Intricacies and differences were also apparent across participants' descriptions of their ethnic identity. For example, none of the Māori participants mentioned that they were *tangata whenua*, however the Pasifika participant (Leah) identified herself as an indigenous woman. This might be unsurprising given that latest statistics show that the number of people who acknowledge that they have Māori ancestry is more than those who identify as Māori, and more people report mixed ethnicity such as Pakehā and Māori (Statistics New Zealand, 2013), indicating a possible loss of Māori identity as a result of indigenous cultural assimilation following colonisation (Bennet & Liu, 2018).

Ethnic minorities and majorities (our second, linked ‘technical terms’) in New Zealand represent a particular pattern, and include both the indigenous (Māori) and immigrant minorities in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2018a; Pearson, 2018). Studies have shown that ethnic minorities and majorities are characterised by the imbalance of power between the two groups, with ethnic minorities perceived as less powerful, which is reflected in lower numbers, political influence and resources (Baker, 1983; Fitzgerald, 2018; Pearson, 2018; Ragins, 1997; Smith, 1991; Tariq & Berthaud, 1997; Verkuyten, 2006). Until the mid-1940s, ethnic minorities in New Zealand comprised Māori and Asian immigrants, but from the 1980s there were more diverse migrant inflows including Pasifika people (Wilson, 2005). Thus, Māori are ethnic minorities in New Zealand as well as the indigenous ethnic group, which may be a triple jeopardy or perhaps a ‘privilege’ depending on how it is perceived by others. Some consider that Māori receive special privileges compared with other ethnic groups and Pakehā (Ip, 2003), a distinction which at times has been associated with political motivation (Barber, 2008; Johansson, 2004). Others suggest that what are perceived as privileges are actually indigenous rights given to Māori due to the Treaty of Waitangi, and that Māori are over-represented in lower socio-economic markers. This is seen as a consequence of a lack of Crown responsibility around the Treaty, and migrant women have been perceived by some as obtaining more privileges than Māori women (e.g. Barber, 2008; Borell, Gregory, McCreanor, Jensen & Barnes, 2009; Durie, 2004; Meihana, 2015). Statistically, Māori and Pasfika women are disadvantaged with respect to socioeconomic status, mental and physical health (Statistics New Zealand, 2013).

Finally, the ‘intersectional locations’ of individuals are understood to be a result of their intersecting identities such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual identity and age, and lead to varied and complex individual experiences (Christensen & Jensen, 2012; Crenshaw, 1989; McCall, 2005; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). When one identity, for example participant ethnicity, combines with other identities the complexities increase and the subjective experiences and perceptions vary.

Issues encountered in data analysis

Despite my deliberately asking all participants whether and how ethnicity may impact the sponsoring relationship, not all the participants chose to address this aspect in any depth. Some participants stated that ethnicity would not impact their sponsoring relationships as sponsors or sponsees, even though they had not actually experienced being in an inter-ethnic sponsoring relationship. For example, all six Pakehā participants claimed that ethnicity would not be a barrier to any sponsoring relationship for them, yet five of them said they had not had any experience of such an inter-ethnic or cross cultural sponsoring relationship in the workplace context. Their relative dismissal of this topic, could be due to the apparent sensitivity of subject of ethnicity, or even because they felt that, since I belonged to an ethnic minority myself and was a migrant, such a discussion may be misread or misunderstood or just uncomfortable (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). One Pakehā sponsor, Linda, did, however, reflect on differences among the ways people belonging to various ethnicities responded to her as a manager, and one Pakehā sponsee, Teresa, talked about her experiences with a Māori sponsor.

What is particularly interesting about the responses of most Pākehā participants (majority ethnicity), is the contrast between their perceptions and those of participants who identified as an ethnic minority. Indeed, ten participants who identified as ethnic minorities talked about how their ethnicity impacted their workplace experiences or their career. I felt that, when participants, in particular South Asian, discussed sponsorship issues related to ethnicity, their affinity with me as 'one of them' enabled them to be more at ease and have candid discussions about issues relating to ethnicity.

Māori participants typically began by explaining how things work on the *marae* and the position of women in a Māori worldview before talking about their experiences in workplaces as Māori women (Lorraine, Melissa and Jemma) or as a Māori man (Geoff). Two participants identified with more than one ethnicity, where one was an ethnic minority and one was a majority, and they talked about how that influenced with whom they easily formed relationships (e.g. Teresa) or how they faced challenges in managing expectations from themselves in their role as a sponsor (Jemma).

Not all participants talked directly about how their ethnicity impacted their sponsoring relationships. In some cases, this only became evident to me on examining their transcribed accounts. These variously revealed how their sponsors had given them a chance; helped them overcome ethnic barriers in the workplaces or provided support for settling down into a new environment. The influence of their own ethnic identity was more directly discussed when participants talked about their motivation to sponsor others such as the case with Melissa and Geoff.

7.2 Notion of discrimination

Participants from ethnic minorities reported discrimination in the workplace or in the broader social context as barriers to their career progress, which sponsorship helped address. Perceived barriers included being unable to find work, negotiate higher salaries and social stereotyping which discredited their capabilities and skills.

Leah, for example, came to New Zealand when she accompanied her husband for his job. She talked about having to leave a career behind and is still frustrated at the rate of progress of her career in New Zealand while all her colleagues have made strides in her home country. While her challenges could in part be due to other issues involved in finding work in a new country, she perceived her ethnic identity to be the cause of her setbacks: *"So I am thinking if I had stayed in South Asia I probably would be a senior leader by now. My colleagues who are there, they are senior leaders and here I am still just coming up".*

Otherness

Paula migrated to New Zealand at a very young age, and was always aware of being different from others around her while growing up: "*Oh I am different to everybody else. Why can't I be the same? Why do I have to have brown skin because this is holding me back"*. Her desire to not have 'brown skin' may have been in part due to the perceptions around migrants in the place she grew up in:

> "*This place, where I had spent 25 years, is an extremely white European society. It doesn't cope well with people like me who are educated, out there, but also of ethnicity. I think that hostility comes with their own insecurity. We*

are here to be part of the community and help. We are not here to take over".

Paula's beliefs are far from unusual. Migrants in New Zealand report constantly battling with stereotypes associated with their ethnicity (Stibley et al., 2011). Additionally, research also shows that migrants from the UK or South Africa, who are white, do not have the same experiences as non-white migrants, for example from Asia, because of physical differences such as skin colour (Lyons, Madden, Chamberlain & Carr, 2011). Thus, while the use of 'we' indicates Paula's migrant identity, her statement also indicates the 'otherness' that she perceived because of the visible aspects of her ethnicity, such as skin colour.

This concept of 'otherness', to some extent, explains how social identities of majority and minority groups are created (Prasad & Prasad, 2003). Otherness refers to the perception of being different, and having characteristics that make one different from the group that is dominant in a given setting, that is, one who does not embody the norm, (e.g. Bauman, 1991; Clarke, 2018; Jervis, 1999; McNamara, 1997; Petersoo, 2007; Prasad & Prasad, 2003; Sampson, 1993; Sibley, 1995). A consequence of otherness is uneven power relations, where the majority group considers the minority group as the 'other', based on real or imaginary differences, and often excludes them (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997; Patil, 2011; Pio & Essers, 2014; Zwingel, 2012).

Further, social groups define themselves in relation to the 'other' along various dimensions such as gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality – however gender, race and ethnicity have been shown to be the largest reasons for a sense of otherness among people in an organisational context (e.g. Durand & Calori, 2006; Fernando & Cohen,

2014; Harlow & Hearn, 1995; Prasad & Prasad, 2003; Pullen & Simpson, 2009; Tyler, 2005; Tyler & Cohen, 2010). People experiencing otherness are unlikely to have a sense of belonging and are often excluded from opportunities in an organisational setting (Prasad & Prasad, 2003). Moreover, those with multiple dimensions of otherness are less likely to advance in their careers than those with a single dimension and (e.g. Catalyst, 2014; Hugh & Peiperl, 2007; Singh, Vinnicombe & Terjesen, 2007).

Cultural stereotypes

While participants reported barriers due to ethnicity, there was also a view that some cultural barriers were eliminated as a result of moving to New Zealand, viewed as a country that had different values, worldviews and social expectations of women. For example, gender was not considered a barrier in New Zealand compared to South Asia, where the expectations from and of women were to raise children rather than pursue careers as Valerie mentioned: *"Gender did not matter at all and it hasn't been a barrier".* However, the negative stereotypes about South Asians in New Zealand meant that people of this ethnicity had to work harder to prove themselves.

Research shows that women of colour face stereotypes associated with their ethnicity in environments where they are an ethnic minority, and thus perceive the need to work harder to prove themselves and challenge stereotypes associated with them (e.g. Berdahl & Moore, 2006; Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Valerie reasoned that such stereotypes were a result of having access to limited information:

> "*That* [describing a stereotype about South Asians] *was the kind of perception because there was no internet so all people saw were who the*

first migration people [first wave of migrants or early migrants] *were. It was a culture barrier. It was huge. You had to put double the effort to convince people, you had to prove yourself whereas if I belonged to the same culture I did not need to put in that kind of effort".*

In workplaces, the barriers were considered to be a result of participants' ethnicity alone or the combination of ethnicity and gender. For example, stereotypes of Māori as sports-focussed and women as 'stay-at-home mothers were reported by Melissa who felt that being a Māori woman created barriers to her career progress:

"*First you are Māori so there must be something medically wrong with you because Māori do sports and secondly you are a woman so why are you not at home having a child.. Me being a woman and Māori I felt went against me there. Nobody ever said that, it's my personal perception but becoming a partner* [in the consulting firm she was working with] *there was not really an option when I found that being a woman and being Māori were two attributes that would go against me".*

Research shows that a perception of discriminatory barriers of this type often result in feelings of discouragement as expressed by Melissa (e.g. Dhanani, 2014; Ensher, Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001).

Unconscious bias

Although the sense of otherness or being different seemed evident to participants more broadly in society, ethnicity as a cause for bias and discrimination in the workplace was not always obvious. Unconscious bias and hidden discrimination

highlighted their otherness and made it difficult for participants to establish workplace relationships in general. Jasmine reported that stereotypes about conservative South Asian women resulted in her colleagues not socialising with her informally, while subtly bringing up the stereotype in conversations. This impacted her day-to-day work:

> *"They think that if a person is coming from South Asia he or she is coming from a socially conservative society but they don't know what South Asia is like because they don't know how people living there are different from what they show in movies. So they used to have those preconceived notions. They would crack some jokes and go - Oh, Jasmine we did not realise you were here. But I am not going to complain or whatever. It is difficult being a woman of colour".*

Jasmine's statement indicates her desire to be seen as someone who could take part in office humour, and not as someone who typifies stereotypes of South Asian women and thus likely to be intolerant of jokes about them. At the same time, her statement also suggests her awareness of the political significance of the term 'women of colour' and that she identifies her experiences as 'woman of colour' issues, broader than those of just South Asian women.

There is sometimes a sense of uncertainty around subtle discrimination in organisational settings which may be difficult to comprehend (Cortina, Kabat-Farr, Leskinen, Huerta & Magley, 2008; van Laer & Janssens, 2011; Rowe, 1990). However, this subtle discrimination became really problematic for Jasmine when she accidentally found out she was underpaid: *"When I saw that contract on the printer by mistake, which was for a female colleague for the same position and with lesser*

experience, not at all relevant except a totally different background, and getting the same salary as me, it was the first time that I felt that this was something to do with my ethnicity". She attributed the pay difference to her ethnicity rationalising that even though she had knowledge of her boss treating women more harshly than men ("*He made them cry")*, it must be her ethnicity that was the reason for the pay gap: "*What else? It wasn't gender related at all. I have not felt personally very strongly about gender".*

Since the other person involved was also a woman, for Jasmine ethnicity was the only alternative explanation to make sense of this information since the other woman was white. Research in New Zealand has shown that people most often experience racial discrimination in employment situations (4.3%) followed by public places, and migrants are more likely to face racial discrimination than non-migrants (Statistics New Zealand, 2012). Studies also shows that past experiences of discrimination by ethnic minorities increases the tendency to judge any negative experience involving non-ethnic minorities as discrimination (Bombay, Matheson & Anisman, 2014). This may be the reason for Jasmine perceiving herself as the 'other' and as being discriminated against due to her ethnic identity and not due to her gender.

Nel claimed that ethnicity did not matter in her sponsoring relationships with her managers as much as it did in her interactions with her colleagues. She valued the relationships that she was able to establish with her managers, in part due to some shared interests, however the difficulty of establishing informal relationships with colleagues was problematic in her day to day work. She emphasised that her identity as a woman of colour influenced her interactions with colleagues:

"I don't think my ethnicity is a problem with my managers. It is a more professional conversation and in some time they know I love wine and then the conversation is easy to have after that but with my colleagues it's a struggle they naturally tend to go talking to other white women. I do work amongst people who look at me as a different person. If I am trying to connect with a guy he is looking at it from two perspectives the fact that I am not white and the fact that I am a woman. So what is the sort of conversation I can have with her? That's a big big thing".

Therefore, although there were similarities among ethnic minority women, women of colour and migrant women in the outcomes of discriminatory experiences such as not being able to form workplace relationships, the experiences themselves were diverse and related to the intersections that participants found themselves at. For example, otherness, unconscious bias, stereotypes and discrimination impacted on women of colour or migrant women through expectations and identities placed on them by others such as a quiet South Asian woman or a sporty Māori woman.

Influence of intersections

The concept of intersectionality brings into focus the varying experiences of individuals placed at the intersections of characteristics such as gender and ethnicity, and thus supports taking them into account in the consideration of discrimination (Christensen & Jensen, 2012; McCall, 2005; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). For example, findings of my research suggest that the experiences of all women are not alike, the experiences of all ethnic minorities are not alike, there are differences between the experiences of ethnic minority men and women, and there are further intersections

that vary as a result of analysing migrant women's experiences (e.g. as woman of colour versus white migrant women). Melissa, Nel and Jasmine talked about their experiences and personal challenges as ethnic minority women, their experiences were not necessarily the same. Perhaps more significant was that their sponsoring relationships were perceived as meaningful because they addressed these different challenges and experiences.

Findings indicate that ethnicity was considered a bigger barrier than gender for two participants, while three participants considered that both gender and ethnicity in combination, placed them in challenging positions. The migrant status of four participants influenced their ability to form relationships both in and outside the workplace due to stereotypes about ethnic migrants and ethnic migrant women. Thus, perceptions of enhanced disadvantage, a result of belonging to multiple minority identities (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Walker & Melton, 2015) were highlighted by Melissa Paula, Valerie, Nel and Jasmine. For Melissa, however, they were a direct consequence of being a Māori woman in a workplace dominated by men, and a result of being migrant women of colour for Paula, Valerie, Nel and Jasmine.

One view of intersectionality suggests that categories, and thus intersectional positions, are socially constructed and fluid, as well as ambiguous and conflicting or contradictory at times (McCall, 2005). Thus, individuals may call upon different identities, despite belonging to similar intersectional positions, depending on the context and time (McCall, 2005). For example, Paula's preference for sponsor characteristics changed as her intersectional experiences changed over time. While there is ongoing discussion about the benefits of diversity for businesses on one hand

(e.g. Jayne & Dipboye, 2004; McKinsey & Company, 2015; Stevens, Plaut & Sanchez-Burks, 2008), Paula's statement suggests that ethnic minority identity is perhaps still viewed as inferior by those involved:

> *"I gravitate naturally towards people who are Asians, but if I had to choose between an Asian man and a Pakehā woman, I would probably go towards the woman now. Ten years ago I probably would have gone towards the Asian man. So I guess I am evolving. I guess I am trying to see myself as a non-migrant. I am mainstream"*.

Her sponsor, also her manager, whom she was still working with at the time of the interview was a woman. Thus, the influence of intersectional locations on sponsoring relationships is not fixed but fluctuating, changing as the needs of those involved alter. Furthermore, the sense of being disadvantaged due to multiple identities is not fixed, but ultimately influences their experiences of sponsoring, which is detailed in the following section.

7.3 Intersectional locations influence the meaning of sponsoring

The second key finding addressed in this chapter is that the intersectional locations of the participants, characterised by gender, ethnicity and migrant status, determined whom they considered a sponsor and why, what they perceived as help in a sponsoring relationship, and the notion of gratitude that accompanied the sponsoring relationship. For participants who had migrated to New Zealand as adults, the biggest hurdle on migration was to secure work and thus the significance of sponsoring was often related to their first jobs. They reported that their sponsors had given them the first opportunity to work in New Zealand by taking a chance on them, despite being

from another country, and not having known them or their work. This was a challenge based on insecurities about not having been educated in New Zealand and their experience in the job market in New Zealand.

On migrating to New Zealand, Valerie found that employers thought of migrants as a risky hire: "*Ethnicity was more of the unknown factor. You are an unknown factor they don't know the type of education you have received. You have not been through the education system so in a way they were taking a great risk".* Her sponsor was the person who offered her the first job and gave her that chance: *"I said thank you for backing a dark horse because he didn't know me. Somewhere something tells you, ok let's give her a chance because if he hadn't then I wouldn't be where I am today".*

Jasmine's concerns about her career began with the decision to move to New Zealand following her marriage. When finding a job in New Zealand proved challenging, the individual responsible for giving her a job was considered significant and helpful, and thus her sponsor:

> *"I started worrying about my career while still in South Asia. I will start with the big thing Jack has helped me a great deal with - giving me a career in New Zealand because I know it is not easy for everyone to come and start looking for jobs, and within the first month get a job in New Zealand, especially when you don't have experience of working in this environment. The work culture is different, the industry is different and business is done differently in New Zealand".*

Sponsors were also identified as the people who helped an individual overcome cultural barriers in the workplace in various ways. Pasifika people report an

expectation of facing discrimination in New Zealand workplaces (Statistics New Zealand, 2012). When this issue was addressed, the person responsible was considered a sponsor by Leah whose sponsor provided encouragement and motivation: *"A person that I could say just really looked out for me. Made me publish, made me believe that there was a voice for indigenous people within the program".*

Prior experiences also determined what type of help was unavailable, and thus required and desired. Jasmine spoke about the influence of her sponsor in helping her get a salary increase after she found that she was underpaid compared to similar peers: *"He got my back. Yeah in both ways, in terms of qualitative as well as making it quantifiable in terms of getting a salary hike".* Her statement implies that this relationship was meaningful to her because it addressed the sense of unfairness and demotivation that she was experiencing at the time, and encompassed both tangible and intangible elements.

Paula described facing a *"triple whammy"* early on in her work life, that of being a woman, a person of colour and of working in a profession dominated by men. Her sponsors' support was critical: *"Without those people I would not be where I am today".* Creating a supportive environment for sponsees to enable achievement of career goals in the midst of a different cultural environment was significant for Sophie as an immigrant, with sponsoring being provided by several people and having an indirect career impact:

> *"I had a really strong sense of a collective presence in my life and it was not any particular individual. Among that collective presence there were some people I became closer with rather than others. I was coming here*

completely alone with no infrastructure here or no backdrop. You don't know anyone, you are making a life over here".

Sometimes, a supportive environment was created through connections with similar ethnic groups which facilitated open conversations about the issues they faced. Leah who identified as Pasifika found it easy to develop a relationship with her Māori sponsor: *"I think it was more about looking out for pacific development and because they were tangata whenua and because they had been through some of the struggles and some of the opportunities. What I liked about Amy is I could talk to her openly about what was happening".* There is a sense from Leah's statement that open discussion of issues relating to ethnic identity occurs most easily with those of the same ethnicity or from another similar ethnic group, which had also been shown in prior research (Greenwood, Ellmers & Holley, 2014). Past research also suggests that ethnic minority migrants in particular are more likely to confide in other ethnic minority migrants due to homophily, that is, the notion that people connect more with those who are similar to themselves (e.g. Louc, 2000; Marsden, 1987, 1988; McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001).

Tokenism

Leah's statement above indicates that ethnic similarity may thus also contribute towards the development of sponsoring relationships for ethnic minorities. However, Leah expressed that there was a sense of "*tokenism*" in her sponsoring relationship with her non-ethnic minority sponsor, who had also helped her with her career: *"I struggle with this* [tokenism]*. I find myself in this situation where every now and then I have to be that voice that has to speak out, even though I don't want to but it's like if*

you are not gonna do it then who else is gonna do it?" . Tokenism refers to the notion that when minority populations, such as women in workplaces, are in key positions simply to make up numbers they end up facing increased scrutiny, and expectations to perform and represent their group, and this is more pronounced for those who tick more than one diversity/minority box such as migrant women or ethnic minority women (e.g. Eagly, Makhijani & Klonsky, 1992; Greed, 2000; Kanter, 1977; McDonald, Toussaint & Schweizer, 2004; Redersdorff, Martinot, & Branscombe, 2004; Singh & Vinnicombe, 2004; Watts, 2010; Whittock, 2000; Yoder, 1991, 1994). Findings show that this may then adversely impact the meaningfulness of sponsoring relationships for ethnic minority women.

7.4 Intersectional locations influence motivation to sponsor

The third finding addressed in this chapter is that ethnic minority participants' intersectional locations influenced their motivation to sponsor others, and whom they would sponsor. These intersectional locations necessarily included ethnicity, while this was not so for non-ethnic minority participants. For example, gender was the motivating factor for Erica and Faith's sponsoring efforts, who did not identify as ethnic minorities. In contrast, Melissa wanted to sponsor other Māori women due to the challenges she herself had faced as a Māori woman. Melissa wanted to facilitate Māori women into the profession and focussed on the specific barriers they face:

> *"I'd like to mentor and support the growth of young Māori women. The reason that I focus on being Māori is that it is ingrained in us, because of the cultural side of the Marae, that the man takes the lead. So subconsciously it starts to be this narrative. A whole lot of people are shifting*

that and asserting themselves in different roles and the more Māori women that can show that it can happen, the more of us there will be".

Geoff also raised the issue of how the *marae* influences leadership and gender roles, and privileges men. However, being a man did not eliminate the challenges he faced being Māori in a Pakehā-dominated environment. His motivation to sponsor other Māori arose from that experience, while gender was not raised as a factor: *"I think you know our philosophy from the start is that it would be Māori working for Māori. So I am always keen to get Māori into the profession".* This was amplified by wanting to promote educational opportunities for Māori which were restricted for him due to his family background: *"Even going to school was a little bit odd and there wasn't really that opportunity to do that".* Meanwhile, for Geoff, being a member of an ethnic minority served to dilute the privileges associated with being a man.

For example, in two of the organisations he had worked for he had tried to create an interest in Māori businesses however:

> *"It was a Pakehā organisation run by Pakehā and I didn't have a particular identity there. What I was about and what I was trying to do and the opportunity I could see. They didn't understand you know little cultural things, the way we did things. So they didn't support me when I tried to say that we need to have a Māori business here. I wouldn't say they particularly discriminated, they just didn't get it".*

Thus, all these experiences together influenced his desire to sponsor other Māori, both men and women, when he started his own firm and the characteristics that comprised

his intersectional position as a Māori man were influential in determining who received sponsoring and why.

Paula's upbringing as a migrant instilled with a sense of obligation to New Zealand, meant that helping other New Zealanders was akin to giving back to New Zealand:

> "*It* [why she sponsors] *goes back to my childhood. Coming here as an immigrant my parents instilled in me the value that New Zealand has given us so much so you must give back more. If you do a little experiment on our little group of people we have all given back to New Zealand. Not necessarily in an academic way but in some productive way".*

A number of studies show that migrants are grateful to the host society in general or sometimes more specifically to the ethnic groups that provided them with the opportunities in the host country (Healey, 2014; Mazzucato, 2008; Niner, Kokanovic & Cuthbert, 2013; Smith, Lalonde & Johnson, 2004). Paula did not discuss sponsoring people from any specific ethnicities, which suggests that perhaps national identity was more important to her than ethnicity in terms of her sponsoring.

However, sometimes ethnicity did influence ethnic minority participants' desire for sponsors from similar ethnic groups, and sponsoring others from similar ethnicities. Lorraine highlighted how the notion of 'Māori working with Māori' meant that the opportunities to establish relationships with other Māori were higher and thus it was more likely that a Māori individual would find Māori sponsors who were valued and trusted: *"A lot of Māori businesses do have family and friends involved in our businesses. My sister, my cousin, my best friend from school. So maybe it's around people we trust and value to be in our businesses".*

Similarly, the notion of helping other Pasifika people meant that Leah could expect help and support, and form such relationships within Pacific community groups. Leah's initial job opportunities arose from sponsors of the same ethnicity and this prompted her career in New Zealand: *"I guess it is the Pacific connection. Being Pacific we get invited to the same things, so it just kind of develops from there".* The development of social networks is influenced by ethnic status, and ethnicity has been suggested to influence people's desire to associate with each other (e.g. Bayer, Ferreira & McMillan, 2007; Marmaros & Sacerdote, 2006; Mcpherson, et al., 2001; Moody, 2001; Smith & Silva, 2011; Topa, 2001). Evidence suggests that friends, relatives and people who belong to one ethnic community are the biggest source of information regarding employment for migrants (e.g. Bisin, Pattachini, Verdier & Zinou, 2011; Chavez, 1992; Hagan 1994, Menjívar, 2000; Ryan, 2011; Zhou, 1992). Thus, ethnic minority migrants perhaps seek sponsors within their social networks, which is likely to include other ethnic migrants, and which may inadvertently result in limited availability of sponsorship for them. Conversely, some sponsees sought sponsors who could open up broad networks outside of their ethnic group. For example, Jasmine discussed her expectations from her white sponsor: *"References and testimonials. That he gives a testimony that she is excellent, which he agrees and says all the time".*

7.5 Identifying with more than one ethnicity

Findings also suggest that identifying with more than one ethnicity, when one of them is a minority, could enable as well as restrict the ability to develop sponsoring relationships. Teresa reported a perceived affinity with Māori and talked about how that facilitated a sponsoring relationship with a Māori female sponsor:

"I think I connect to the Māori way of being, just their way of being, it is relaxed and so for me I connect with that because I got brought up in a Māori and Pakehā environment. I grew up up-North so my first way of being or my first language is Māori so it easier for me to connect with Māori".

Teresa was the only non-ethnic minority participant, of six, who stated that her sponsor's ethnicity influenced how she engaged in a positive sponsoring relationship. However, Teresa did not identify herself as Pākehā when asked about her ethnicity. Instead she identified as 'Kiwi'. This indicates that there may be some resistance to be identified as Pākehā. Pākehā is a term that refers to the "dominant white race in New Zealand" (O'Connor, 1990). Thus identifying as Pākehā is associated with privilege and historical ramifications, which may be a reason for rejecting the term in favour of the term Kiwi which is less controversial. It is also possible that when someone is part of the dominant ethnic group (like Pākehā in New Zealand) they do not see themselves as the 'other' in relation to ethnicity. This may be the reason that they prefer to use terminology such as New Zealander or Kiwi (Cormack & Robson, 2010), a term which has also been the focus of considerable discussion in recent times (Bell 2009; Callister, Didham & Kivi 2009; Kukutai & Didham 2009; UMR Research 2009). Alternatively, it may be that Pakehā do not see their ethnicity and consider it to be irrelevant or not an important part of their identity (Webber, McKinley & Hattie, 2013), or that white privilege is invisible to Pakehā in New Zealand (Addy, 2008).

Intersectional locations can give or take away privilege (e.g. Cho et al., 2013; McCall, 2005). While ethnic affinity was favourable for Teresa in developing sponsoring

relationships, the expectations from Jemma who also identified with more than one ethnicity, resulted in particular challenges. Being Māori influenced how Jemma was expected to behave, and also set the expectation that she would sponsor other Māori. However, Jemma identified as Pakehā more than Māori, having been raised by a Pakehā mother and having values she saw as Pakehā values. She experienced a tension between what she was expected to do and what she wanted to do. There is a sense of obligation to sponsor people from the ethnic group to which she was identified as by others:

> *"Well we need more Māori women in ECE for sure coz sometimes we feel outnumbered. And they, Pakehā you know English talking, now they are trying to tell us how we are supposed to be Māori coz the treaty of Waitangi is very strong and we are supposed to be adhering to it and now it's turning around because if you are not outwardly Māori there are lots of issues around that as well. But the teachers, we are teachers first and Māori second and I think for me coz I was brought up by a Pakehā mother too. I was biased more towards the English way of what I was brought up with rather than the Māori side".*

While Jemma described her ethnicity as Māori, her statement indicates that her ethnic identity is significantly shaped by her Pakehā mother who adopted her. Research shows that ethnic minority children who are adopted into ethnic majority cultures are often identified by others as belonging to their birth race, which focusses on the physical characteristics of a group of people rather than their behaviour and thinking (Baden, Treweeke, & Ahluwalia, 2012). Since Jemma externally looks Māori, she is

identified as Māori by others and thus perhaps the expectations on her are similar to those associated with Māori brought up in a Māori context with Māori values, even though her own ethnic identity is also shaped strongly by the Pakehā culture in which she was brought up. Meanwhile, as an ethnic minority individual she was not 'allowed' to practice or behave in ways that were associated with ethnic majorities *"Now they [Pakehā] are trying to tell us how we are supposed to be Māori because the Treaty of Waitangi is very strong and we are supposed to be adhering to it".*

Teresa's account, in contrast, does not indicate any of the tensions that Jemma reported. Instead, her intersectional location as a Pakehā woman have provided her with privilege. Such tensions have implications for the availability, meaningfulness and benefits of sponsorship for ethnic minority women. From the perspective of women's careers, when ethnic minorities are expected to sponsor other ethnic minorities there is a risk of both placing the burden of inclusiveness on ethnic minorities themselves, as well as perhaps further limiting opportunities to receive sponsoring for individuals belonging to ethnic minorities, given that not only ethnic minorities but also women receive less sponsorship than men (e.g. Ehrich, 2008; Hewlett, 2013; Hewlett et al., 2010; Ibarra et al., 2010; Kanter, 1977; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010; Paddison, 2013; Sandler, 2014).

7.6 Challenges of discrimination and gratitude

Perceptions of gratitude were a key component of ethnic minority participants' sponsoring relationships. While accounts of non-minority participants also indicated a sense of gratefulness towards their sponsors, it was not linked to the perception of inevitable day-to-day marginalisation due to their intersecting identities. In their

sponsoring relationships, there was a sense of unexpected help in what were perceived as discriminatory yet inescapable circumstances. This resulted in a feeling of gratitude towards the sponsor, who was viewed as having rescued them from a challenging situation.

As discussed in Chapter Five, from a psychological perspective gratitude indicates an emotion that occurs as a result of reviewing a specific life situation, and realising that another individual is responsible for something good that has happened (Emmons, 2004; McCullough et al., 2002; Watkins, Emmons & McCullough, 2004). Gratitude is likely to last longer when an event is deemed important (Verduyn, Delvaux, van Coillie, Tuerlinckx & van Mechelen, 2009). This was the case for Melissa and Valerie in their reflections on feelings of gratitude towards their sponsors from the past. Melissa believed that her career would be restricted, based on workplace experiences as a Māori woman. She considered Ibrahim, who was the *"only Māori partner"* in the firm that she worked in, a key sponsor. Ibrahim's help was vital for her career because he overtly supported her as a Māori woman in a large organisation which was dominated by non-Māori men, and enabled her to overcome the barriers of ethnicity and gender:

> *"He gave me my first client and said go do what you have to do. He let me spread my wings so to speak, fully supported me and trained me on how to be the confident accountant that I needed to be. He gave me the confidence to try and I did. I could have continued to be the back office accountant if he had not given me the opportunity that he gave me".*

Attribution

Attribution theory (Forsterling, 2001; Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1973; Kelley & Michela, 1980; Shaver, 1983; Thibaut & Riecken, 1955; Weiner, 2004) suggests that individuals attribute the behaviour of others either to their innate characteristics (internal attribution) or to the circumstances surrounding the behaviour (external attribution). Causal attributions explain how individuals explain their own behaviour as well as that of others (Kelley, 1973) and gratitude has been shown to affect causal attributions (Jackson, Lewandowski, Fleury & Chin, 2001).

When ethnic minority participants identified sponsors in the midst of broader obvious or subtle stereotyping and discrimination, it is likely that they attributed such behaviour to the sponsors' the inherent helpful or altruistic traits of the sponsors, rather than considering other factors involved. This was also the case with participants who had prior behavioural expectation from people in certain contexts, for example towards Māori women or migrants. When they encountered people displaying behaviour that did not conform to these preconceptions, and who helped their careers, they felt a sense of gratitude towards the person displaying that behaviour. As a result, any other explanations or reasons for the sponsor's behaviour and help were perhaps not as evident. For example, Valerie might have been offered a job because there was a need for more staff in that area or in Melissa's case her sponsor may have wanted someone else in a senior position to help with his work.

The notion of gratitude sometimes also occasioned sponsees to accord their sponsors superior status, untouched by what was happening around them in the workplace or sometimes more broadly in the social context. The sponsee felt gratitude towards the

sponsor for help provided on the one hand, while experiencing stereotyping and discrimination within and outside the workplace on the other. There was also a sense that the sponsee viewed the sponsor as a saviour, similar to a romanticised view of a charismatic leader, where any potential 'dark' side to their personality or actions was possibly ignored (Bass, 1988; Bligh, Kohles, Pearce, Justin, & Stovall, 2007; Degroot, Kiker & Cross, 2000).

However, such positive impressions sometimes changed as in the case of Jasmine. The 'halo effect' explains how 'positive first impressions' lead to subsequent impressions that are positive due to the assumption that they would all be similar to the first, and this is responsible for the difficulty in changing the positive image that the first impression may have created in an individual's mind (Forgas & Laham, 2009; Nisbett & De Camp-Wilson, 1977; Rasmussen, 2008). However, this perception may change when something to the contrary happens. Jasmine's positive first impression of her sponsor as a benevolent individual who gave her a career in New Zealand were only dispelled when she found that she may be at the receiving end of unfair practices by him, by being paid lower than another equally qualified woman.

Gratitude has also been shown to contribute towards the formation and development of relationships, as well as to the connectedness and satisfaction experienced within relationships (Algoe, Fredrickson & Gable 2013; Algoe, Haidt & Gable, 2008; Wood, Froh & Geraghty, 2010). When a person shows gratitude, this itself may well be the beginning of a relationship (e.g. Algoe et al., 2008; Lambert & Fincham, 2011), and even friendship. Therefore, gratitude may also have contributed towards the development of sponsoring relationships. In addition, gratitude as a psychological construct has been shown to give rise to altruistic behaviour (McCullough et al., 2001;

Nowak & Roch, 2007). In the gift-giving framework of sponsoring proposed in Chapter Five of this thesis, I discussed how a deep sense of gratitude would motivate an individual to do something similar for others or which gives rise to the notion of altruistic giving. The findings presented in this chapter, Chapter Seven, indicate the possible reasons behind the sense of gratitude among participants belonging to ethnic minorities, and highlight that these reasons are directly linked to their intersectional locations, which in turn may influence their own motivation to sponsor others.

Obligation and indebtedness

Examination of the accounts of ethnic minority participants also reveals that not all of them experienced gratitude. Instead, some participants expressed feeling obliged and indebted. This indebtedness was observed in Paula's extract of feeling obliged to give back, something she stated others in similar positions as her (migrants) had also done. Similarly, when help was expected due to ethnic affinity with a group, as in Leah's case, it was understood that someone from that ethnic group would reach out and provide support. Such prior expectations also sometimes obligated a sponsor or sponsee to help other people of the same ethnic group, evident in Jemma's account of being expected to sponsor other Māori.

Although the terms gratitude and indebtedness tend to be used interchangeably, as a psychological construct they are different and experienced as different things in people's minds (Gray, Emmons & Morrison, 2001; McCullough et al., 2008; Watkins, Scheer, Ovnicek & Kolts, 2006). Gratitude is considered to be an intrinsically good emotion which is accompanied by positive feelings whereas Indebtedness is a negative psychological construct which is accompanied by a negative state of mind

and is associated with the notion of reciprocity or returning a favour or repaying (Watkins et al., 2006). For example, the notion of reciprocity is quite strong in Māori culture and referred to as *koha* or *utu*, however the expectation from Jemma to help other Māori was experienced as obligatory and gave rise to underlying tensions, a negative state of mind. Thus, indebtedness and obligation may sometimes make the experience of sponsoring less positive for ethnic minority participants, potentially diminishing the ensuing benefits.

7.7 Power imbalances

Finally, the findings suggest that the notion of being helped in the midst of discriminatory circumstances and the associated sense of dependency upon a sponsor by ethnic minority participants might result in power imbalances in sponsoring relationships. Engaging in sponsoring relationships became challenging for Sophie, as an ethnic minority migrant, when she moved into a leadership position and suddenly lost the support of her Pakehā sponsors:

> *"This is where for the first time it occurred to me that there is a strand of something troubling among Pākehās. Pākehās are great when they feel they are in this more dominant role of being kind and helpful and being the ones who are doing good. There is shift in how they apprehend you if they are being told what to do or if somebody else is in a role whereby there is a shift in the direction of the hierarchy. It is the first time you realise there is a subtle hierarchy here. So as long as I was the South Asian over there who was this person who was helped by everybody it was all nice and friendly,*

but not as somebody who was not requiring any help, who was someone who was now leading this thing".

Sophie's experience could be the result of factors such as resentment and distancing, which have been reported in past research when peers become managers or subordinates become superior in positional power (Dogan & Vecchio, 2001; Menon & Thompson, 2010; Schaubroeck & Lam, 2004). However, her statement also indicates that perhaps her sponsors perceived the ethnic minority sponsee as someone in need of their support, and this was their motivation to sponsor. Research on mentoring has indicated that ethnic minority participants are often viewed as weaker and in need of help and thus the help provided by their mentors is considered the reason for their success in workplaces, which has reciprocal benefits for a mentor whose reputation is enhanced due to the protégé's success (e.g. Ragins, 1997).

Sophie's account suggests that these dynamics may also be evident in sponsoring relationships. When an ethnic minority individual was less likely to be considered weak or needy, such as when occupying a powerful position, this help was not perceived as needed. The sponsors may also have considered that the achievement of the minority sponsee would no longer be linked to their help, and hence without any reciprocal benefits. Thus, some sponsors belonging to ethnic majorities may consciously or subconsciously prefer to maintain power imbalances in their sponsoring relationships with ethnic minorities.

Research in New Zealand also shows that Pakehā insecurity sometimes drives efforts to support ethnic minority individuals and groups (e.g. Crawford, 2016; Rata, 2005; Sibley, Wilson & Robertson, 2007), which may have driven sponsorship efforts by

Sophie's Pakehā sponsors, who no longer felt that sense of obligation when Sophie advanced in her career, and were no longer available for help and support. Past research also indicates that the authority of women of colour is often resisted (Byrd, 2009, Catalyst, 2004), and that there are negative stereotypes associated with women of specific ethnicities such as Asian or African American which lead to such resistance (Kawahara, Esnil & Hsu, 2007; Sanchez-Hucles & Sanchez, 2007). The resistance to engage in equal power relationships with ethnic minorities was also evident in Nel's description of her not being able to be more directive with her colleagues since she was a South Asian migrant: *"And just the fact that I am an South Asian woman so who am I to tell them what to do".*

Power relations

Broadly resonant of the Rowland's (1995) model of power, earlier introduced with respect to power imbalances and empowerment in sponsoring relationships, from a sociological perspective power, refers to the social relationships between various groups underpinned by equal or unequal money, resources, or authority (e.g. Blau, 2017; Martin, 1977; Ragins, 1997; Wilson, 1983). A sociological perspective of power helps in understanding power dynamics between social groups, in how one group influences another and is especially helpful in understanding relationships between ethnic minorities and non-minorities (Baker, 1983; Bloemraad, 2013; Bloemraad & Schonwalder, 2013; Pio, 2007b; Ragins, 1997; van Dijk, 2008; Verkuyten, 2006). Being considered an ethnic minority is thus more to do with these power imbalances than numbers. The individual perspectives about power as the ability to influence and make decisions are embedded within these broader organisational and social power

relations (Ragins, 1997).

Findings around perceived implicit discrimination highlight the existing power structures between dominant and non-dominant groups within organisations and the contexts within which these organisations function, which may also determine who is sponsored and how people experience sponsoring, for example Sophie. These power imbalances may be problematic for individuals in being able to engage in sponsoring relationships. On the other hand, they may also be the reason that sponsorship was - initiated in the first place. For example, the sense of obligation to sponsor others in the same ethnic group and helping those who are considered subordinate in power as a result of their perceived identify.

It is worth reiterating that the sponsoring relationships, which were experienced at varied intersectional locations, were themselves located within broader social, cultural and organisational contexts. These contexts presented existing power imbalances between dominant and non-dominant social groups, which were enabling for some people and challenging for others and which also influenced their perceptions and experiences. For example, while Melissa and Geoff both described ethnic discrimination, gender was a compounding factor for Melissa but not for Geoff, influencing the former's interest in sponsoring Māori women. Similarly, identifying with more than one ethnicity was enabling for Teresa who was visibly Pakehā and identified Māori values and culture, but challenging for Jemma who was visibly Māori but also identified with Pakehā values and culture.

Findings addressed in this chapter highlight both the individual power imbalances within sponsoring relationships involving ethnic minority participants, through influence and dependence, and the broader structural organisational and social power differentials that they encountered, both of which shape their experiences of sponsoring.

Finally, another power related issue exposed by the current study is the concept of intersectional invisibility explains how individuals who belong to multiple subordinate groups become invisible because they do not fit the archetype of dominant social groups (Purdie-Vaughn & Eibach, 2008; Shields, 2008). For example, a Māori woman is neither a man nor Pakehā and thus may be perceived as double jeopardy because she does not accrue benefits of both socially dominant groups – men and Pākehā. Further, if she does not look Māori then she is even more invisible or, as in the case of Jemma, if she does not look Pākehā but identifies as Pākehā. Findings suggest that the opportunities for ethnic minority women to form sponsoring relationships may be fewer, and more complicated and complex, than those for non-ethnic minority women. Thus, there is a need to move beyond intersectional invisibility in workplaces and in sponsoring research to address how these identity and status factors combine to affect opportunities to establish sponsoring relationships. This will more richly inform the practice of sponsoring, and thus make it more widely available.

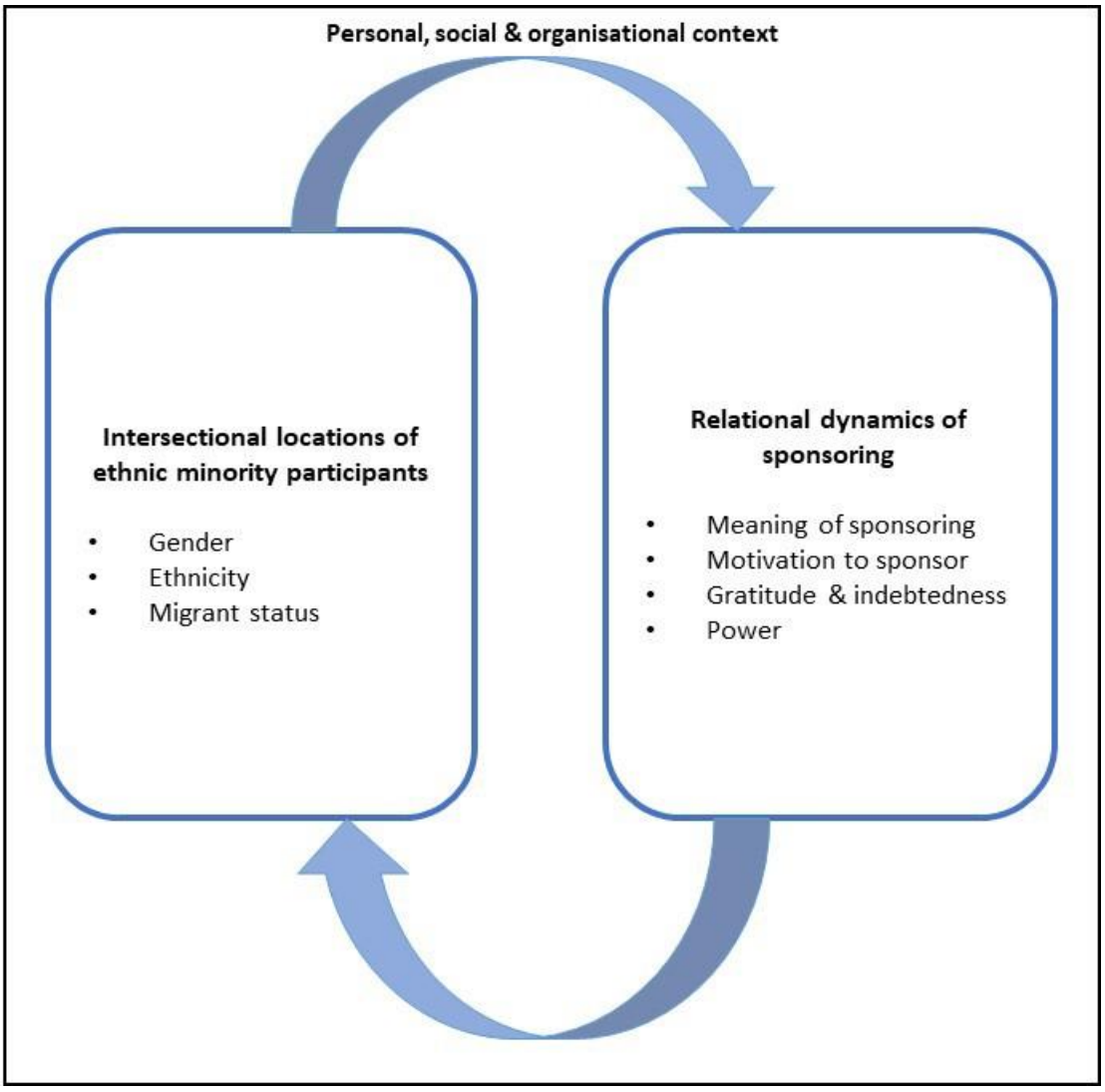
7.8 Relational dynamics of sponsorship involving ethnic minority participants

Findings presented in this chapter highlight the challenges which ethnic minority participants experienced and how they influenced their sponsoring relationships. While sponsoring was considered particularly helpful to career progress by all the

participants of this research and the help from sponsors was valued, for Māori, Pasifika and South Asian participants, sponsoring was consistently related to the issues they faced as ethnic minorities in workplaces and was pivotal for their career in various ways. This sometimes happened as a result of being given a chance in a tough situation, for example when they migrated to New Zealand, as was the case for Valerie and Jasmine, or by being given an opportunity when it was greatly needed, such as when they were struggling as an ethnic minority to advance in their career as Melissa highlighted. At other times, it was significant because it provided a supportive environment for recent ethnic minority migrants and helped them cross ethnic barriers in the workplace. Irrespective of the reason, the descriptions of sponsoring were tied to their struggles as ethnic minority migrants, and/or as Māori or Pasifika women in New Zealand.

The findings suggest that the meaning attributed to sponsoring by ethnic minority participants was influenced by their intersectional positions (ethnic minority men and women, ethnic minority migrant women) which elicited the notion of gratitude and/or indebtedness from sponsees towards their sponsors, and influenced the sponsors' sponsoring efforts. The intersectional positions of participants also led to certain relational behaviours (for example giving back to New Zealand, sponsoring other ethnic minorities; unwilling to support ethnic minorities when they are not perceived as needy) and perceptual experiences (gratitude towards sponsor). Finally, personal, social and organisational contexts in which these sponsoring relationships occurred resulted in issues related to power. The interdependence of the intersectional locations of ethnic minority participants and the relational dynamics observed is depicted in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Intersectional Locations and Relational Dynamics of Sponsoring



7.9 Conclusion

Findings discussed in this chapter focussed on the influence of intersectional locations of ethnic minority participants on experiences of sponsorship. Participants' experiences of workplace bias and discrimination ultimately influenced their sponsoring experiences, and the meanings they attributed to sponsorship. These experiences, however, were diverse. Individual experiences varied due to the feelings about ethnic identity, where they were in their careers and integration into New

Zealand society and organisations, even amongst those with similar social characteristics, for example gender and ethnicity. In turn, sponsorship prompted feelings of gratitude and/or indebtedness in sponsees. Intersectional locations also influenced participants' motivation to provide sponsorship. Findings, however, also indicate that the influences of ethnicity, gender and migrant identity were changeable and intertwined, and varied over time. Thus, the intersectional positons of participants influenced the experiences they had and the influence of one or other identity on one or other experience cannot and should not be neatly separated.

In the next chapter (Chapter Eight), I suggest rethinking sponsoring. Further, I propose a re-conceptualised sponsorship model that is informed by the findings of this study presented in previous chapters, which offers a broader and pragmatic view of sponsoring and extends its extant understanding.

Chapter Eight: Re-conceptualising Sponsorship

The focus of this research was to better understand the sponsoring relationship through an exploration of sponsor and sponsee experiences. Sponsorship is typically understood in functional, instrumental terms as a practice in which sponsors facilitate sponsees' career advancement, sometimes in return for loyalty and/or information (e.g. Hewlett, 2013; Hewlett et al., 2010; Rezvani, 2014). The findings here, however, show sponsorship is experienced on a continuum of instrumental and relational exchanges, rather than being entirely instrumental in character. Consequently, in this chapter I propose a re-conceptualised model of sponsorship drawn out of the analysis discussed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

8.1 Rethinking sponsorship

The findings discussed in the previous three chapters contribute to how sponsoring relationships in workplaces can be understood and conceptualised, simultaneously affirming the current definition and highlighting ways in which we can rethink sponsoring. The evidence reinforces the functional validity and utility of current understandings of sponsorship being defined as a practice, whereby sponsors facilitate sponsees' career advancement to senior leadership positions through influencing promotion decisions, enabling networks with senior leaders and increasing a sponsee's visibility, (e.g. de Vries & Binns, 2018; Ehrich, 2008; Foust-Cummings et al., 2011; Hewlett et al., 2010; Hewlett et al., 2012; Ibarra et al., 2010; Kambil, 2010;

Paddison, 2013; Travis et al., 2013). The existing definition highlights the core focus and major tangible results of sponsorship, that of the sponsor facilitating the sponsee's career advancement and serves to distinguish how sponsorship differs from other developmental practices or helping relationships, such as coaching and mentoring. However, through examining the relational practices and relationship dynamics involved in sponsorship, my findings indicate the need to rethink sponsorship in ways that better reveal its multi-dimensional character, diverse practices and impacts. The findings provide empirical support for extending our understanding of what sponsorship in the workplace means to individuals and the effects and benefits it generates for them.

The existing literature positions workplace sponsorship as an instrumental exchange where sponsors (senior staff) advocate for their sponsees' (junior staff) career advancement, often in return for benefits such as satisfaction, loyalty and/or supplying information (e.g. Hewlett, 2013; Hewlett et al., 2010; Rezvani, 2014). However, my research shows we can also understand sponsorship as a relational practice with multiple dimensions, giving rise to a diverse range of overt and often unstated benefits and obligations, both personal and professional in nature. The instrumental aspect of the relationship, with give and take exchanges, is, thus, only part of what sponsorship involves.

These insights enable a rethinking of sponsorship, highlighting the potential for it to be a meaningful relationship involving a sense of connectedness, friendship, caring and nurturing, all of which contribute holistically towards sponsees' career advancement. The sponsoring relationship can also at times encompass other developmental

practices, such as coaching and mentoring. Fundamentally, these sponsoring relationships are built on perceptions of trust, generosity, gratitude, kindness and empathy.

Sponsorship can consequently be likened to an intangible gift to a sponsee, often driven by altruism, while the advancement of a sponsee's career is a product of career advice, encouragement and providing opportunities. The sponsoring relationship can create an enduring bond, which may continue beyond the workplace. It can foster a sense of gratitude in the sponsee, who is then motivated to pass this gift onto others. There are variations in the giving and receiving within a sponsoring relationship: giving may not always be altruistic and may sometimes involve expectations of reciprocity and obligation. Sometimes sponsors may also benefit from sponsoring relationships, even though these benefits may not always be evident to sponsees and/or sponsors at the time.

Sponsoring relationships therefore lie on a continuum comprising instrumental and relational characteristics, as detailed in the gift-giving framework of sponsorship in Chapter Five (Figure 5.1, p. 148). Sponsorship has blurred boundaries with respect to people, place, context and interactions. There are spatial (including both the workplace and outside) and temporal (across time and enduring) dimensions to sponsoring relationships. Accordingly, sponsorship might extend beyond a given workplace, involve sponsors who may or may not be in formal positions of influence or power, involve other developmental and supportive practices such as mentoring and/or coaching, and continue over time.

Sponsorship is a practice that facilitates women's career advancement (e.g. de Vries & Binns, 2018; Hewlett et al., 2010; Hewlett et al., 2012; McKinsey & Company, 2018). While the core definition of sponsorship continues to have utility in offering conceptual boundaries, helping theorists to distinguish sponsorship from other developmental practices such as coaching and mentoring, in practice sponsoring relationships tend to be multi-dimensional in character. The complex nature of sponsoring relationships found in this research thus enables a *rethinking* of workplace sponsorship as a relational practice consisting of both instrumental and relational exchanges.

8.2 A relational perspective

The closeness in relationships between two people is determined by several factors such as personality, behaviour and context (e.g. Duck, 2007; Sias & Cahill, 1998; Wu, Foo & Turban, 2008), and any of these factors could have been responsible for the closeness and connectedness experienced by participants. However, research also suggests that closeness and connectedness in relationships is positively influenced by relational practice, which emphasises the ability to connect with and build relations with others in organisations (Fletcher, 2001; Jordan, 2008; Liang, Tracy, Taylor, Williams, Jordan & Miller, 2002; Miller, 1986; Surrey, 1985; Weisinger, 1998).

Relational skills and practices, such as the sense of connectedness and empathy contributed to participants' experiences of enduring sponsoring relationships. This understanding of sponsoring thus included a relationship focus rather than just outcome focus. The role of connectivity and relationships is significant in women's career progress, thus paying attention to the relational practices that constitute sponsoring is essential (e.g. Fletcher, 2001; Jordan, 2008; Miller, 1986; Sias, 2009).

The findings support a more relational approach of sponsoring, one that focusses on how sponsoring is shaped by relationships between individuals.

A relational perspective suggests that individuals grow and develop in relation to others, and not in isolation. Relational practices involve connections and collaborations (Fletcher, 2004; Jordan, Hartling & Walker, 2004; Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Such relationships have the potential to benefit both parties through influencing and learning from each other, both within and outside the workplace context (e.g. Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Ragins & Button, 2007; Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; Higgins, Dobrow & Roloff, 2010; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Ragins & Verbos, 2007; Roberts, 2007). Therefore, a relational approach of sponsorship moves away from an instrumental model that supports growth in isolation, towards a model based on the notion that human beings long for connections (e.g. Blustein, 2011, Bowlby, 1977; Jordan, 2004, 2008). Such an approach would have the potential for mutual growth and development of those involved, and result in extending the benefits of sponsorship to women beyond those looking for promotions and/or being in positional leadership.

The findings of my research indicate that relational strengths were valued by participants, and constituted a significant part of the sponsoring relationship, with ensuing career enhancing benefits. Yet, research to date has indicated that relational practice is often actively erased and overlooked in organisations because it is associated with feminine ways of being, viewed as a soft approach, and often given an “off record status” (Holmes & Marra, 2004, p. 379) as a feminine stereotype and gendered activity (e.g. Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Fletcher, 2001; Holmes & Schnurr, 2006; Padavic & Reskin, 2002). Research in New Zealand has also demonstrated that

it is often discounted in workplaces as background practice (Holmes & Marra, 2004).

Findings focussing on benevolence, kindness, connectedness and caring within sponsoring relationships, challenge the current gendered understanding of sponsoring, which does not take into consideration what are viewed as more feminine qualities. Relational strengths, such as the ability to connect with others and empathy, are often devalued because they are described through language that implies weakness rather than strength, for example, being “emotionally needy or overly dependent on relationships” (Miller, 1976, p. 360).

Relational theory has informed the literature on high quality workplace connections and positive interactions (Dutton, 2003), and postulates that people who engage in relational interactions experience a further longing for such connections (Miller, 1986). Thus, in a Relational Sponsorship Model a sponsor contributes to a sponsee’s growth as well as grow in return, and the sponsee in turn makes a contribution to another sponsee’s growth and so on, making sponsoring more widely available. This would be a positive outcome of a sponsoring relationship for women’s career advancement as it paves the way for continued support for other women. Relational interactions between individuals create the environment for progress to occur both by enhancing individual potential - for example relational processes lead to improved self-esteem and likelihood of success and achievement (Miller, 1986), and also by influencing organisational culture positively by facilitating the development of processes conducive to positive workplace relationships (Dutton & Ragins, 2007). Thus, relational practice and relational models of sponsoring can also help address disempowering dynamics within sponsoring relationships, such as those revealed in

my research (Fletcher, 2004). This suggested relational focus has implications for practice.

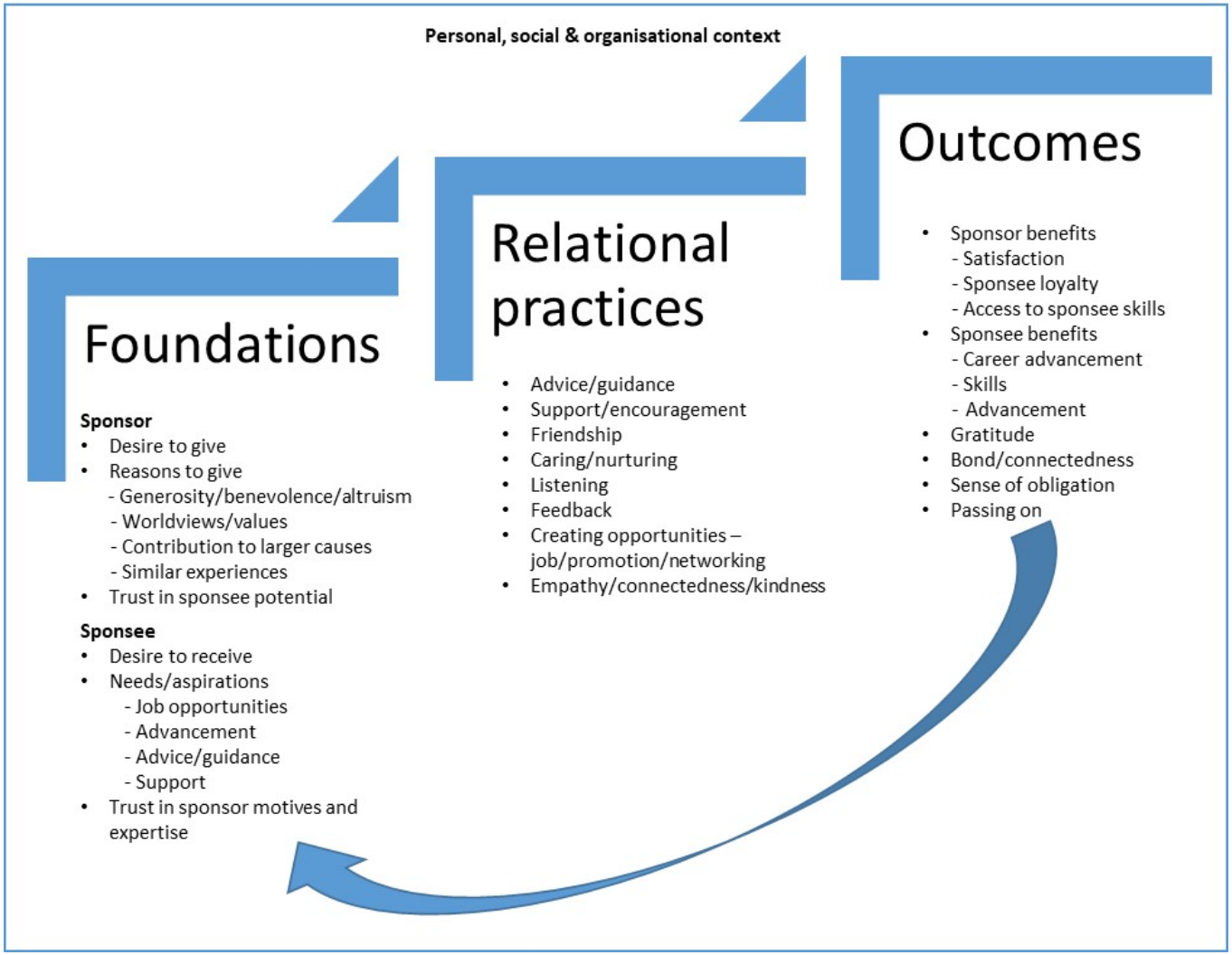
8.3 Re-conceptualised model of sponsorship

The re-conceptualised model of sponsorship (Figure 8.1) moves beyond the current understanding of sponsoring as merely an instrumental exchange and highlights its relational aspects. This relational model situates sponsorship within both organisational and non-organisational settings. It constitutes three elements, namely, foundations, relational practices and outcomes. In the model, the underpinning foundations of sponsorship include sponsor and sponsee motivations and needs such as the desire to give, trust in sponsee's potential, the desire to receive and sponsee needs. The relational practices of sponsorship comprise actions such as empathy, connectedness, trust, guidance, advice, support and encouragement. Outcomes of sponsorship comprise career and relational benefits for sponsors and sponsees, gratitude and obligation.

The term 'sponsorship' has been deliberately chosen in preference to the more common 'sponsoring'. Up until his point I have chosen to use sponsoring and sponsorship reasonably interchangeably, nonetheless favouring the former (and now well established) term: sponsoring. The model, in capturing a more complex and multifaceted, *relationship* driven understanding of the sponsor-sponsee association, has moved me to favour 'sponsorship' as a descriptive term. For me, the term sponsorship resonates with relationship oriented meanings that this research has showcased: terms such as partnership, friendship and leadership, which cannot occur without at least two parties.

In sum, the re-conceptualised model of sponsorship enables a richer, broader and deeper understanding of sponsoring. It also explains some of the differences and nuances found in participants' experiences of sponsorship. The model suggests that there is a need to recognise and value a wider range of sponsorship interactions, and that policies and programmes focussing on sponsorship need to move beyond considering it as an instrumental exchange and include both organisational and non-organisational contexts in sponsoring efforts, in order to truly achieve the desired outcomes from sponsorship for women's career advancement.

Figure 8.1. Relational Sponsorship Model



This chapter serves to rethink sponsoring as a relational practice, and proposes a re-conceptualised model of sponsorship. Chapter Nine will bring together findings from chapters Five, Six and Seven and draw conclusions relating to scholarship, practice, policy and future research on sponsorship.

Chapter Nine: Conclusions and Implications

This final chapter synthesises all the findings of this study and the Relational Sponsorship Model discussed in Chapter Eight, and highlights the ensuing implications for scholarship, practice, policy and research.

9.1 Overview

This research is a result of my broad interest in women's career advancement, and, more specifically, my curiosity about widespread claims of sponsoring's potential to address issues of women's advancement in organisations. Sponsoring has thus far been conceptualised as an instrumental exchange resulting in benefits such as promotions and raises for sponsees. It has been argued that making sponsoring available to women would significantly increase the number of women in senior leadership. Informed by my prior research on the perceptions of sponsoring, my doctoral research objective was to understand how sponsees and sponsors experienced the sponsoring relationship in order to better understand the nature of sponsoring.

The findings of this study challenge the dominant understanding of sponsorship as an instrumental exchange and re-conceptualise it as a practice characterised by relational interactions, underpinned by generosity, friendship and kindness, all of which shaped its significance to those involved. While sponsorship led to positive career outcomes for sponsees, and sometimes, sponsors, the relational experience was broader and

deeper, affecting both parties professionally and personally. Those relational interactions and enduring sense of connection made sponsoring meaningful, and in many cases sparked a desire to extend a similar experience to others. The complex nature of the relationship and sponsoring's relational character needs to therefore be recognised as what makes the process meaningful for sponsors and sponsees.

Women's career progress can be enabled through several dimensions. In the organisational context some of these are: individual (skill development); organisational (through supportive organisational culture, structures and policies), and relational through the support of colleagues and managers. My findings indicate that the experiences of sponsorship spanned all these dimensions, and contribute towards a model of sponsorship extending beyond the common conception of sponsoring. The findings also indicate that not all sponsoring relationships have similar dynamics, even though they may lead to similar instrumental and/or relational outcomes. It is therefore important to recognize and support the range of sponsoring relationships that occur within workplaces by rethinking and redesigning sponsorship efforts to reflect the diverse needs of women.

Issues and challenges associated with sponsoring relationships, particularly those involving women of colour were explored. Findings suggest that the intersectional locations of participants influence the meaning attributed to sponsorship, exposing more complexities, by moving beyond gender and considering individual intersectional locations. Three key themes emerged from the findings and enabled an insight into the characteristics of sponsorship – giving and receiving, the multifaceted quality of sponsorship and the role of ethnicity in the experiences of sponsorship.

Giving and receiving

Sponsorship involves a complex, relational exchange process involving benefits for both parties and these can be conceptualised as a continuum. This conceptualisation goes beyond extant theories of sponsoring.

The first theme focussed on the giving and receiving in sponsoring relationships, highlighting the variations in this aspect of the relationship. Giving had generous underpinnings, however it was not always altruistic and sometimes involved reciprocity and obligation. While all sponsees benefitted from the relationship, at times, there were also benefits for a sponsor, which may or may not be evident and overt. Figure 5.1, p. 148, depicts the gift-giving framework of sponsoring developed from the findings. Mauss (1954) and Hyde's (1983) theories of gift exchanges informed the model and enabled a deeper understanding of the giving and receiving in sponsorship. The framework proposes that sponsoring relationships span a continuum from gift exchanges to market-oriented, instrumental exchanges. It conceives of sponsorship as comprising relationships placed at various locations on this continuum, highlighting key characteristics of that relationship that are meaningful for people, how it might come about and the resulting benefits for both sponsors and sponsees. Viewed through this framework, the extant understanding of sponsoring appears limiting, as it positions sponsorship towards the instrumental exchange side of the continuum, potentially ignoring the wider benefits that ensue from relationships, which also include non-instrumental exchanges. The continuum also exposes the inherent difficulty in providing an unequivocal definition of sponsorship, with several variants possible at each position on the continuum.

Multifaceted sponsoring relationships

Sponsorship is multifaceted and relational, not merely instrumental.

The second theme concentrated on the multidimensional nature of sponsoring relationships. The findings indicated that there was an exchange of benefits in sponsoring relationships, and additionally, participants experienced sponsorship as a meaningful relationship involving a sense of connectedness, friendship, caring and nurturing. This contrasts with conventional notions of sponsoring as an instrumental practice oriented toward tangible benefits such as advocating for raises and promotions. However, there were differences in some of the dynamics of the sponsoring relationship based on the gender of sponsors and sponsees. For example, female sponsors were expected to be more caring and nurturing, while male sponsors were approached for more instrumental outcomes. These gender differences revealed the unconscious and systemic biases, and gender stereotypes that exist in organisations and society, and have implications for female sponsors – when women take on the role of sponsor there may be different expectations based on their gender which may create greater demands on them. Further, the findings revealed that the relationship was not necessarily empowering for all the sponsees, with disempowering dynamics and a sense of dependency upon the sponsor in some relationships (Figure 6.1, p. 184).

Role of ethnicity in sponsoring relationships

Intersectional positions influence sponsorship and are crucial considerations for the design and implementation of sponsoring programmes. Intersectionality highlights that sponsorship has special significance for women whose ethnicity and migrant or

indigenous status distinguishes them from the majority ethnic group in a work environment.

The third theme highlighted the sponsoring experiences of women who came from diverse backgrounds with respect to ethnicity, place of birth, and sense of belonging (Figure 7.1, p. 223). The challenges experienced by people at the intersections of their gender, ethnicity and migrant or indigenous status were highlighted. These intersectional positions influenced the availability of sponsoring, participant perception of the sponsoring relationship and the meaning attributed to it, as well as their motivation to sponsor and seek sponsors. The findings revealed that participants' experiences of systemic and organisational discrimination were closely associated with the meanings they derived from their sponsoring relationships. A sponsor was viewed as someone untouched by these systemic and organisational biases, stereotypes and discriminatory practices due to the perception of help provided by the sponsor despite these conditions. The resulting gratitude and indebtedness was a key feature of their descriptions of the relationship. Their accounts also revealed the power dynamics between ethnic majority and minority individuals and groups in organisations, which reinforced the existing structures of privilege in organisations and possibly diminished the availability and beneficial outcomes of sponsorship for people who were not privileged with these existing structures.

9.2 Meaningful connections beyond formal and organisational roles and relationships

Sponsorship is a relationship characterised by deeply felt, often enduring, meaningful connections that are distinct from some other [superficial] types of workplace interactions.

Examination of findings indicate that people engage in various types of interactions and develop connections in their professional lives which have a range of different characteristics and personal meanings. Participants formed meaningful connections during the course of their life either within (managers, bosses, colleagues) or outside their work context (for example family, friends and educators). They reported connecting with diverse people in their lives and engaging in different types of relationships, which they variously described as networking, mentoring and sponsoring. They considered some of them as meaningful connections. Others, such as networking, were viewed as connections that were not deep and meaningful. The meaningful connections that participants experienced were a result of positive engagement between sponsors and sponsees. These meaningful connections contributed towards their careers in a myriad of instrumental and relational ways (formal and informal), all of which were valued and sometimes occurred simultaneously within the same relationship. When connections were valued, they left a lasting impression on the individual.

9.3 A complex and dynamic relationship

Sponsorship can be conceived as a relational practice between two parties that is characterised by an interplay of many factors including personal attributes of the sponsor and sponsee, motivations of the players, the meanings they attribute to the activity and the inherent power imbalance.

Collectively, findings emphasise the complexity inherent in sponsoring relationships and the various aspects of the relationship, which the current understanding of sponsoring does not take into account. Analysis provides an insight into the nature of the sponsoring relationship, the factors that influence sponsoring relationships, and

some of the associated challenges and issues. The sponsoring relationship is characterised by features such as the giving and receiving, the sense of gratitude or obligation experienced by sponsees, and the beneficial outcomes for the sponsee, and sometimes for the sponsor. These features are products of the interplay between the three aspects of sponsorship proposed in the Relational Sponsorship Model (Figure 8.1). It is experienced as a meaningful connection consisting of varied and inter-dependent interactions, both instrumental and non-instrumental in nature. Regardless, the relationship is influenced by the social, organisational and personal context. These findings suggest that the current understanding of sponsoring requires broadening in order to generate a more realistic view of sponsorship which takes into account the diverse characteristics of this complex relationship, and the context in which they occur.

9.4 Recasting sponsoring as a relational model of sponsorship

Sponsorship in practice is not a purely, or even dominantly, instrumental activity. Rather, it can be conceptualised as a multidimensional, complex, dynamic interplay of personal and professional motivations and needs of participants; relational practices; and professional and personal outcomes.

Synthesising all the themes introduced in the preceding sections, the Relational Sponsorship (see Figure 8.1) extends the current understanding of sponsoring and suggests that sponsorship is a relational practice. This practice is underpinned by interpersonal trust, sponsor generosity and sponsee gratitude. It is broadly oriented toward enabling sponsees' career advancement by way of advice, support, encouragement and sometimes, the provision of specific opportunities. Because of this, sponsorship may at particular moments overlap with mentoring and/or coaching.

However, its specific relational dynamics means it is a distinct, multi-dimensional phenomenon. These relational dynamics comprise: trust; giving, receiving and possibly passing on of an intangible gift, originating in the sponsor's benevolence and/or desire to influence the sponsee's career; caring/nurturing, friendship, empathy, support and guidance; the enduring influence of the sponsor in the sponsee's mind; the sponsee's sense of gratitude and/or obligation toward the sponsor. Its broad orientation and relational character means sponsorship should not be conceived of, or defined, in solely instrumental terms. This re-conceptualisation of sponsoring as a relational practice of *sponsorship* (a term proposed as an accurate descriptor for the practice) not only helps us understand the phenomenon better, it has significant implications for practice and policy, and in particular the implementation of sponsoring programmes.

9.5 Implications for practice and policy

From a practice perspective, findings suggest a different, more integrated, approach to sponsorship than currently followed. The Relational Sponsorship Model (Figure 8.1) suggests a need to recognise and focus on the foundational elements and relational practices of sponsorship, in order to realise beneficial outcomes. This means organisational acknowledgement of the emotional and psychological investment on the part of both sponsor and sponsee, awareness of associated issues and challenges, and provision of a conducive organisational environment. Additionally, intersectionality reveals that special considerations should be given to issues of gender and ethnicity and/or migrant or indigenous identity when designing sponsorship programmes.

Utilising the Relational Sponsorship Model

The relational dynamics of sponsorship illustrated in the Relational Sponsorship Model (Figure 8.1), which conceptualises sponsorship as a complex relationship with foundational aspects, relational practices and outcomes, recognises the diversity of women, and make the relationship more meaningful for sponsors and sponsees. Hence, this model could be used to inform the design of sponsorship initiatives, and be used to examine sponsorship programmes within organisations and sponsoring relationships that are emergent or organic, in order to evaluate what may be most beneficial for women[1].

Understanding networking and creating networking opportunities

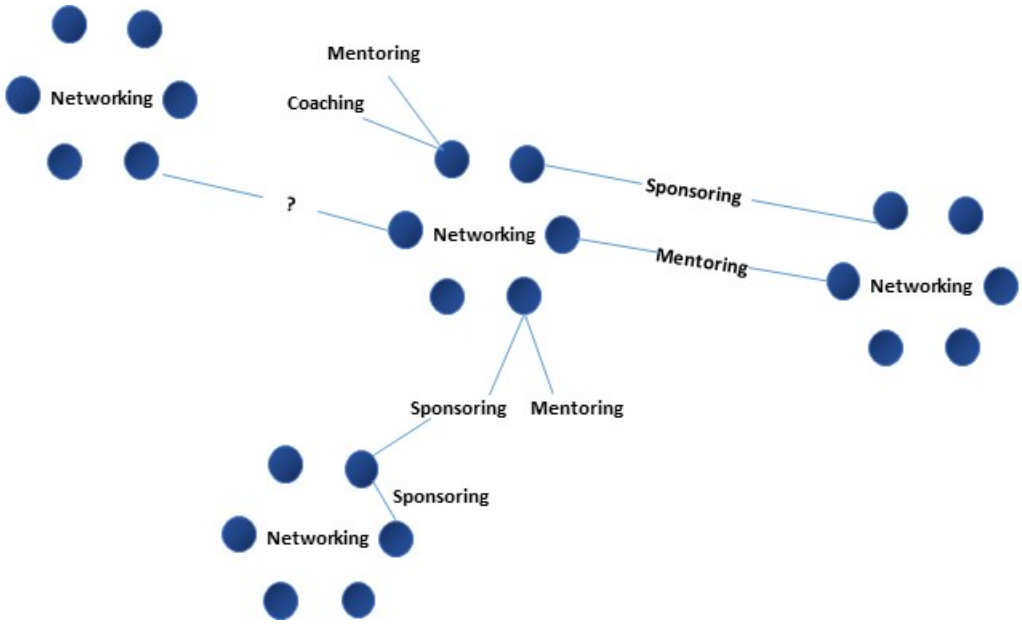
Women have fewer opportunities to form sponsoring relationships than men, so organisations seeking to increase sponsorship opportunities for women need to begin with a focus on providing openings for networking and exposure to others in the organisation across various levels, which may not be routinely available.

This study shows that sponsorship may sometimes display the characteristics of other developmental relationships which occur in workplaces such as coaching and/or mentoring. The value derived is in the meaning attributed to the relationship by those involved. Women form meaningful connections with some people from their networks. Mentoring, sponsorship, coaching and other yet unexplored practices are likely to be the meaningful relationships originating from formal or informal networking processes (Figure 9.1). Furthermore, engaging in these practices may in turn lead to broadening

[1] There has been interest in using the findings of my study for evaluating the role of sponsorship in women's career advancement.

the networks of those involved. Thus, my findings support an integrated approach towards practices such as mentoring, sponsorship and coaching in organisations.

Figure 9.1. Networking Processes Support Sponsorship Efforts



Developing an organisational context that encourages formal and informal support networks

Analysis of findings highlights the role of values, beliefs and worldviews in sponsoring relationships, thus organisations should consider these aspects in their sponsorship efforts. Furthermore, in order for positive and meaningful workplace connections to make a significant impact upon sponsorship outcomes for women, it is necessary for organisations to provide an appropriate and supportive organisational environment requiring a focus on structural aspects. Networking opportunities are likely to be more meaningful, valuable and beneficial to women if they occur in contexts that support

relational behaviour and practices. Thus, organisations need to invest in recognising, supporting and endorsing relational practices, through promoting awareness about relational practices, and investing in developing relational skills and strengths.

Raising awareness of intersectional considerations and adopting an intersectional approach

This study has highlighted the significance of taking an intersectional approach in paying attention to issues such as discrimination and bias, and the particularly limited sponsorship opportunities for women of colour. Organisations should ensure that all women, across all organisational levels, have equal opportunities for sponsorship. However, organisations wanting to take a formal approach, including providing sponsors to women, would need to take into consideration other factors that may influence the development of a sponsoring relationship such as the values, beliefs and individual personality attributes of those involved. An integrated approach towards sponsorship also needs to include appropriate recruitment and talent management practices, and training on issues such as unconscious bias in order to address issues of discrimination and otherness.

Ensuring ethical engagement, transparency and responsibility

This study demonstrates a need to focus on ethical engagement of sponsees and sponsors, recognising the power dynamics and the sense of obligation that can arise in sponsoring relationships. This requires careful attention to ensure a sponsor cannot exercise undue influence over a sponsee or that a sponsee does not have unrealistic expectations of what a sponsor can provide or facilitate for them. Organisations ought to consider healthy and respectful relationships given the current environment with a

heightened awareness around sexual harassment and bullying as seen in the #metoo movement. Organisational practices designed to sustain greater transparency about the relational process of sponsorship, may also create greater clarity and enhance ethical conduct between sponsors and sponsees.

9.6 Future research

Further exploration of aspects of the sponsorship relationship

What happens within sponsoring relationships and how people experience it requires more detailed analysis. Such a study would seek insights into how sponsorship can be more effective for all women and be a more meaningful and positive workplace connection. This current research has provided a framework for such a future study, which might lead to further dimensions of sponsorship emerging and to a deeper critique of the construct.

Investigating the implications of other identities

Although this study highlights the importance of recognising some intersecting aspects of 'being' a sponsor and/or sponsee, there are some identities that were not considered explicitly in my research such as economic status, class, age or sexual orientation. Future, targeted examination of these, is likely to reveal further complexities to consider in forming and enhancing sponsoring relationships. Thus, I see merit in exploring the influence of gender, ethnicity, migrant and indigenous status and class, and social and organisational factors such as geography, profession and industry upon sponsoring relationships.

Understanding of intersectionalities

This research has exposed the need for intra-group differences to be given greater attention in research. Further, intersecting identities are variable and subject to change. Findings suggest that such structural dynamics, including power differentials between ethnic groups, may influence the availability and beneficial outcomes of sponsorship. Hence, there is a need to pay attention to the structural elements such as power imbalances between ethnic groups, and implicit unconscious and subconscious bias that surround sponsoring relationships and shape the meaning people attribute to these relationships, in order to understand what facilitates or hinders their development. Additionally, while this study has put the spotlight on women, perhaps sponsorship for men is also under researched. Insights around intersectionality in relation to sponsorship would thus benefit women and perhaps otherwise marginalised men.

Alternative methodologies

We would gain greater insight into the sponsorship phenomenon through the use of methodologies such as longitudinal studies, and intersectional approaches. Studies could include participants such as sponsor-sponsee pairs, and both male and female sponsors and sponsees. Such alternative approaches would enable an insight into the many factors that shape and influence the relationship, and thus inform practice on what could be done to facilitate beneficial sponsoring relationships.

Understanding of contextual influences

Future research should consider the impact that wider social and organisational factors have upon the availability, effectiveness and outcomes of sponsorship.

Sponsoring relationships do not operate in isolation and are part of organisational and social contexts. Understanding other influences upon women's career progress such as programmes, policies or other enabling or challenging structural elements was not within the scope of my research. Insight into a range of influences upon sponsoring relationships would generate a broader understanding of sponsorship, informing efforts to make it more inclusive and equitably available to all women. This may also provide insight into what sponsors are expected to do as individuals instead of just focussing on how institutions and organisations need to change their structures, and policies.

Research that seeks to provide insight into relational practices

Further, this study suggests moving beyond viewing sponsorship as a means to advance women into senior leadership, to a focus on the importance and value of relational practices that challenge existing structural barriers to changing the composition of organisations and boards beyond just gender and ethnicity. Hence, future research should seek further understanding of the relational practices constituting sponsorship as well as more broadly endeavour to offer further understanding of relational practices, both within and outside organisations, which facilitate inclusivity.

Overall, the findings of my research support continued sponsorship research in order to inform practice and enable positive outcomes for a wider and diverse group of women.

9.7 Final thoughts

This research journey has provided me with new insights and enabled me to reflect upon past and present experiences. I now understand why I did not find some past workplace relationships positive and why they had not contributed to my overall wellbeing. I also gained a deeper understanding of the relationships that were extremely valuable and memorable. Perhaps more importantly, I also understand how this may be true for other women in workplaces. While I believe that my experiences are unique to me, I too have experienced the significant positive impact that these experiences had on both my life and on my career. For me, this impact included emotional support through some difficult stages in my life, new opportunities, support with settling into a new job, career guidance, support through difficult workplace situations and workplace flexibility. I now have a better understanding of the relational nature of sponsorship and how human interactions, carried out within structural constraints, and social and organisational constructs shape the sponsorship relationship. These thoughts have influenced this research and vice-versa.

I acknowledge the influence of my own experiences, assumptions, beliefs and values on this research. At the same time, the participant stories have challenged my own assumptions, enriched my knowledge and provided valuable learning experiences as a researcher and as a woman of colour. As I interviewed those participants who were women of colour, I began to think more deeply about my own ethnic identity, and further about how my location at the intersection of my gender, ethnicity, class and social status co-existed with my personal identity and personality, and influenced my experiences of sponsorship.

My doctoral journey has inspired me to reflect on these aspects of my life. It has thus also inspired me to consider my future research interests. Participants, through sharing their stories, have exposed some of the issues that women face in workplaces. I foresee myself exploring and thinking about ways to redress them, with an emphasis on relational practices in particular. The PhD journey has also sparked an interest in women's issues more broadly and I look forward to seeing where that curiosity will take me. I believe in the power of research to drive change and am motivated by making a difference through my research efforts. This enthuses me to continue on this path in the future.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Summary of the Sponsoring Literature 1977 – 2018.

Year/Country	*Source/s*	*Key Feature*	*Methodological approach*	*Implications*
1977/USA	Kanter	- Sponsors are older employees who enable the career progress of younger employees by helping them bypass hierarchical barriers - Sponsees acquire reflected power by associating with the network of sponsors	Review of literature	Purports a narrow view of sponsoring as a one way practice between older and younger employees, and that a sponsor's role is mainly to provide access to their network which is likely to consist of people like sponsors themselves
1978/USA	Shapiro et al.	- Mentors belong to one end of a continuum of relationships for advice and support, with peers at the other end - Sponsors are somewhere in between and less powerful than mentors	Review of literature	- Advances the notion of the power of sponsors as central to relationships such as mentoring or sponsoring - Contrary to the more recent claims of sponsors being more powerful than mentors, indicating the ambiguity in the use of these terms
1979/USA	Roche	- Interchangeable usage of the terms mentors and sponsors - Mentors and/or sponsors enable career progress to reach senior leadership positions faster	Survey sent to 3976 men and 28 women who were corporate senior executives, of whom 1250 responded (no information on how many women and men responded)	- Narrow inclusion criteria in terms of organizational level meant that the influence of sponsorship upon those in more lower organizational levels was missed - Focus on objective criteria of career success, ignoring subjective or other criteria of career success. Thus, the study may have missed identifying outcomes of sponsoring other than raises and promotions
1982/USA	Speizer	Interchangeable usage of the terms sponsor and mentor, while suggesting that mentors or sponsors enable career progress, financial progress and promotions.	Review of literature	Continued ambiguity around the understanding of sponsoring and mentoring.

Year/Country	Source/s	Key Feature	Methodological approach	Implications
1985/USA	Kram	Sponsoring is part of the career support functions of mentoring and refers to the mentor advocating for a protégé's promotion	Interviewed mentors and protégés in 18 mentoring relationships in a public utility firm of 5000 employees	Sponsoring is considered inherent to mentoring and since this is the most popular model of mentoring utilised in practice, this understanding of sponsoring became most prevalent
2004/USA	Friday et al.	- Sponsoring is a distinct concept and the process of a sponsor nominating or supporting a protégé's promotion. - The relationship between a sponsor and a protégé is called sponsorship.	Meta-review	Attempts to conceptualise sponsoring and mentoring as distinct practices, with the implication that it is perhaps provided by different people
2005/Australia	Tharenou	The career support functions of a mentor, which includes sponsoring, help address the issues of gender discrimination and male managerial hierarchies, and lack of informal networks for women's career advancement	Survey results from 2614 women & 3013 men in junior and middle level positions in Australian public and private sector finance, property and business services	- Sponsoring is considered inherent to mentoring - Highlighted the role of sponsoring for women's career advancement however methodological limitations (surveys, high potentials) could have resulted in overlooking differences in individual perceptions of how sponsoring addressed barriers to career advancement at various levels in organizations
2008/USA	Giscombe	Mentors help protégés break the glass ceiling in formal mentoring programmes by utilising their established networks and acting as sponsors	Review of literature	Continued focus on the influence of sponsorship on the positional advancement of women within organisations

Year/Country	Source/s	Key Feature	Methodological approach	Implications
2008/USA	Ehrich	Sponsors are individuals in powerful positions who enable career advancement by providing special assignments, resources needed for special opportunities and visibility	Review of literature	- Implies that sponsorship is provided by a person in a hierarchically senior position - Perpetuates the notion that an individual who performs specific functions is a sponsor and that if a person is considered a sponsor, they must perform these functions - Failed to recognize other activities or support provided by a sponsor that may be perceived as valuable by a sponsee
2009/UK	Clutterbuck	- Mentors and sponsors are perceived differently in different cultures - Sponsoring is popular in the US and is referred to as sponsorship mentoring in Europe, and consists of high level of role modelling and giving of advice - Mentoring or developmental mentoring is more popular in Europe.	Review of literature	National cultural differences may mean that what is understood as 'sponsoring' in one setting is understood as something different in another
2009/UK	Merrick	Sponsorship mentoring positively influences promotion decisions in organisations.	Participants were women from high potential talent programme, methodology and number of participants unknown	Challenges the negative connotation towards sponsorship in European mentoring literature and purports its influence upon women's career advancement. However, the focus is still on a sponsor's influence upon the positional advancement of women
2009/Australia	Metz	The 'career functions' of mentoring, which include sponsoring, have a positive impact on women's career advancement	Survey results from 848 women working in The Australian Banking Institute	Sponsoring is considered a role played by a mentor that leads to sponsees' positional advancement

Year/Country	Source/s	Key Feature	Methodological approach	Implications
2010/UK	Kumra & Vinnicombe	Sponsors help increase a sponsee's social capital, help develop their skills and overcome challenges, and offer protection from the negative impact of situations in organisations	Interviews with 19 female and 15 male participants from an international management consulting firm	Highlights instrumental interactions as the main component of sponsoring
2010/USA	Ibarra et al.	- Sponsors are individuals in powerful positions who advocate for their protégés promotions, provide access to special information, and career advice - Women are over-mentored and under-sponsored - Women are sponsored less than men so they get promoted less than men	Survey data and interviews with 40 high potential men and women, corporate	- Supports the notion that sponsors are necessarily individuals in powerful organisational positions. - Empirical research was limited to senior leaders, so the influence of sponsorship upon those in lower organizational levels was missed
2010/USA	Kambil	- Sponsors provide special assignments, resources needed for special opportunities and visibility - Mentors have almost no impact on the career advancement of senior leaders	Interviews with 15 female Chief Financial Officers	Methodological limitation in only including participants from the C-Suite, which suggests a pre-determined focus of research, and further supports the notion that the predominant role of a sponsor is to advance their protégés to senior leadership

Year/Country	Source/s	Key Feature	Methodological approach	Implications
2010/USA	Hewlett et al.	- Sponsoring leads to positive outcomes such as promotions, raises, special assignments and protection from negative organisational situations - Women need sponsors, however they lack sponsors - Sponsors are in powerful positions and so able to influence women's career advancement	Survey date from 4000 male and female participants, focus groups (number of participants not mentioned) and interviews (number of participants not mentioned), from private corporations	- Narrow inclusion criteria in terms of organizational level, therefore the influence of sponsorship upon those in more lower organizational levels may have been missed - Missed identifying outcomes of sponsoring other than raises and promotions - Implies that sponsorship is provided by a person in a hierarchically senior position - Overlooks other individuals considered sponsors by women and their contributions to career development/progress
2011/USA	Foust-Cummings et al.,	- Sponsors remove barriers to career advancement of women, help break the glass ceiling, and enable career and financial progress - Women cannot move into senior roles without sponsorship	Interviews with 93 executives and high performers in six top global organizations, corporate	Methodological limitations (surveys, high potentials) could have resulted in overlooking differences in individual perceptions of how sponsoring addressed barriers to career advancement at various levels in the organization
2013/USA	Paddison	- Sponsors provide coveted assignments, visibility, networking opportunities and enable promotions	Review of literature	Supports the notion of sponsoring as an enabler of hierarchical progression in organisations

Year/Country	Source/s	Key Feature	Methodological approach	Implications
2013/Australia	Hellicar	The outcomes of sponsorship include promotions to senior leadership positions; access to special assignments, resources and projects that generate recognition and visibility for senior roles	Combination of interviews and surveys in search and recruitment firms, companies, consultants and members of Chief Executive Women (unknown number of participants)	- Research was limited to senior leaders, so the influence of sponsorship upon those in more lower organizational levels was not considered - Focus on promotions overlooks any other benefit of sponsoring
2018/USA	Hilsabeck	- Sponsoring is a component of mentoring and vice versa, and clear distinctions cannot be drawn between the two concepts. - Endorsements from mentors, who also provide professional training leads to job opportunities post-training	Interviews with 20 neuropsychologists	- Research has purported to seek conceptual clarity however the terms 'mentoring' and 'sponsoring' are used inconsistently or interchangeably - A practitioner based understanding of these terms is dependent upon professional context, and may be different from how researchers examine them and hence their findings may not reliably report practitioner understandings.
2018/Europe	Bhide & Tootell	- Sponsoring is considered a helpful relationship with positive outcomes for sponsees' careers - People of colour have difficulty finding sponsors	Interviews with 11 participants (10 women, 1 man) across 5 countries in Europe, corporate	- The perceptions of sponsoring may vary - There is a need for further research to provide insight into the complexities around sponsoring and a need for further insight into sponsoring relationships - Sponsoring is not available equitably to individuals
2018/Australia	de Vries & Binns	- Sponsoring involves sponsors drawing upon their power and network to advocate for the career advancement of their sponsees	Interviews with 28 participants in higher education (17 female and 11 male), of which 24 were senior academics	- Reinforces the continued narrow understanding of sponsoring as a predominantly instrumental exchange

APPENDIX 2: Research Sub-questions

- Why do women form sponsoring relationships?
- How do women form sponsoring relationships?
- What are their expectations from sponsoring?
- What are the challenges and benefits of the sponsoring relationship?
- What are the outcomes of the relationship?
- What does sponsoring mean for women?
- How do sponsors and sponsees find each other?
- What do sponsees perceive as the contribution of sponsoring to their careers and vice-versa?
- Why do sponsors form sponsoring relationships?
- What do sponsees and sponsors do for each other?

APPENDIX 3: Participant Summaries

Erica

Erica is in her 50s and runs her own law practice. Soon after graduating in her early 20s, she accompanied her then husband to a South Asian country where he was posted. She returned to NZ, primarily because she wanted her child to be educated here, and subsequently qualified as a lawyer. However, she found that being an older woman was challenging in getting a job after graduation. By then, she was also a single mother. She talked about how she struggled to get a job despite what she believed was a very marketable CV and when she did, she was paid less than her male colleagues: "*He wasn't a solicitor and his charge was more than ours* [Erica and her friend with similar qualifications] *there was absolutely no difference except that he was male and we were not".*

Her day to day experiences while working were also challenging, especially as a single mother. All these experiences made her believe that men and women are not treated equally by employers, something that she says she sees to this day. Her view is that this issue also leads to the under-representation of women in senior leadership in law despite the larger number of women graduating from law school. This is a significant motivating factor for her to sponsor other women besides the fact that women in general have other struggles at work: *"First of all you know it's really hard for woman. It is still the case that you have to be twice as good, work twice as hard but also that if you are good at what you do or you are attractive there is also a lot of jealousies and things going on so it's not an easy world to be in".*

Erica considers herself a spiritual person and thinks that when she helps others there is a positive karma aspect to it. At the same time, she only does things for people when she feels they value them and do not take them for granted. She hopes that the situation for women in society and organisations will change in her child's lifetime at least and she feels that research is one way of approaching the issue. That is the reason that when she first contacted me, she said she wanted to be a participant mainly because my research focussed on women.

Sophie

Sophie is in her 50s and arrived in New Zealand looking for work more than 20 years ago, after completing her doctoral studies. She said had no specific career goals to begin with and went to University as she believed it was the means to bring about change in the world. She said that she has achieved her goals in life in the little ways that she makes a difference in the world of higher education.

The first gender issue she encountered in her career was her lack of being able to negotiate her first salary, which she also attributes to the fact that she was in dire need of money. She stated that although it seems like there are systems in place for things such as promotions, having gone through the process she now realises that the system does not have gender parity. The revelation that her ethnicity made a difference in the workplace came to her when she was in a senior leadership role and found that her Pākehā colleagues were only nice and kind until she was not in a leadership position, and not when the roles were reversed. The situation left her "*deeply wounded and emotionally shattered"* and when she returned from a self-imposed break from work to heal herself, she was much more deliberate in forming relationships, seeking relationships with non-Pakehas. She is also part of women only circles and believes that it gives her the opportunity to form relationships with people outside the workplace. It has also made her realise the importance of networks in her life.

She stated that she is most proud of the fact that whatever she has achieved in life is a result of her hard work and effort: *"It is quite a nice feeling because then every single bit of it I have built myself, because I didn't have anything when I came here"*. As a result

of these experiences and feelings she constantly wants to help others and if she feels she can make things better in any way, she does. Being in an influential position helps her to do that but what is more important, she says, is that she is part of many networks. She believes that the situation she is in, wherein she is part of many networks and able to help others, is a natural progression of life "*a cumulative effort of life lived".*

Kylie

Kylie works in a senior leadership position in early education. She explained how when she started her career more than 20 years ago, she was really just looking to earn money. When she realised that business management roles were not making her happy, she decided to retrain in early education because of her interest in forming relationships with families and communities.

She is clear that her career goals are not focussed on upward mobility, but on the type of teacher she wants to be. Since she is already in senior leadership and wants to continue working in the current workplace, upward mobility is not something that inspires her. Instead she focusses on relationships in the workplace and ensuring that everyone feels supported to do their best. She stated that since the gender balance is in favour of women in early education, gender has never been an issue for her in the workplace.

She believes that the support of her team is critical for performing well. Therefore, teamwork is very important to her and she feels empowered by working alongside some great teachers. Relationships are important to her and she also has strong views about the values and beliefs about teaching in early education. She hopes that when she builds these relationships and sponsors people, it is these core values that they imbibe.

Kylie talked about the three women who she considers her sponsees, but talked most about Teresa. She is still in touch with her and proud of all that she has achieved in life. Kylie was recruited for the research through Teresa, who first participated and then

referred me to Kylie. Kylie said yes immediately when I told her that Teresa had referred me.

She prefers to talk to her mother about work and any issues she has rather than with her own managers, who she approaches for performance appraisals and general day to day operational advice. What stands out most about Kylie is that she is very passionate about her work. She thinks that her personal and professional goals cross over since she is very passionate about her work, and her family often say that she is *"married to her work".* It is the nature of her career she says "*You've gotta put extra heart and soul into it".*

Rowena

Rowena began her career in commercial real estate in UK and became an entrepreneur since moving to NZ more than a decade ago. She now runs her own real estate consulting firm. She explained how the people who influenced her the most in her career were those who role modelled for her. She talked about how her boss showed her what it was like to be a female in a male dominated profession; a freelance consultant who introduced her to the manner in which technology can be used showed her *"what an independent minded person could do and that was a career possibility"*; and a colleague who introduced her to the world of public speaking and was *"very generous"* in his praise of her skills as a sales person. She is still in touch with all of them except for the first woman, her first boss, who has passed away. She explained how these relationships had helped her since she never really asks anyone for help: "*mostly it gave me confidence that I could achieve some of the goals that I had and it also gave me ideas of pathways to success because my career path has been eccentric and non-conventional".*

Although she worked in a male dominated profession, she does not consider gender as a barrier or that she is any inferior due to her gender. She believes that she has always used her strengths to push through any gender related issues: "*My natural intellectual capabilities logic was strong and my reasoning was strong and therefore I felt I should not be afraid to use it due to my sex and I did that in all of my career positions".*

She feels that she is able to help other people more since becoming an independent consultant because she has more control over time and resources. She considers

herself a “*social entrepreneur*” and runs an internship programme in her firm. She also participates in other formal mentoring programmes for women entrepreneurs. None of her staff have ever approached her for help. She feels that people only ever approach her for getting a job in her firm and not for any other help.

Lorraine

Lorraine began her career in TV production which was something that she *"fell into"* when some friends of hers starting their own business, involved Lorraine. Besides these friends, she also talked about her aunty, another close friend, her stepfather and her partner as the people who have helped her in her career. She said a lot of Māori businesses had family and friends involved in the business and so perhaps when they had to discuss work related matters they would probably go to family. She was not sure whether the term sponsoring could be used for these people because she felt the term had financial connotations as if there was some payment made for a service like a business advisor or a planner, and that with all the people she had talked about there was no financial payment for services type arrangement.

She mentioned how she went on just doing her work and taking on more work and doing it and that she has never really thought about opportunities. She said that opportunities just came to her, if they interested her she pursued them. She did not have any specific notion about career success and felt that it is other people that tell a person if they are successful. She explained how the biggest thing she needed in her work currently was networks and connections. She has a vast and diverse network because she has networks in film and media, as well as among Māori businesses. She explained how being Māori she goes to a number of Kaupapa conferences where conversations end up in projects. However, she also felt that this alone was not enough to progress in her industry *"You don't really to get in the business of shmoosing people to get something.*

Your work is as good as your last job so if you are continuing to get work then you must be doing something right."

She felt that gender was not a barrier when making pitches for new projects but it was when working with men. She said that due to the nature of her work, she found herself working with Māori but she also mentioned how the process of the work would be the same for Māori or non-Māori, but that Māori liked to work with other Māori in businesses: "*If I am looking for something I will probably look for a Māori business first to support that business".*

Valerie

Valerie is in her 60s and came to NZ to pursue a career in education. Her career ambition had been to work as a civil servant, but her conservative South Asian family's restrictions meant that she could not pursue that ambition. She subsequently worked as a journalist but had to quit work when she had a baby following marriage. Her foray into the field of education was incidental through some voluntary work in her daughter's school. She quickly became passionate about working in education and pursued further studies.

Her decision to move out of the social context in South Asia for the sake of her daughter whom she did not want to *"put through the same things"* motivated her to look for work outside and when she found out that NZ had the best to offer in terms of her career goals, she made that move. She stated how she came across ethnic stereotyping about South Asians in NZ, but gender was never an issue, and how it was always the issue in South Asia.

She described how in the initial days her husband had to send her money since she did not have a job in NZ. Her first sponsor, about whom she talked emotionally, was the person (male) who she believes took a chance on her and gave her a job in NZ. Her notion of sponsoring is that of giving a chance, of someone believing in another person enough to take that risk. This was confirmed for her by the fact that she did not expect to get work in NZ due to the fact that she was not trained here. She stated that migrants had to work doubly hard to prove themselves than locals. She said that she did not really have an opportunity to sponsor others due to the nature of her job. However, she

has been in situations where people have approached her for career or life advice, and she has been able to guide them. She stated that some of those people often came back to thank her and so she knew she had made a difference.

Geoff

Geoff is a Māori man in his 40s. He runs his own accounting firm and explained that his decision to start his own firm was a result of wanting to work for Māori organisations and help them as an accountant. His firm employs Māori and his vision is to be a Māori firm helping other Māori organisations. As an organisation, they aim to train Māori accountants many of whom trained with them, but went on to work with other firms. As an individual, he talked about how he tried to motivate other young Māori to take up accounting as a profession. Geoff felt that ethnicity played a part in how he experienced workplaces before he started his own firm. In his own firm, he said they did not "*discriminate against them*" when other Pākehā business approached them but that generally they *"did not end up having a client relationship with them".*

He credits his present career to his first sponsor, a family friend, who gave him a work opportunity in his accounting firm, as well as encouraged him to pursue further studies. He went onto work for larger accounting organisations, but talked about how he felt they never understood his view about doing things differently when working with Māori. He talked about how Māori men were privileged in the Māori social context as a result of their position in the *marae* and how gender was not a factor in the relationships he formed at work: *"In the marae it's usually men who speak and not women so you know there are some cultural factors there, but in terms of people I've had relationships with gender makes no difference to me apart from the fact that men have generally been in the board roles, partly because of these cultural issues because men are usually running the organisations so you end up having relationships with them a lot".*

He said that although the old boys' network existed for Māori men it was to a lesser extent than what it had been in the organisations he had worked for earlier in his career. However, he also mentioned how he did not want to associate himself with those networks: *"it doesn't inspire me I don't learn from these people, I don't have anything to do with them, I don't have any business from them".*

Melissa

Melissa, a Māori woman in her 30s, always knew that she would be encouraged to pursue higher education following high school. This was a result of her grandmother and her mother's view around education. She said they were her first sponsors, and gave her that opportunity and acted as role models. She is now in a senior leadership position but explained how she never thought about herself in a leadership role: *"I think for cultural reasons as well, it is not all that common for a Māori woman to be a leader so I never had that in my thought processes back then".*

She began her career in a large accounting firm and her first sponsor was her manager in that firm. She explained how in the largely white male firm, he was the one Māori male in a senior position who supported her and made sure she had visibility and challenging assignments. She continued to stay in touch with that sponsor even after leaving that position.

Melissa's experiences as a Māori woman had two dimensions: as a woman in the Māori social context and as a Māori woman in the workplace. In both contexts, she felt discriminated. The former led to her not really pursuing leadership roles, while with the latter she had the notion that she would never make it as a Māori woman in the workplace. Therefore, in her workplace, while the old boys' network meant that as a woman she was not able to have access to the same networks as other men, being a Māori woman was associated with stereotypes. Her sense of gratitude towards Ibrahim, her sponsor in this workplace, was borne from this notion of being different from the rest of the discriminatory workplace. As a result of her experiences, she is keen to help other

Māori women. She stated how she did whatever she could for women in her organisation and was pleased that more and more Māori women were moving into senior leadership and role modelling appropriate practices for other younger Māori women.

Jasmine

Jasmine is in her 30s and came to NZ when she got married. She said she was happy with the way her career was progressing in South Asia before leaving all that and coming to NZ. Having decided initially to just take a break from work for a while, she soon felt bored of not working. It was tough to find work as someone who had no experience of working in NZ. When she found one person (Jack) who was willing to give her a job, she was grateful for the position that was actually created for her in that organisation.

She described how the relationship with this person, whom she thought of as her sponsor, was not always smooth however. It was not until she found out that other people in similar roles were getting paid more than her, that she felt discriminated against due to her ethnicity. By then, she was working under another line manager (her second sponsor) and she talked about how he was supportive and ensured that she got the recognition and salary raise that she desired. However, on a day to day basis there was subtle discrimination and stereotypes about Asian women which meant that not many people formed workplace relationships with her.

The other people who had helped her in NZ, her other sponsors, were those who helped her as an entrepreneur. These were people she met once, but when she approached them again as an entrepreneur they helped by introducing her to key contacts or networks and she managed to get work that way. However, the one person who she thinks could have helped significantly simply by talking about her work was the person who had hired her, and whom she considered her sponsor for that reason. She stated

how there were several opportunities to do that but that Jack (who hired her in the organisation and who she stated was her sponsor) did not utilise those opportunities to help her. When asked whether there was someone she wished she had the support of but could not due to her ethnicity, she named Jack. She said it would have made a big difference to her career overall in NZ if she had his support, something that seems to have fallen short.

Nel

Nel is a South Asian woman. Sponsoring for her is something that happens all around and can come from any person because she considers sponsoring to be the help that enables a sponsee to progress in some way in their life. Thus, she counts her parents, who were role models for her in particular her father, among her first sponsors. Her other sponsors included a colleague who encouraged her to change careers when she arrived in NZ, a female manager who provided her flexibility and a male manager who gave her challenging opportunities and helped develop her self-esteem. Flexibility in particular is very important for Nel as she is a single parent. She explained how she always tried to make her sponsors proud because she wanted to show them that they had done the right thing by sponsoring her: "*I make it a point to deliver in a way that makes them feel that they made a right choice by choosing me for their project so that's my way of returning what they do for me".*

She measures career success in terms of the quality of her work output and said that promotions and raises had automatically followed good work in her career. She stated that she tried to help others whenever she could. She described her role in a mentoring programme and talked about how that role led to a sense of satisfaction of having influenced someone in a positive manner.

She was aware of subtle ethnic discrimination in her workplace which made it difficult for her to make friends in the workplace. However, ethnicity was never an issue with her managers she stated. Gender was an issue sometimes when she worked in all male

teams she explained: "*Truly I wished I was a guy just to get their attention and that kind of a talk".* She explained how she was told that the old boys' club existed in her workplace and how for certain projects they would prefer to have a man because the rest of the team was male and she would not fit in. Here, ethnicity added to the problems because she felt that nobody wanted to *"listen"* to an Asian woman in terms of giving directions anyway.

Teresa

Teresa is in her 40s, and a senior leader in early childhood education who identified herself as Kiwi. She talked about how she had not particularly want to be an early educator but that when she applied and got into college she thought she would *"give it a go".* She got into a senior leadership role as a result of the encouragement of her sponsor, who thought she was ready to take on the role even when she was not sure because she has other responsibilities at home (her husband was in tertiary education and she had young children) which she felt would go against such pursuits. She explained how she was grateful for that opportunity in hindsight because she loved her job now. This sponsor was a woman with whom Teresa had a close relationship and she explained how she was still in touch with her and met her occasionally.

Her second sponsor was a person with whom she connected deeply because of her ethnicity. Teresa grew up among Māori and their culture had a deep influence on her. She explained how this meant that she was able to connect with the Māori ways of being and doing things. She is still in touch with her Māori sponsor, having now taken over her role in the workplace. She believed that relationships were at the centre of sponsoring and that both parties needed to gain the trust of each other. She considers herself a feminist and stated how society would say that having a male sponsor was better than having a female sponsor for career progression, but that she disagreed. She thought that women could sponsor women through relationship building and act as role models for them.

She felt that there was a need for *“confident women that are not gonna get crushed and rebel back when something gets sent to them”,* in order for things to change for women in society, and that sponsoring was important for that to happen and for women to *“stay together and be strong moving forward”.* She said she always tried to do that for the people who work with her in her workplace.

Paula

Paula is a South Asian woman in her 40s who migrated to NZ when she was less than five years old. She works in a senior leadership position in a private firm. She began her career working for the government. She explained how it had been important for her to have the secure job when she began her career but how that perception changed when she was offered a job in a private firm by one of her sponsors. She is now grateful for that opportunity which she feels had changed the course of her career.

She talked very emotionally about her sponsors who she thought were kind, benevolent and caring in their relationships with her. She explained how her being an ethnic minority woman created barriers to her career progression and how her sponsors' role had been critical in addressing those barriers and giving her opportunities. She also explained how when she arrived in NZ she was met with friendly and caring people and it was only when she joined the workforce that the extent of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity became apparent to her even though while growing up she always felt different because she was "*brown".*

She explained that having a female sponsor (currently) had helped her embrace her feminine side and not be afraid to showcase it, while all her previous sponsors had been male. As a sponsor she cared for her sponsees, similar to how her sponsors had cared for her. She explained that she always got their back and that she often expected loyalty from them in return. As an example she talked about how she had expected them to come and work for her in a new firm: "O*f course they can look after themselves, they*

can make the decision to go anywhere but I was being a little selfish I wanted them to come work for me. I had invested time and effort in their careers".

Paula believes in helping other women whenever she can and in whatever way she can, something she feels not many women engage in because they *"are all competing rather than showing solidarity".* This is something she wishes she had more of in her own career.

Leah

Leah is a South Asian woman in her 40s who migrated to NZ when she accompanied her husband. She talked about how she continues to think that her career progress would have been better had she not migrated because all her peers from her birth country were already in senior leadership while she was not there yet. She explained that she decided to stay on for the sake of her children who she feels have better opportunities in NZ.

She works in higher education and credits her career in NZ to three sponsors: people who had helped her at various stages of her career in NZ. All her sponsors were women, one was Māori, one Pākehā and one Pasifika. Her Māori and Pasifika sponsors were people she described as caring and who influenced her life outside of the workplace. With her Māori and South Asian sponsors, she shared the commonality of being an ethnic minority individual and she talked about how they all cared for the rights of ethnic minorities. She talked about how all the jobs that she had since moving to NZ were a result of informal meetings of ethnic minority groups which happened because *"You know we get invited to the same things".*

Thus, she was grateful for those connections and help received as an ethnic minority individual. She talked about how with her Pākehā sponsor she occasionally feels a sense of envy because had she been in South Asia her organisational position would have been similar to the sponsor's.

Her position in the organisation has not allowed her to sponsor anyone yet. However, she stated how she always wants to help others and has had the occasion to do so for

a couple of Pasifika women in the workplace. This help involved their personal lives and not careers. However, she explained how the outcomes had been positive and that those women had thanked her for the help. Being part of the Pasifika community and activity groups, she also involves herself with youth mentoring and developmental programmes. However, she feels that while the recipients find it useful, she personally feels her role there does not enable her to form relationships and deep connections similar to the ones she had with her own sponsors.

Jemma

Jemma is in her 50s, a Māori woman by birth and raised by a Pākehā mother. She talked about how this meant that although she was actively trying to embrace her Māori side, she was "*biased more towards English way rather than the Māori side".* She explained how this is problematic for her because she is expected to behave like a Māori and sponsor other Māori, while she herself did not necessarily want to do that.

She began her career in the defence services right after she left school. She married a man she met there but she talked about how that was *"a negative emotional relationship that failed".* Subsequently, she also met her now husband in the defence services and she talked about how that relationship has helped her grow and be positive about herself. Having stayed at home as a primary caregiver for her children for several years, she decided to pursue what she always wanted to do, which was to teach in ECE. She talked about how her husband encouraged and supported her to do that. Therefore, she counts her husband as someone who has helped her in her career, her sponsor. While she pursued higher education in ECE, her occasional work in the management side of retail businesses taught her about leadership and leading, something she said was not formally taught in ECE. Leadership in ECE, she explained, was something "*you fell into but they don't prepare you".* This experience is something that she shares with her sponsees.

Her sponsor in her first job was also her manager and she talked about how her sponsor's constant support and encouragement pushed her to achieve goals. She also stated that she learnt about how leadership could be practised by observing her

sponsor. Relationships were important to Jemma as she stated that she believes in being relational in her leadership style. She particularly values the "*sisterhood"* of colleagues and senior leaders who she thinks are "*always there for her".*

Jemma's spiritual values guide her in her day to day behaviour and she explained that although she is not religious she abides by the value of *"treating everyone with kindness and humanity".* She explained that as a result, she probably would not know how something she did for someone had influenced their career positively unless she was told about it.

Faith

Faith is a doctor in her 40s who entered the profession due to an interest in science and her mother's encouragement for tertiary education. She talked about how she met her husband in medical school and how, after graduating, she followed her husband to a new city when he went on to train as specialist. Her medical career was thus a result of taking what job she could get, rather than thinking through what she wanted to do. She ended up working in her first default job for two years. During that time, she said she also felt that she could have a baby and *"get that out of the way*", but also that when she was pregnant she "*thought well what I if lose the baby? I won't have a baby and I won't have a job so I applied for a PT job and I got offered a few of them*".

She explained that she and her husband had decided on child rearing responsibilities early on in their marriage. She also said she used to be quite bitter about that fact especially when at one point the marriage was not in a good place: *"this became an issue when there was a point of difficulty and it looked like we might separate and I said well you are gonna be really wealthy and rich in your life and I am not".* She explained that it was child rearing that primarily influenced a woman's career in medicine and so they had to find another way of working around that.

She said that in her current role as a senior consultant in public health, she was involved a lot in people's performance and promotions. It was in this aspect of her job that she had her first sponsoring experience as a sponsor. Faith talked about the two people who had influenced her career significantly: her mother and her supervisor under whom she was training. Her supervisor she explained was a great role model and in particular

she encouraged the notion that a woman could be feminine and still be a senior leader. She reflected on how that relationship compared with the one she had with her own sponsee: *“they were both like more senior person supporting the junior person but I guess the thing was we are in different specialties. So with my sponsee there is more of a gap whereas I was always on the pathway to become like my sponsor”.*

Linda

Linda is in her 30s and currently works in higher education in science. She explained how she ended up pursuing studies where she could rather than what she actually wanted to do, because of her grades. Her career in NZ began when she returned home after studying overseas for about ten years.

She explained that she was a structured thinker and that she set clear goals for each year, that she then put her energy into achieving. This included promotions. Therefore, when she felt that she was not reaching her goals, she approached others who could guide her on the right path. She said that she was aware of the need to "*play the game"* if she had to move up the career ladder, that and she played that game and this is where *"mentoring and other stuff came in"*.

She talked about the two people who significantly impacted her career, who she said were her sponsors. She said that gender had never been an issue in her work and believes that like men, women need to ask for things instead of waiting to get noticed. She believes that it is important for women to put their hand up, get feedback and learn to take critical feedback. She said that she did all that but having a supportive manager still made a big difference.

In terms of people she had sponsored, she said she had experience with students since she was in teaching and research. That relationship involved a focus on developing them, guiding them and giving them enough independence to achieve goals on their own. She said she was known to be tough with her students but that it gave her satisfaction to see them achieve and be confident in their skills.

She explained how a sponsor's role was different in NZ academia than it was overseas, and that in NZ *"sponsors are more like your contacts, having that kind of connection, the networking is the sponsoring".* However, her personal opinion is that sponsoring is a dynamic relationship because while it started between two people one of whom was a senior and one a junior, once the junior person found their feet and became more confident the senior had to back off and be more of a colleague.

APPENDIX 4: Sample Pages from my Research Diary

Recruiting participants

It seems like ppl are more interested in talking about their sponsors. I have participants who want to talk to me about people who helped them.

The video seems to have ~~helped~~ helped!!

First interview (R)

- interesting interview
- R worked in a male dominated industry and she seems to think of sponsoring as more than 'advocating' for her.

She talked about drawing inspiration from her sponsors .... and also about her sponsor who became her friend.

It seem like you can sponsor more if you are not constrained in a company/org. She seems

to have done that ....

Have I sponsored anyone? Hmm? I have helped people ... it makes me feel 'purposeful' like my life has meaning and a ~~purpo~~ purpose. R did not talk like that though.

L.

What a long interview ... and so many interesting insights. I feel like I'm going to be in touch with L in the future too.

We talked about many non-research related things after the interview.

It seems like sponsoring really 'touched' L beyond just the workplace. She clearly feels strongly about ~~charities~~ ~~to~~ sponsoring

Date .....

barrier to career advancement for women of colour. She kept saying 'you know how it is' ..... feeling sort of connected. It is tough to actually feel the same because I have worked in totally different circumstances but I do think I can understand what she is trying to say. Got a sense of 'kindness' as key to sponsorship.

Date .....

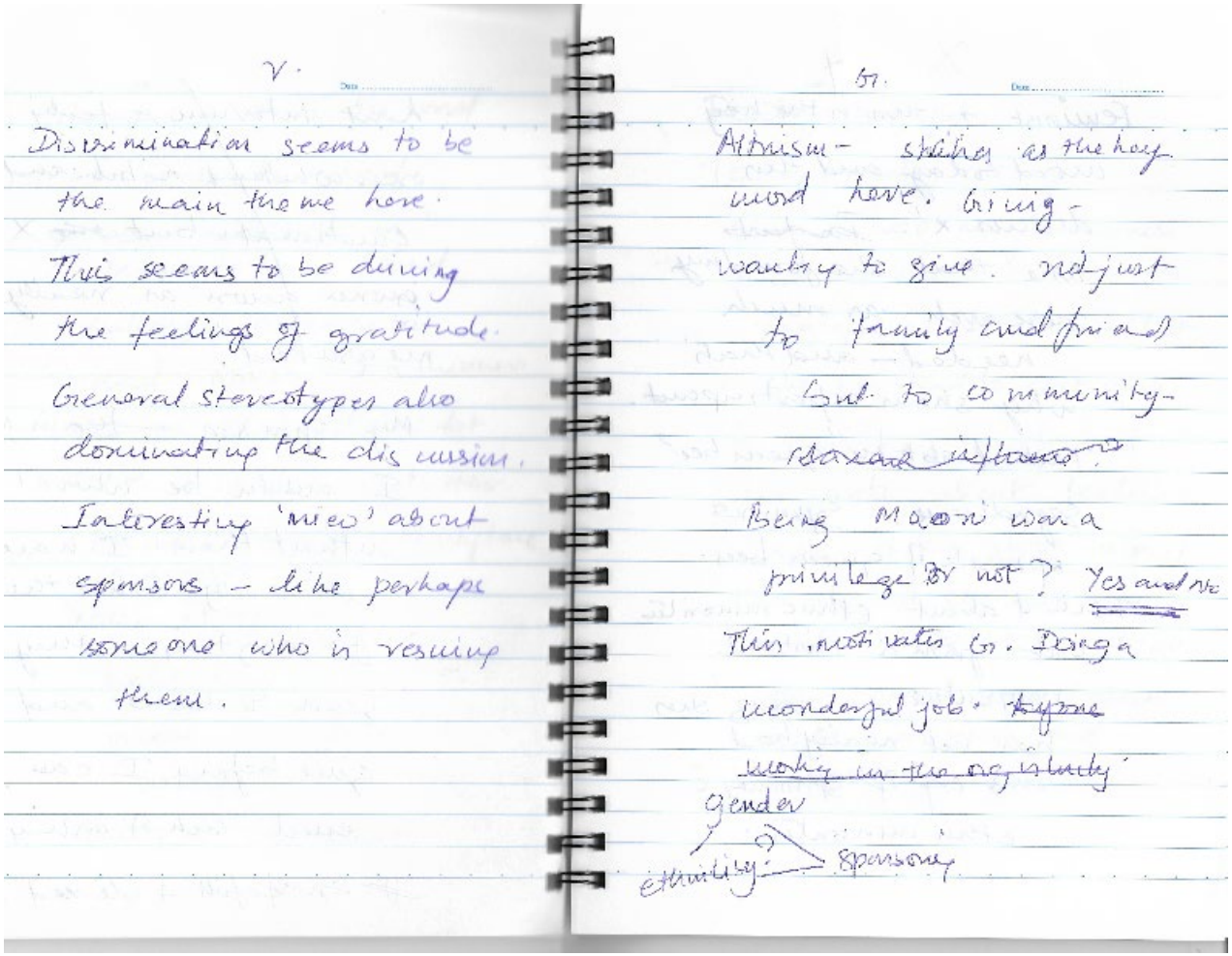
L also seems to want t
help other people beca
that in the way she i
This is ~~perhaps~~ probably no
for other ~~similar~~ people
similar ethnicity beca
she is active in those gro

S

It seems now that kindness is a recurring theme. Sponsoring as an act of kindness. This is soo different from how it is potrayed. Is this just in New Zealand? And this kindness seems 'unlimited' or without boundaries - so you could sponsor several people.

P

how what an emotional interview. lots of tears for she was really emotional today. Seems like she feels shongly about the benevolence of her spons. Some instrumental benefits were also discussed but constantly emphasised the benevolence of sponsors. Her values include 'giving to others so that milk



V.

Discrimination seems to be the main theme here. This seems to be driving the feelings of gratitude. General stereotypes also dominating the discussion. Interesting 'view' about sponsors – like perhaps someone who is rescuing them.

57.

Altruism – stashes as the key word here. Giving – wanting to give. not just to family and friends but to community – ~~[illegible]~~?

Being Maori was a privilege or not? Yes and No

This motivates G. Doing a wonderful job. ~~[illegible]~~ ~~working in the organisation~~

gender

ethnicity? — sponsors

~~Is sponsorship really~~

Is sponsoring really emotional?

I feel emotional when I think about my sponsor?

well depends on how sponsoring is presented to me. If someone says its advocating for raises & promotions - I will go well I have sponsors and I'm closer to some of them but if I'm allowed to say its in any help for my career - I will first think of the ppl I'm close to and then I ~~feel~~ feel emotional.

APPENDIX 5: Van Manen's Steps of Phenomenological Inquiry

This table has been adopted from Taylor & Francis, 2013, p. 87-89.

Step	**Description**	**How it was applied to this research**
"Turning to the nature of the lived experience or turning to a phenomenon of interest"	Analogous to the early part of research, here the researcher thinks about what phenomenon interests them and why	This step led to the research questions and the research objectives. The phenomenon of interest is one that I am committed to as a result of my own experiences as well as those of others. Upon examination of literature, I found that there is a lack of insight into the sponsoring relationship and evidence that such an insight would be useful for sponsoring literature. Thus I stay committed to this phenomenon as I feel that there is much to contribute in terms of empirical research and believe in the potential of qualitative research to be able to provide adequate insight.
"Investigating experience as we live it"	Comparable to the data collection phase, where the researcher gathers accounts of the lived experiences of the participants rather than theorizing about it like an objective activity. The term investigation here refers to learning about a phenomenon by hearing about it directly from the people who have experienced it.	The data collection methods employed i.e. open ended semi structured interviews enabled in capturing the experiences of the participants first hand. The interview guide aimed to elicit responses that were in-depth without imposing structure. However, at all times, the focus was on the central research question and hence the interview was semi-structured. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed by me and that allowed me to re-live the interview moments when they had related their experiences to me and take into consideration other non-verbal cues such as tears.
"Reflection on essential themes which characterize the phenomenon"	The notion that reflecting upon data will lead to an insight into the meaning of the phenomenon. This is	I was informed by Van Manen's (1990) suggestions for isolating themes while drawing out themes and sub themes and in positioning myself in an interpretive stance and asking myself the question "What do these accounts tell me about the phenomenon?". While doing so, I utilised theoretical concepts from

	comparable to the data analysis phase where the researcher makes sense of the data collected utilising methods such as thematic analysis. This is the view that the themes that provide an insight into the phenomenon become apparent upon reflecting on the accounts of participants and thus this step suggests an interpretative stance towards uncovering the meaning of the participants' accounts.	psychology and sociology in order to interpret the descriptions of participants while also presenting those descriptions themselves.
"Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and re-writing"	This is the notion that a description of the phenomenon is provided in any manner that the researcher considers useful, through a process of writing and re-writing to provide deep rich insights into the phenomenon. This can be through themes, poems, exemplars, etc.	This step was considered to indicate thoroughness and detailed presentation of the interpretive descriptions, well supported by direct quotes from the participants, keeping in mind the research objective and questions.
"Maintaining a strong and oriented relation"	The need to maintain a focus on the phenomenon of interest at all times during data analysis in order to provide deeper insights about the phenomenon.	I kept the research question in mind throughout the research process which influenced the development of the interview guide, semi-structured interviews, transcription and analysis of data. This was particularly relevant during thematic analysis in order to reveal the nature of sponsoring relationship.

“Balancing the research context by considering the parts and the whole”	This is the need for considering the various parts of the phenomenon and whether they enable a recognition of the whole of the phenomenon, and whether the researcher has illuminated the phenomenon. This can be comparable to the discussion section of qualitative studies where the researcher pulls together all the parts of the research, bringing the research to conclusion.	Data analysis involved reading, re-reading, coding and recoding several times before arriving at the themes and sub-themes as I went back and forth between the various parts and the whole in order to find an alignment between the two, and finding a balance between how whole transcripts and the relevant highlighted coded parts of the transcripts provided an insight into the sponsoring relationship. I also referred to the participant summaries, which I constructed based on the overall information I had about them, from them.

APPENDIX 6: Low Risk Notification

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND

Date: 26 February 2016

Dear Vasudha Shailendra Bhide

Re: Ethics Notification - **4000015581 - Application for ethical approval for a low risk research project titled: Gender, ethnicity and sponsoring: A study of New Zealand women's experiences of sponsoring**

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

If situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your ethical analysis, please contact a Research Ethics Administrator.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:
"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director - Ethics, telephone 06 3569099 ext 86015, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz. "

Please note, if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again, answering "yes" to the publication question to provide more information for one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Brian Finch
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise
Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, 4442, New Zealand T 06 951 6841; 06 95106840
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz; animalethics@massey.ac.nz; gtc@massey.ac.nz

APPENDIX 7: Information Sheet

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Private Bag 11 222

Palmerston North

New Zealand

Telephone: +64 6 356 9099

http://management.massey.ac.nz

Gender, ethnicity and sponsoring: A study of New Zealand women's experiences of sponsoring

INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher's Details

I am Vasudha Bhide, a PhD student at the School of Management, Massey University, Palmerston North and am currently inviting participants for my doctoral research on the impact of sponsors on the careers of women.

Project Description and Invitation

The topic of my doctoral research is **New Zealand women's experiences of sponsoring** and I am currently inviting participants to be interviewed for this research. Sponsoring was considered a sub-function of mentoring for a number of years and it

is only recently that it has gained attention as an independent concept. A sponsor has been identified as a person in a senior position who can influence promotion decisions, make available key connections or networks with senior leaders or people in power, increase a sponsee's visibility and provide any kind of support needed to move up the career ladder. Sponsoring has been suggested to be a powerful tool for advancing women into senior leadership positions. However, in my Masters research on the experiences of sponsoring in Europe, I found that sponsoring was thought of in several different ways by individuals and may not necessarily be thought of as a tool for promotions and raises only.

My goal is to understand and provide insight into sponsoring and the sponsoring relationship from diverse perspectives. I am also interested in understanding how ethnic identity influences the diverse sponsoring experiences of women. This study is expected to have an impact on the way we think about sponsoring in relation to the career development of women currently. More details about this research can be found in this short video: **https://youtu.be/B6Z9uWsrjRw**

I would like to invite you to participate in this research on a voluntary basis.

Aims of research

- Understand the diverse perceptions of sponsoring
- Provide insight into the sponsoring relationship
- Understand how ethnicity influences the perceptions of sponsoring and vice-versa

Participant Identification and Recruitment

I am looking for a small number of participants (between15-20) as this is a qualitative study involving in-depth interviews. I am seeking participants who are or have been sponsors (men and women) and have sponsored at least one woman; and sponsees (women) who have had at least one sponsor (male of female). Given the variable meanings attributed to sponsoring in my research in Europe, a sponsor is considered someone who has significantly impacted an individual's career or helped them reach where they are in their career. A sponsee is an individual who has or had a sponsor.

The term 'sponsorship' may not be well-known in a New Zealand context. Therefore**, if you can think of at least one person who has helped you reach where you are in your career or you can think of one person whom you have helped in their career, I would like to interview you and invite you to participate.**

Project Procedures

I would like to conduct an interview (either face to face or via skype/phone), at a time and place that is convenient to you which would take approximately an hour of your time. A pre-determined set of questions will guide but not limit the direction and flow of the interview. The interviews would be voice recorded and transcribed with your permission.

Data Management

The data I collect would be transcribed and analysed thematically in order to understand the impact of gender and ethnicity upon the sponsoring relationship. If you prefer, your transcripts will be sent to you via e-mail or post to confirm/omit what was recorded. All recordings and transcriptions will be stored either in a locked and secure cabinet in my office or in my secure personal network drive at Massey University for a

period of five years before being disposed of appropriately. All information is confidential and all participants would remain anonymous in the final transcripts and any published information. I can share a summary of the project findings with you upon request.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any particular question;
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.

Project Contacts

Vasudha Bhide

E-mail: v.bhide@massey.ac.nz

Phone: [redacted]

Dr. Sarah Leberman (Primary Supervisor)

Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor, Massey University, Palmerston North

E-mail: S.I.Leberman@massey.ac.nz

Dr. Farah Palmer (Supervisor)

Senior Lecturer & Director - Te Au Rangahau (Māori Business & Leadership Centre)

School of Management, Massey University, Palmerston North

E-mail: F.R.Palmer@massey.ac.nz

Please contact me or my supervisors if you have any questions about the project.

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

APPENDIX 8: Consent Form

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http://management.massey.ac.nz

Gender, ethnicity and sponsoring: A phenomenological study of New Zealand women's experiences of sponsoring

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: ..... **Date:** .....

Full Name - printed .....

APPENDIX 9: Recruitment Flyer

Gender, ethnicity and sponsoring: A study of New Zealand women's experiences of sponsoring

The research

My research is about understanding the diverse sponsoring experiences of women. A sponsor is currently thought of as a person who provides valuable support and help to an individual in their career, facilitates desired career outcomes and is associated with critical career moments. I am interested in understanding how women experience sponsoring relationships and further how these experiences are perceived by women who identify with different ethnicities.

You can get involved

I am actively seeking women belonging to various ethnicities who have had at least one sponsor in their career in order to explore how their ethnicity and gender influenced the sponsoring experiences. At the same time, I am also seeking male of female sponsors who could share with me their experiences of acting as sponsors for women. Participation is voluntary and all information is confidential.

Impact on diversity management

Your stories will provide valuable insight into the sponsoring relationship and support practical solutions that move away from a one-size-fits-all approach towards understanding and addressing the needs of diverse women and positive diversity management.

How to respond

Please visit https://youtu.be/B6Z9uWsrjRw for a short video about the research. I can be reached on v.bhide@massey.ac.nz or [redacted] if you are interested in knowing more about the study, would like to participate or know someone who may be interested in participating in the study.

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.
If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz. "

APPENDIX 10: Definitions

(To be shared with participants if required)

Sponsors (Bhide, 2014; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990; Hewlett et al., 2010; Friday et al., 2004; Foust-Cummings et al., 2011)

Sponsors use their influence to support the career advancement of a sponsee in an organization and promote and support their sponsees for promotions. A sponsor is a person who enables a sponsee to make makes connections or networks with senior leaders or people in power, increases a sponsees visibility in closed door senior meetings, events, forums, etc., makes available career opportunities, special assignments or desired positions in organizations, protects sponsees in case of negative outcomes in organizations. Sponsors provide 'help' to sponsees.

Ethnicity and Race (Statistics New Zealand, http://www.stats.govt.nz/methods/classifications-and-standards/classification-related-stats standards/ethnicity/definition.aspx#explanatory).

Ethnicity

"Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel they belong to. Ethnicity is a measure of cultural affiliation, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality or citizenship. Ethnicity is self-perceived and people can belong to more than one ethnic group.

An ethnic group is made up of people who have some or all of the following characteristics:

- a common proper name
- one or more elements of common culture which need not be specified, but may include religion, customs, or language
- unique community of interests, feelings and actions
- a shared sense of common origins or ancestry, and
- a common geographic origin."

This definition is based on the work of Smith (1986).

Race

Race is the biological characteristic that is assigned to a person as opposed to ethnicity that a person choses himself or herself.

APPENDIX 11: Semi-structured Interview Guide

Sponsees

1. Career pathway
2. Please tell me about people who have helped you in your career.
   - How did you find him or her?
   - How did they help you?
   - Which was the most important area they helped you in?
   - How often did you meet, where did you meet?
   - What did you discuss with him or her?
   - Did you help him or her in return?
   - What was the outcome?
   - What were the challenges?
   - Are they still ongoing?
   - Were there relationships that you wanted to form as you felt it would influence your career but could not due to gender? Elaborate.
   - Were there relationships that you wanted to form as you felt it would influence your career but could not due to ethnicity? Elaborate.
   - Would you call this person a sponsor? Why? Why not?
3. Please tell me about the sponsoring relationship/s you had:
   - How was it formed?
   - What did your sponsor do for you in your career?
   - What was the outcome?
   - What were the challenges?
   - Is it still ongoing? Why or why not?

- Do you feel you did something for your sponsor? What did you do for your sponsor?

4. Was your sponsor male or female? Did the sponsor/s gender impact the relationship? How? Did you choose the sponsor because of gender?
5. Were there some sponsoring relationships that you had wanted to form but could not as a result of your gender? Elaborate.
6. If relevant: How were the sponsoring relationships with male sponsors different from those with female sponsors?
7. Would you prefer to form a sponsoring relationship with males or females? Why? Elaborate.
8. How would you describe your ethnicity? What does that mean for you?
9. Do you feel that your ethnicity impacted your career? How?

Note: for questions on ethnicity, I would refer to the specific ethnicity of the interviewee once they identify their ethnicity. For example, in question 7 - Did being Māori/Asian/etc. impact your sponsoring relationship?

10. Did your ethnicity impact your sponsoring relationship/s? How?
11. What was the ethnicity of your sponsor? Did the sponsor/s ethnicity impact the relationship? How? Did you choose the sponsor because of ethnicity?
12. Were there some sponsoring relationships that you had wanted to form but could not as a result of your ethnicity? Why? Elaborate.
13. Would you prefer to form a sponsoring relationship with someone of the same ethnicity as you? Why? Elaborate.
14. If relevant: How were the sponsoring relationships with people of the same ethnicity as you differ from those belonging to other ethnicities?

Sponsors

1. How many people have you sponsored?
2. Please tell me about the sponsoring relationships you had (details for as many as the sponsors talks about)
    - How was it formed?
    - What did you do for your sponsee's career?
    - Where did you meet, how often?
    - What was the outcome?
    - What were the challenges?
    - Is it still ongoing? Why or why not?
    - Did your sponsee do something for you?

APPENDIX 12: Transcript Release Form

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Gender, ethnicity and sponsoring: A study of New Zealand women's experiences of sponsoring

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature: ..... **Date:** .....

Full Name – printed .....

APPENDIX 13: Initial List of Nodes from Thematic Analysis

Ambiguous interactions Ambiguous terminology Awareness of ability to help Awareness of developmental outcomes Awareness of larger issues Awareness of receiving in return Bending backwards Benevolence Caring like a child Characteristics of people perceived as significant Choosing whom to help Collective relationships Contributing towards a cause Deliberate Dependability Family and or friends as sponsors Felt need for support Friendship Giving a voice Gratitude Hidden expectation of gratitude or value	Ability to influence Hope for paying forward Indebtedness Intersectional experiences Making sponsor proud, seeking approval Networks as significant No expectations in return Non positional ability to influence Advice or guidance Being there or available Career planning Confidence Encouragement Flexibility Motivation Protection Sounding board Sponsor as someone who provides public recognition Supporter of personal goals Vouching for Opportunity to find support Other	Peers as sponsors Perception of someone's need Personal values Philosophical motivation Pleasure from gratitude Pleasure from help provided Pleasure from the ability to help Pride Professional friendships Providing opportunities or giving a chance Recognising ability Recognising potential Relating circumstances Relational benefits Role modelling as significant Sponsor as gender neutral Sponsor as infallible Sponsor as parent like Supportive workplace culture Unaware of having helped Unexpected kindness Watching over