

## **The influences of multi-level processes on the transnational mobilities of skilled migrants**

Dr. Chi Hong Nguyen <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> English Language Department, FPT University, Can Tho Campus, Vietnam ([chinh6@fe.edu.vn](mailto:chinh6@fe.edu.vn))

### **Abstract**

Skilled migration is initiated by both individuals' pursuits and mobility regimes. It involves the strategies migrants use, and meanings they embed in the use of these strategies. Individuals and institutions are not merely subjects who are influenced by global forces of race for talent. By taking transnationalism on board, this paper argues that there are multi-level processes that shape and re-shape transnational mobilities in various scales and domains. It is not always the case of global forces which influence local actors, but the local economic, political and social practices of migrants that shape the ways they respond to global forces.

Key words: brain flows, skilled migration, multi-level processes, transnationalism, transnational mobilities

### **1. Introduction**

In the global discourse of race for talent, professional migration following international education – which is associated with two-step migration – is disembodied as homogeneous brain flows from one nation to another for national competitive advantage. In contrast, studies taking transnationalism perspectives show the embodiment of transnational mobilities through relational aspects of migrants' lives. This essay also challenges the policy assumption that disembodies migrants' experiences of transnational mobilities as homogeneous brain flows from one country to another. In contrast, migrants' entwinement with the world allows them to experience transnational mobilities in intersecting social aspects, in which they encounter interrelated constraints and possibilities emerging from their interactions with others and things across space and time.

This article argues that migrants always share the world with others and things in intersecting social domains, so that transnational mobilities are reflective of their entwinement with the world. It does so by elaborating migrants' embodiment of through their relations to multi-level social processes. The first part of this paper looks at how migrants interact with mobility governance to make sense of transnational mobilities. The following parts discuss influences of intersecting professional, communal, and familial scales in which the immobilities of others affect transnational mobilities with regard to decisions to migrate and experiences of relocation.

### **2. Mobility governance of the transnational mobilities of skilled migrants**

Migrants' mobilities are often described as being shaped by state regimes of policies and control. However, migrants also actively respond to the global race for talent embedded in skilled immigration

schemes in Western countries through their interactions with others at intersecting social domains. For example, considering permanent residency (PR) as the “holy grail” (Robertson, 2011a, p. 107; see also Lindquist, Biao, & Yeoh, 2012), some international students manage to pay high fees for recruitment and documentation services provided by licensed and unlicensed migration agents, or use (transnational) social networks to migrate after education. Others deliberately choose degree programs that are demanded in host societies and accordingly provided by some institutions that international students associate with “PR factories” (Baas, 2006, p. 12). Opportunistic students-turned-migrants who rush into applying for PR by utilizing various illegal ways cause governments and the media to portray them as “backdoor migrants,” bringing a threat to the state in terms of selecting the most appropriate skills for the labour market (Robertson, 2011b, p. 2196). Some have their mobilities initiated (and constrained for some) by a romance relationship and marriage bonding in host countries either by choice or cultural practices of ethnicity and gender (Biao, 2005 & 2007; King, 2002; Willis & Yeoh, 2003).

In terms of ethnicity, for example, the growing demands for information technology (IT) professionals in the US and Australia enable the boom of Indian “body shops” which recruit IT Indian engineers and then farm them out for particular projects (Biao, 2005 & 2007). Applicants can then meet the prescribed requirements for the Green Card in the US or PR in Australia by getting work contracts with potential employers without facing financial constraints in applying for permanent resident visas in these countries. Biao’s work also shows that some migrants further utilize the cultural caste practice of dowries from families with daughters wanting to marry them to increase the likelihood of migration. Some of these migrants choose to take IT degree programs overseas and ask for dowries to support their international education journeys, while others’ international education journeys are willingly and fully funded by the girls’ families prior to their weddings. In this vein, these Indian skilled migrants experience the influences of migration brokers in relation to their “ethnicization” (Biao, 2007, p. 9) and cultural norms. The global race for talent and national skilled immigration schemes are then encountered in combination with commercial services provided by intermediaries, migrants’ caste relations, availability of academic programs in host countries, and social networks.

In addition, migrants are often described as those who embody skilled migration policies through their daily encounter with others with affections. Conradson and McKay (2007) have emphasized that emotions are inseparable from mobilities as the “felt dimensions”, as migrants are always embedded in relation to other people, events, and things, whether these constellations are “geographically close or distant, located in the present or past” (p. 167). Migrants may experience fidelity and commitment towards families, friends, and communities, or guilt when they are unable to fulfil communal or familial obligations. Their interactions with others across space construct processes of “culture of circulation” (Lee & LiPuma, 2002, p. 192) when achievements or failures in practices of socio-cultural norms transmit certain meanings to their transnational mobilities. For example, Robertson’s (2011a) research on international students who have studied and are waiting for PR outcomes in Australia has shown that would-be skilled migrants experience a mixed of feelings including anxiety, disappointment, happiness, and hopelessness. These feelings come to them not just through their encounter with the state regime, but also their interactions with families at home and friends in Australia. By ending up with an unexpected tax debt caused by lack of clear advice on the change of her tax status, one participant in Robertson’s (2011a) sample was refused to go back to her country to

attend a family funeral, making her feel guilty and sad. This example shows that skilled migrants' responses to the state regime reflects how they live in the world with others, with emotions and agency.

The mobility governance controls migrants' mobilities through citizenship. International mobility is not a "resource" that not everyone can obtain (Skeggs, 2004, p. 49) because of receiving governments' control of population visibly through the grant of citizenship to select who can arrive and stay as "designer migrants" (Robertson, 2011b, p. 2196). However, national citizenship has been challenged by economic globalization and migrants' transnational practices resulting in social transformations of the state and changes in citizenship laws (Sassen, 2002, p. 277). These global and transnational processes undermine "the realities of solidarity and interdependence that underlie national citizenship" (Tambini, 2001, p. 212). While governments may express that becoming a citizen "represents a commitment" to the nation and people and "gives a sense of belonging" because migrants can "fully participate" in all aspect of life in the destination country (DIBP, 2015), not all migrants may feel "fully belonging" to host societies. Citizenship is used as a commodity for legal migration which influences and is influenced by migrants' interactions with others to make sense of belonging. They may maintain dual citizenship, and participate in transnational networks and organizations for cross-border socio-economic, political, cultural, and religious practices. Otherwise, they may not participate in any transnational activities, but do not feel entirely belonging to host countries in terms of emotions and loyalty.

Citizenship is then encountered as a form of legal residency status, and meanings of integration. The ways migrants experience the uses of citizenship for their mobilities are related to how they construct and re-construct belonging in host societies. A growing body of research has looked into how migrants' mobilities influence and are influenced by their subjective experiences of being legal residents, ranging from issues of gender, ethnicity, and social class. A variety of theoretical frameworks such as multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, and feminism (e.g. Blunt & Willis, 2000; Mitchell, 2007; Nagel, 2005; Raghuram, 2008; Staeheli & Nagel, 2006; Yeoh & Wills, 1999 & 2005) have been used to investigate strategies that migrants practice to maintain or re-construct their sense of belonging with legal residency status, particularly their efforts of "homemaking" (Staeheli & Nagel, 2006, p. 1600).

By exploring migrants' relation to the world, these studies have primarily pointed out that migrants' sense of belonging under the legal status of citizenship is negotiated through intersecting and overlapping social divisions and roles, as well as socio-political, cultural, and professional practices and norms. For example, by looking at how Arab managerial migrants working for transnational corporations in London participate in the local politics of multiculturalism and integration, Nagel (2005) reveals that they tend to express ethnic links to Arab communities and cultural practices as a strategy to maintain their origin. However, while the public often construes them as foreigners, especially after the September 11 event, their participation in Arab political organizations in the UK is experienced as a way to contest the Arab foreignness. In so doing, their uses of citizenship become a tool for them to acquire political positioning with other Arab migrants in the UK. In this sense, migrants' sense of belonging may become congruent, or ambiguous and contradictory with the legal status of residency stated in their citizenship. The ways migrants make "home" are constructed by external relationships as much as internal relations when they are located in a place, which they may call "home" (Staeheli & Nagel, 2006, p. 1601; see also Conradson & McKay, 2007). In general, the ways migrants make sense of citizenship are negotiated through their encounter with others at

intersecting social domains in quite similar respects to their responses to mobility governance in skilled migration schemes. Their interactions with others may define the sense of belonging they want to embody in their acquisition of citizenship as forms and experiences of mobilities.

### **3. Communal, professional, and familial practices**

Migrants are always with families, professional environments, and communities. Their interactions with the surrounding world prior to decisions to migrate and during relocation may affect forms, meanings, and experience of transnational mobilities. Their transnational practices are not “a set of abstracted or dematerialised” flows, but are grounded in the “multiplicity of involvements” (Basch, Glick-Schiller, & Blanc-Szanton, 1996, p. 7) sustained at the everyday level (Conradson & Latham, 2005).

At the community level, socio-cultural norms such as communal practices of marriage and mobilities for status are found to influence some skilled migrants’ decisions to migrate and relocation. For example, by conducting in-depth fieldwork in Australia and India, Biao (2005 & 2007) has shown significant influences of communal and social practices on transnational mobilities of Indian skilled migrants, as mentioned earlier. Biao points out that the emergence of mobile Indian IT professionals affects the increase of dowries that some Indian male students utilize as a means to support their pursuits of IT programs and migration in Western countries. Similarly, Faist (2000b) outlines interrelated influences of transnational kinship and practices on mobilities. An example is remittances which are usually sent through kinship practices involving migrants’ mutual obligations and expectations shaped by cultural meanings. Levitt (1998) has also found that social remittances in terms of ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital are sent through practices of kinship as mutual social ties in communities, which are then adjusted in accordance with communal laws and practices. As such, migrants’ transnational practices of cultural norms reflect how their embeddedness in communities socially positions themselves and their families. Yet, the ways they follow cultural practices may sometimes pose constraints to them. For example, in case of international marriage migrants following the cultural practice of filial piety, Yeoh and colleagues’ (2013) study shows that remittances and gifts sent by Vietnamese brides in Singapore enable their natal families in Vietnam to foreground an image of material success in the village which, in return, emotionalizes their acts of sending remittances as the “acts of recognition” (p. 441). Yet, these women have to struggle with domestic arguments in their marital families in Singapore, accepting husbands’ blames as a cost for their sacrifices. In some instances, migrants’ encounter with cultural norms intersects with family issues, creating constraints and opportunities for the initiation and sustainment of transnational mobilities.

At the professional community level, research has shown that professional environments and practices in home and host societies may shape skilled migrants’ mobilities in several ways. In host societies, for example, Yeoh and Khoo (1998) have revealed that skilled female migrants, who follow their husbands for work in Singapore, participate in community work, in addition to taking professional employment, as a strategy to obtain social grounding in a public sphere. Their community work shows that while they are able to maintain familial responsibilities as housewives in a private sphere, their participation in social work enables them to earn better social positioning as another public sphere in the new place. In this sense, their transnational mobilities are experienced as a balanced standing

among professional, familial, and social positions. Further, migrants' professional practices are also encountered in relation to mobility governance, as mentioned above. For example, professional environments in host societies may influence skilled migrants' relocation through precariousness in obtaining employment while waiting for legal status of citizenship (Robertson & Runganaikaloo, 2014), labour exploitation, insecurity, racial discrimination, unemployment, and social inequality (Baas, 2010; Goldring & Landolt, 2011; Nonini, 2002). Their professional practices are influenced by socio-cultural and political norms that all together influence their relocation strategies and experiences.

In addition, research has shown that socio-economic transformations in home societies may affect return and transnational practices of skilled migrants. Saxenian (2002) argues that new economic opportunities in emerging Asian economies such as Taiwan, India, and China, attract the return of transnational entrepreneur migrants from the US through technical communities in these origin countries. Their transnational return and participation in professional communities provide a significant mechanism for them to disseminate knowledge and upgrade local people's capabilities. In this vein, skilled migrants' decisions to migrate, return, and sustain transnational connections are affected by professional practices in home societies, which are accorded with national policies for development. For example, in an attempt to call for overseas Chinese professionals' return, the Chinese Government has employed many policies to offer financial rewards to prospective returning migrants for economic and technological contributions (Biao, 2011). These policies appear as representations of rituals of economic-technological determinist approaches, politically shaping new subjectivities of returning migrants within the Chinese Communist Party's ideological response to neoliberal globalization. Similarly, in relation to Vietnam's recent economic conditions, Dang (2003) explores the motivations for Vietnamese expatriates' return by addressing some factors related to the Government's incentives stated in the diaspora strategies, including materialistic attractions, better research facilities, connections to the Vietnamese origin, as well as increasing freedom of speech. These studies have implicitly referred to influences of professional practices on transnational mobilities in relation to socio-economic changes, diasporic strategies in home societies, transnational connections, and migrants' sense-making of belonging.

At the family level, influences of migrants' domestic roles and interactions with family members may constrain or lead to opportunities for their negotiations of transnational mobilities. For example, educational credentials can be utilized for two-step migrants' residency to meet their parents' aspirations for social status, and a familial pursuit of social advantage and security (Waters, 2005 & 2006b). Further, while male migrants seem to initiate transnational mobilities for economic pursuit as breadwinners, women migrants tend to follow as dependent spouses. In fact, a strand of research, often an earlier stream before the 2000s, has portrayed the notions of females moving critiqued by Yeoh and Willis (2005) as "secondary" or "tied" (p. 211) migrants whose employment prospects and practices are constrained by domestic responsibilities. Paying little heed to female migrants' social and professional aspects, some studies conceptualize female migration as being included in family migration which is initiated by "the search for higher household (or family) incomes" when female migrants accept to "sacrifice" employment so that the family can "reap the post-migration benefits obtained by the "male breadwinner" (Boyle, Halfacree & Smith, 1999, p. 114). The migrant image as a single male who is seen as being "disembodied and disembedded from contexts such as familial or household relationships" (Kofman, 2000, p. 53) narrows the focus of migration studies to an

exploration of cost-and-benefit rationality of migrants. By taking a feminist perspective, Yeoh and Willis (2005) (see also Yeoh & Khoo, 1998) have found that under the influences of Singapore's regionalization process in using human capital through emigration to Asia, some Singaporean women migrants accept to follow their husbands migrating to China, whereas others lead the migration for entrepreneurial activities by themselves. However, these female migrants have to negotiate mothering practices and domestic unpaid work to sustain the stability in their mobilities. In this sense, skills that female migrants possess and perform in labour markets, if any, are embodied in the ways they negotiate gender and familial issues, which can be different from male migrants. Despite the current debate on conceptualizing female migrants, these studies collectively refer to influences of migrants' relations to intersecting social and familial aspects on transnational mobilities.

Migrants, either males or females, skilled or unskilled, are always embedded in the world with others at household structures, work, and wider social networks. This is why de Haas (2010a, p. 246) asserts that migration should be explored in relation to wider socio-economic contexts and broader transformation processes embedded in development. I further argue that we should explore how macro-level conditions and forces are encountered in relation to migrants' everyday experiences of professional, communal, and familial norms and practices. The complex relations between individuals in local settings within national and global fronts increase agency on the one hand, but do not weaken the roles of the nation-state on the other.

#### **4. (Relative) immobilities of others and migrants**

Transnationalism research shows that migrants' decisions to migrate, relocation experiences, as well as future intentions are significantly influenced by others who might be relatively immobile (see e.g. Biao, 2005 & 2007; Waters, 2006a). As I have discussed so far, relatively immobile people that migrants encounter directly or indirectly may include migration intermediaries, families, those in communities, friends, colleagues, or others sharing the world with migrants in home and host societies. Immobilities are then seen as important as mobilities (Hannam, Sheller, & Urry, 2006, p. 5).

In home societies, migrants' family engagement and socio-cultural norms in communities are found to affect their negotiations of transnational mobilities. For example, Waters (2005 & 2006a) has argued that Hong Kong students' education-related migration in Canada is initiated as a family strategy for students to deal with domestic educational failures and acquire more cultural and social capital in terms of obtaining Western degrees for future employment, and for parents to acquire social status. Their migration after international education reflects part of a wider strategy for household capital accumulation. Similarly, Ho and Bedford's (2008) study of Hong Kong migrants who undertake secondary and tertiary education in New Zealand and subsequently apply for PR has revealed that their migration is influenced by their parents, some of whom followed them for caring as "astronaut" parents moving back and forth between Hong Kong and New Zealand. Some respondents' intentions to return to Hong Kong or move to another country for work are later shaped by their parents' settlement in Hong Kong or relocation to another country due to their past mobilities as "astronaut" parents following other siblings' international education journeys in other countries.

Household strategies for mobilities are not limited to natal families. They are extended by caste relations and mobility arrangements by marital families. For example, as I have mentioned Biao's (2005 & 2007) work on Indian IT migrants, their transnational mobilities are initiated and arranged by

bridal families' dowries, which are used as resources for mobilities. A noteworthy point underlying these studies is the acknowledgement of familial practices of mobilities are influenced by broader socio-political conditions in home and host societies. For example, Waters (2005 & 2006a) discusses socio-economic transformations in Hong Kong with the rise of middle class families who expect to convert economic resources into cultural capital for children's future work prospects. Similarly, Ho and Bedford (2008) mention the influences of relaxing conditions for skilled immigration that facilitate Hong Kong students to apply for PR, but tightening requirements for family reunion immigration that impedes their parents from joining them to apply for PR in New Zealand. These studies collectively present skilled migrants' embeddedness in a web of social interactions, ranging from familial practices to socio-political conditions.

Influences of immobilities on migration may arise the ways migrants make sense of space in dealing with constraints and realizing possibilities, as well as following social norms embedded in places. When migrants move between spaces, they encounter challenges as well as possibilities opening up from their encounter with the challenges in the new place. Further, when migrants dwell in places, they may follow or break with public norms to enact mobilities (see also Biao, 2005 & 2007; Nagel, 2005; Willis & Yeoh, 2002 & 2003; Yeoh & Willis, 1999). For example, by looking at Singaporean economic migrants in China, Yeoh and Willis's (1999) study shows that the migration decisions of expatriate professionals are made in relation to cultural practices of marriage and marriage plans, which both foster and impede their professional and social mobility in the host society. In quite a similar vein, Biao's (2005 & 2007) work shows how Indian IT professionals' skilled labour mobility is managed by the "body shopping" practice in relation to the immobility of cultural norms in India. He points out that how IT professionals use the services of the body shops is relational to how they manage social and communal practices and gender relations. Some Indian castes' practices of the dowry are closely associated with "family prestige" (2005, p. 370), where bridal families accept to pay high amount of money, gold, furniture, immovable commodities such as apartments, and even the costs of the future grooms' international education in IT. In this sense, following public norms influences migrants' mobilities as well as those who live close to them. Because migrants never live their lives separately from others, their mobilities always include the production, distribution and engagement with politics, which Cresswell (2010, p. 21) terms as a "politics of mobility". The politics of mobility entails the production of social relations and how mobility is produced by social relations.

After migrants have arrived in a destination, they may not become immobile in host societies. Migrants' sustainment of transnational relationships and nationalism enable them to become mobile in terms of making physical movements such as frequent home visits and imagined return. Their immobilities, which are associated with "roots", may affect mobilities as negotiations of "routes". While "roots" often signify emotional and affective bonds with the physical environment, shared culture and locality as local anchorage into place, "routes" refer to ways that people are mobile yet attached to place as "culturally mediated experiences of dwelling and travelling" (Clifford, 1997, p. 5). These two concepts are intertwined (Clifford, 1997, p. 4; Gustafson, 2001; p. 670). Yet, some studies on transnationalism acknowledge that the two concepts are not always complimentary to each other. While it is commonly assumed that mobile people are less likely to develop a strong sense of territorial belonging (Bauman, 1995; Fried, 2000), other studies show that mobility and belonging are not necessarily mutually exclusive when mobile people may have strong territorial bonds (Pollini,

2005). Cultural and ethnic attachment as well as a sense of belonging may distract migrants from making “roots” in host societies. Instead, the “routes” they are making are the sense of belonging to home societies (Faist, 2000b; Gustafson, 2001; Vertovec, 2009). Sustained contacts and sustainment of transnational relationships are experienced as the “routes” they are making to maintain their “roots”. “Dwelling mobility” is seen as the emergent theme of research. As Chaney (1979) noted on the flows of Caribbean peoples to the United States during the 1970s, there are now people who experience “dwelling mobility” by having their “feet in two societies” (p. 209).

## **5. Assimilation and transnational ties**

Some migration studies tend to investigate skilled immigration in host societies through an assimilationist view. These studies often examine how migrants assimilate in the host society through language use, employment patterns, intermarriages, naturalization, and residential location. They also explore how migrants experience upward social mobilities in achieving professional outcomes and downward incorporation into other minority groups. However, assimilation theories are critiqued for several aspects. First, this theory tends to assume a sequential adaptation of migration in receiving societies as a “norm to which migrants should aspire” (Nagel, 2009, p. 400). This norm prescribes the attractions of benefits in receiving societies compared to distractions in countries of origin. Migrants are depicted to rationally make a choice out of this norm by gradually shedding their cultural and ethnic practices as well as political loyalties with the home country (Guarnizo, Portes, & Haller, 2003, p. 1215). As such, this theory neglects migrants’ ongoing relations with their countries of origin, particularly with regard to migrants’ socio-cultural positioning in transnational spaces between home and host societies (Walton-Roberts, 2004, p. 99). Also, not every migrant chooses to follow the cost-and-benefit routes of assimilation, as nationalism and ethnicity are found to play a significant role in shaping migrants’ relocation and connecting them to home societies (see also Biao, 2007; Portes & Zhou, 1993). In addition, studies dealing with assimilation issues often pay attention to the “ideological and political deliberations” taking place in both home and host societies that shape those who are in the “mainstream” and who remain “outside of [the] boundaries” (Nagel, 2009, p. 401). Because of the focus on these deliberations, assimilation is understood as a “pattern of sameness” or a “relational process of making sameness” within host societies (p. 401). Yet, migrants’ activities in host countries are various, ranging from daily activities to transnational practices. These activities potentially lead to different outcomes and meanings attached to the transnational activities that constitute transnational social fields (Faist, 2000b; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Migration studies with the assimilationist perspective, therefore, are unable to interpret transnational lives that exceed national borders.

In contrast, transnationalism studies find that assimilation is not always an inevitable process of migrants’ adjustment in host societies. Some research (e.g. Caglar, 2002; de Haas, 2010a; Nagel, 2009; Smith, 2001; Vertovec, 2001 & 2009) juxtapose the relations between transnational and local levels that form an important part in migrants’ everyday lives. Smith (2001), for example, argues that transnational practices enabled by the governance of dual citizenship limit migrants from assimilating to host societies. Further, in transnational social fields of potentially differential power, migrants may have to face disparities, inequalities, religious, and racial issues that may facilitate and legitimize mobility and fixity that hinder their assimilation (Glick-Schiller & Salazar, 2013, p. 183). A number of studies (e.g. Basch, Glick-Schiller, & Blanc-Szanton, 1996; Ehrkamp, 2005; Glick-Schiller & Salazar, 2013; Nagel, 2002 & 2009; Portes, 2003; Vertovec, 2001) have argued that migrants do not



always lose their distinctiveness to assimilate with the mainstream population in host societies. Instead, some migrants may incorporate in the new society and concurrently maintain their roots with the countries of origin, whereas others do not participate in transnational activities at all. Integration in host societies and commitment to home countries are not necessarily substitutes, but can be complements (de Haas, 2010a, 247).

## **6. Concluding comments: Transnational mobilities as reflective of migrants' entwinement with the world**

This article firstly discussed the disembodiment of transnational mobilities in state governance conceptualizing migrants as brain flows as commodities under the global and national race for talent. However, migrants are always embedded in social interactions with not only the global and national regimes of talent and development, but also communities, professional environments, and families. Then, I argued that forms, meanings, and experiences of transnational mobilities are embodied through migrants' interactions with others and things. Accordingly, understanding the embodiment of transnational mobilities is to attend to migrants' entwinement with the world.

It should be noted that migrants negotiate transnational mobilities at intersecting social domains, rather than sets of policy influences in isolation in one place such as either host or home societies. Skilled migrants' mobilities are shaped by political and social changes in both home and host societies. States and supranational organizations play significant roles in formulating mechanisms and control over migration through migration schemes, policies, and legal supporting or constraining regimes. However, migrants experience mobilities in close relation to others and things in transnational spaces. Under socio-economic and political transformations in home and host societies and migrants' relation to others and things:

Mobilities often no longer take the form of permanent ruptures, uprooting, and settlement, but are more likely to be transient and complex, ridden with disruptions, detours, multi-destinations, and founded on interconnections and multiple chains of movement [...] with multi-stranded linkages across space (Yeoh, 2005, p. 60).

The need to attend to confluences of macro-contextual influences including migration policies, socio-economic and political conditions, social and communal practices, as well as those in home and host societies is important in understanding how migrants share the social world with others. Under confluences of others and things in intersecting social aspects, migrants may experience a transformation of their decisions to migrate to possibilities and constraints through the journeys. Some may achieve what they have set out before migration, whereas others fail to do so, but realize other possibilities opened up. In this vein, migration entails more than just migrants' imaginations of migration before departure, but also arrival experiences and possibly feelings of in-betweenness during relocation.

Therefore, exploring the forms, meanings, and experiences of transnational mobilities must be based on a theoretical framework that considers migrants as active agents who make sense of transnational mobilities through their interactions with the world in various intersecting social domains. Migrants are always intertwined with the world. The theoretical perspective that views transnational mobilities as being reflective of migrants' entwinement with the world may challenge assumptions held in the

policy discourse which portray professional migration reductively in economic terms as the flows of human capital between discrete nations, disregarding transnational ties.

### **Compliance of research and publication ethics**

I, as the Corresponding Author, declare and undertake that in the study titled as “The influences of multi-level processes on the transnational mobilities of skilled migrants”, scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed; Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry Journal Editorial Board has no responsibility for all ethical violations to be encountered, that all responsibility belongs to the author/s and that this study has not been sent to any other academic publication platform for evaluation.

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