Mobility and Intergenerational Transfers of Capital: Narrating Expatriate and Globally Mobile Children's Perspectives

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Abstract

This chapter critically reviews extant literature on capital accumulation and intergenerational transfers among expatriate and globally mobile families, with a focus on accompanying children's perspectives. It discusses three themes in the literature. First, it analyses the values and meanings of migration and global mobility to the parents and children, and the significance of intergenerational social reproduction and mobility to them. Second, it deconstructs the children's presumed privilege and homogeneity by highlighting the complexities and specificities of capital transmission from parents to children. Third, it highlights the relatively unheard voices and choices of children in familial capital/mobility projects. The chapter concludes with some methodological suggestions to take into account children's perspectives of and roles in intergenerational pursuits of capital and transnational im(mobility).

Keywords

Accompanying children, third culture kids, transnational migration, capital, expatriation, intergenerational mobility

Introduction

There is well-established literature examining the link between transnational mobility and the intergenerational social reproduction and mobility of expatriate and globally mobile families (see Wan et al., 2017 for a review of 'global families'). Transnational migration is often viewed as part of a familial strategy to accumulate and enhance capital (in economic, cultural, social and symbolic forms) that would ensure sustained or improved material wealth and status for the family and the next generation (Hanisch, 2020; Oso & Suárez-Grimalt, 2017; Waters, 2005). The centrality of the family in transnational mobility research lies in that migrants are not isolated individuals, but part of family systems with interlocking ties, obligations and resources that sustain intergenerational capital pursuits (Coe & Shani 2015). The literature predominantly approaches family-led transnational mobility from the perspectives of parents, without taking equal account of children's views. Using parents as the starting and focal point gives very little voice to the children who may have conflicting views on what transnational mobility primarily means to them. Furthermore, it does not shed light on the extent to which the children are motivated to pursue mobility related goals and trajectories aspired and expected out of them. Moreover, this parent-centric approach assumes simplistically that the capital transmission from parents to children is even and straightforward, and that each child will be able to draw from and accumulate the same amount and form of capital with equal success. There is therefore a missed opportunity to examine children's diverse and unexpected mobility outcomes (i.e., the extent to which they are able to improve or maintain the social status and privilege of their parents).

While some specific studies on expatriate and globally mobile people have given attention to their childhood mobility experiences, these often involve adults reflecting on and reconstructing their past (Bell-Vilada et al., 2011; Eidse & Sichel, 2004b; Fail et al., 2004; Kwon, 2019), rather than children speaking as children. These retrospectives are at best, partial and selective given the passing of time and the influence of adult-guided reminiscing

on the now-adult children's autobiographical memory (Bjørnsen, 2020). By contrast, studies on international school students' mobility and future aspirations have focused on these young people's viewpoints (e.g., Cranston, 2020; Maxwell & Aggleton, 2016; Young, 2017). As Orellana et al. (2001) have argued, children and young people are also active and independent participants of migration, whose lives, relationships and experiences are altered through the migration process. Moreover, 'the *presence* of children is central to the families' decision-making process' (ibid., p. 587, original emphasis). There is therefore a need to place equal emphasis on children's perspectives (Fechter & Korpela, 2016; Hatfield, 2010; Kang, 2013; Sander, 2016; Tse & Waters, 2013). Not only does this give agency and voice to children as (transnational, expatriate or serial) migrants, it also offers a more comprehensive understanding of familial migration by highlighting the differential perspectives of individual family members. YES!

This chapter explores the values attached to, and meanings of, migration and global mobility to parents and their children, and the significance of intergenerational social reproduction and mobility to both groups.[1] Second, it deconstructs the children's presumed privilege and homogeneity by highlighting the complexities and specificities of capital transmission from parents to children. Third, it highlights the relatively unheard voices and choices of children in familial capital/ mobility projects. The chapter concludes with some methodological suggestions for taking into account children's perspectives of and roles in intergenerational pursuits of capital and transnational im(mobility).

Expatriate and globally mobile children
Terms and definitions
Existing literature in migration and cross-cultural education have used various terms to describe and characterize children who move across borders with their families,[1] often on multiple occasions. These terms include 'Third Culture Kids' (TCK) (Useem, 1973; Pollock & Van Reken, 2009), 'global nomads' (McCaig, 2002; Mclachlan, 2007), 'nomadic children' (Eidse & Sichel, 2004a), and 'serial migrants' children' (Désilets, 2015). The common feature amongst these myriad terms is the experience of (1) moving across borders with the family as a child; and (2) schooling and growing up in a foreign context that is not one's (or either parents') country of origin. To better capture the experience of growing up in-between cultures, Van Reken proposed another term, 'cross-cultural kids' (CCK), defined as 'a person who is living in—or meaningfully interacting with—two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during the developmental years of childhood (up to age 18)' (2011, p. 33). However, this term does not explain in depth the roles, aspirations and trajectories of children who have become involved in their family's capital/mobility projects.

In this chapter, we define expatriate and globally mobile children as children who primarily move overseas with their families often temporarily due to their parents' work. The parents may be self-initiated expatriates or company assignees in a range of industries (e.g., oil and gas, education, finance, consulting), aid workers, embassy and diplomatic staff, military staff, and missionaries (see McNulty & Selmer, 2017, Parts III-IV). These families have been referred to as 'expatriate families', especially in the human resources and business management literature (Lazarova et al., 2015). As we have highlighted elsewhere, the term

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[1] This chapter excludes the discussion of refugee children who may move under very different circumstances than expatriate and globally mobile children.

'expatriate' has colonial and racial connotations (Koh and Sin, 2020; also see Kunz, 2020). However, we use it in this instance to capture the notion of choice and the relative ease of global mobility enjoyed by these families. Furthermore, using the term expatriate also enables us to interrogate the commonly assumed privilege that is associated with the term (Kunz, 2016; 2020). As we will later show, focusing on the children's perspectives challenges their presumed privilege and homogeneity as members of the expatriate family.

The term expatriate and globally mobile children used in this chapter does not include first- and further generation (im)migrant children who have already been the subject of many studies in the migration literature (e.g. Nyíri, 2014; Waters & Levitt, 2002; Wessendorf, 2016; Zhou, 1997). However, as (im)migrant children can also be globally mobile, we will review a few works on them where relevant to the discussion on expatriate and globally mobile children (e.g., migrant children in transnational split household arrangements). There are fundamental differences between the first group (expatriate and globally mobile children) and the second ((im)migrant children) (Dillon & Ali, 2019). (Im)migrant children are likely to have families who have set up roots in the host country and view cross-border mobility as a permanent or long-term move. On the other hand, expatriate and globally mobile children are likely to partake in multiple, shorter term and occasionally multi-directional cross-border mobility. They are often associated with the term TCK, although there are differences between these two groups.

The term expatriate and globally mobile children focuses on the mobility aspect of the children's lives rather than the 'third culture' connotation in the term TCK. TCK suggests that children who experience multiple international relocation during their formative years do not belong to either the culture of their country of citizenship and the culture of their host country (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009). Instead, they occupy a third culture space where they interact with many cultures but do not fully belong in any of them and struggle to locate a sense of home. On the other hand, the term, expatriate and globally mobile children shifts the focus from 'culture' (which may be difficult to define and can be subject to continual change) to 'mobility' (which can be traced and mapped). Examining the mobility of the children allows for a consideration of cultural context and individual resources, characteristics and circumstances not afforded in the term TCK (Dillon & Ali, 2019; Fanning & Burns, 2017). It enables us to circumvent the arbitrary and broad categorization of mobile children of relative privilege into static either/or cultures. We therefore posit that it is much more useful to focus on the mobility (rather than cultural) dimension of the children's lives, specifically in the context of family expatriation.

Invisibility in the literature
The relative invisibility of expatriate and globally mobile children in migration research lies in the common treatment of the children as passive dependents in the familial migratory project. More attention has been paid instead to the agency of parents as primary migrants and their strategies in utilizing economic (e.g., financial wealth) and cultural capitals (e.g., knowledge, skills, dispositions, qualifications) for household social mobility and reproduction (Selmer & Lam, 2004). Ackers and Stalford's (2004) study of internal family migration within the European Union noted that some parents subjected their children to 'future oriented consent' (p. 111) where migration was made with the justification that their children would reflect positively about the decision in future. Some children had more voice in the decision-making process, having being offered restricted choices between particular options from

what Ackers and Stalford described as the 'children's menu' (ibid.). However, the children as a whole lacked control over the eventual family decision. The privileging of parents' voices and choices in the dominant migration literature is problematic as it dismisses the consideration of children and young people as equal movers.

Following on Ackers and Stalford's line of argument but applied to the context of family expatriation, Hutchins (2011) argued that children's roles in familial migratory decision-making are often framed in the literature around the discourse of best interest, seen from their parents' perspectives. This discourse supports a common justification by expatriate and globally mobile parents that transnational mobility is made with their child(ren)'s education in mind (usually alongside parents' own career-related considerations) and that moving will bring future economic and status benefits to the child(ren) (Sander, 2016). However, as we will later show, the expected future benefits may not materialize in the same form and to the same degree as originally envisaged. Moreover, expatriate and globally mobile children are differentially involved and included in the familial migration decision-making process.

Research on expatriate and globally mobile children's experiences rarely extend beyond their educational experiences in international schools (Adams & Fleer, 2016; Fail et al., 2004; Tanu, 2014; 2018) and their identity, coping and belonging issues as they traverse borders, cultures, languages and friendship groups (Benjamin & Dervin, 2015; Dixon & Hayden, 2008; Kwon, 2019). Little has been done to link their experiences of international schools and frequent relocations with their relationships with their parents (with the exception of a few works such as Adams, 2014; Lijadi & Van Schalkwyk, 2017; Mclachlan, 2007; Sander, 2016). Moreover, the centring of parents' needs and aspirations has led to a gap in the literature where the children's individual capital accumulation strategies and mobility trajectories are often being overlooked (see Ní Laoire, 2020 for a rare exception). As there are multiple subjectivities within families, there is a need to take into account that children's opinions and experiences are not necessarily representative of or congruent to their parents' (Hatfield, 2010, p. 244). The individuality of each child and his/her unique viewpoints and preferences need to be considered in relation to the familial global mobility project.

To address these gaps in the literature, this chapter departs from a parent-centric approach to highlight and incorporate children's perspectives on transnational mobility and intergenerational social reproduction and mobility. In what follows, we examine parents' and children's perspectives respectively, before turning to the challenges and limits of familial capital accumulation and transfer across borders. We then focus on parent-child decision-making with regard to expatriation and mobility. Throughout these two sections, we highlight the nuances and insights that arise from a focus on children's lived experiences.

Capital accumulation through global mobility
(Familial) mobility capital
The notion of global mobility as capital has been mainly framed in existing literature around Bourdieu's influential and frequently cited concept of cultural capital. It is worth outlining the ways in which the concept has been applied in the family migration context. Bourdieu's original conception of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) notes that cultural capital in forms such as exclusive knowledge, competences and dispositions were used by elite families in 1960s France to ensure social reproduction, that is, the

transmission of power, social distinction and privilege to the children. The schooling system recognizes and rewards the cultural capital embodied by children of the dominant class, leading to their high educational attainment and subsequent occupational and status advantages.

Drawing from Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, literature in migration research has conceptualized cross-border mobility as a resource consisting of an accumulation of knowledge and experiences of mobility that can be drawn upon to inform decisions to move overseas and to stay put when the situation calls for it (Moret, 2017). This resource, also known as 'motiliy' or mobility capital when utilized (Kaufman et al., 2014; Leivestad, 2016; Ní Laoire, 2020), is unevenly distributed based on social position(ings) (Basaran & Olssen, 2018; Moret, 2017) - individuals who occupy dominant social position(ings) (e.g. along class, gender, ethnicity and nationality lines) and with advantaged access to capital (e.g., economic, cultural, social and linguistic) are able to move countries and at other times, be strategically immobile with more ease than individuals from lower social position(ings). Mobility capital can facilitate the accumulation and enhancement of economic (e.g., income), cultural (e.g., distinctive inter-cultural experiences; globally recognized and transferable credentials, knowledge, and skills), social (e.g., networks of support) and symbolic (e.g., prestige and recognition) capital at different times and in different (transnational) places (Moret 2017; Ní Laoire, 2020). In this chapter, we refer to these capitals as mobility related capital.

Migration literature have noted the pursuit of transnational education migration by middle-class families (typically the parents' decision) as a strategy for social distinction. Children's education in international schools and boarding schools - or, at the very least, a school in an English-speaking country - is seen as a crucial first step that paves the path towards accumulating future familial mobility and related capital (Kang, 2013, p. 329-330). In these projects, the family would 'migrate' on paper, with the children physically crossing international borders for schooling while the parents engage in circular/transnational mobilities or split household arrangements (Waters, 2005; 2006; Tse & Waters, 2013). Terms such as astronaut families and *kirogi kajok* (lit. 'wild geese families') (Abelmann et al., 2016; Okazaki & Kim, 2018) have been used to describe the ways these families partake in transnational living for the sake of the children's education and future capital rewards.

Parents' perspectives
In the context of expatriate and globally mobile families, it has been argued that parents have access to mobility capital that can be mobilized across borders and transferred to their accompanying children (Adams & Agbenyega, 2019; Mclachlan, 2007; Weenink, 2008). Mclachlan's (2007) study of expatriate and globally mobile children and their families in a private international school in Southern England showed how the parents actively coached their children to manage global mobility. The strategies include making friends with children of similar mobility backgrounds and withdrawing to observe and learn local norms and behaviour. Similarly, Weenink found that some globally mobile parents went to the extent of 'arrang[ing] cultural shocks to impart a cosmopolitan cultural openness in their children' (2008, p. 1095).

These examples highlight the importance of a kind of 'international mindedness' (Elwood & Davis, 2009), 'open-mindedness' (Fechter, 2016), or 'cosmopolitan capital' (Igarashi & Saito,

2014; Tanu, 2018; Weenink, 2008) that parents insist on imparting onto their children. Having already led globally mobile lives, these parents understood and appreciated the value of capital that can ease one's adaptation to different cultural contexts. The ability to become 'cultural chameleons' (Dillon & Ali, 2019) and relate to people of diverse backgrounds is a form of mobility related capital that is valued by multinational corporations and transnational organisations. By extension, the recognition of mobility related capital by employing organisations means that the children will become competitive in the global job market. More importantly, this form of capital is assumed to be obtainable only through global mobility.

As a result of such an assumption (i.e., global mobility can translate into capitals with future use and exchange values), newer cohorts of aspiring families have joined the global mobility bandwagon. Kim and Okazaki (2017), for example, highlighted how less-affluent middle class South Korean families arranged early study abroad (*chogi yuhak*) programmes for their children. Instead of moving to traditional destination countries in the West (e.g., Australia, UK, USA) which are preferred by elite and more affluent middle class families, these families moved to more affordable Southeast Asian countries which offer English-medium education and English-language immersion experiences (e.g., Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines). Similarly, Huang and Yeoh (2005) found that 'study mothers' from China (i.e., mothers who join their children's education migration as accompanying guardians) believed that their children's acquisition of English language skills and other mobility related capital in Singapore would bring future positional benefits. Specifically, with the accumulated cultural capital, their children would be able to enjoy greater flexibility in their future global mobilities and be competitive in global and local contexts, including the 'origin' context if they chose to 'return'.

What is clear here is that, regardless of social class and the extent of global mobilities, parents typically hold capital accumulation aspirations for their children. For parents who are already living globally mobile lives and whose children are born into the family's global mobility trajectory, the mobility/capital project continues automatically and organically. By contrast, for parents who have yet to live globally mobile lives, it is the children who are often deliberately positioned as the means and basis to kickstart the familial capital accumulation project. As we have discussed in this section, this is usually pursued through the children's overseas education.

Children's perspectives

As key participants and oftentimes anchors to their family's capital accumulation project, expatriate and globally mobile children have varying levels of agreement with their parents regarding the value and desirability of global mobility. On the one hand, they may fully agree with and embrace the globally mobile lives that their parents have set out for them, carrying the same aspirations into their adult lives and even reproducing them for their own children. On the other hand, they may yearn for a more sedentary lifestyle and disagree with the value that their parents associate with global mobility. Moreover, there may also be groups that sit in between these two extremes - while they may agree with the value of global mobility, their agreement does not discount the emotional and psychological challenges that they face from being globally mobile.

Primary age expatriate children in Bangkok who Dixon and Hayden (2008) interviewed through online questionnaires experienced a sense of grief and loss as relocation to another country caused and/or prolonged their separation from extended family members, friends and pets. However, moving brought the opportunity to reinvent the self and accumulate new experiences of schools, people, cultures, food and landscapes. It is this acquisition of mobility related capital that former expatriate and globally mobile children, now adults, tend to appreciate, as Kwon (2019) argued. Equipped with the right knowledge and resources gained through mobility, the children-turned-adult expatriates in her study were keen to maintain the life of a global nomad, extending a transnationally mobile lifestyle from childhood into adulthood.

The former Irish child return migrants in Ní Laoire's (2020) study expressed a desire to leave Ireland again in their young adulthood to acquire more worldly experience before an eventual return to their home country. Their desire for future mobility was shaped by their pasts and family histories of mobility (p. 5), reflecting how mobility capital first introduced by their parents can reproduce intergenerational mobility aspirations. Mobility was seen by the former child migrants as a rite of passage, a necessary move for self-development and becoming adult. They also used their past familial mobility experiences and the mobility related capital that they have acquired through those experiences to distinguish themselves from their peers. Through their selective narrativization of hypermobility, they positioned themselves as 'knowledgeable and experienced mobile subjects' (p. 8). In this way, they mobilized their mobility and related capital to establish their social distinction in the present and future. Such use of capital would appear to be in line with the parents' aspirations discussed in the preceding section.

However, as now adults confronting their own present and future mobilities that are independent from their families', some former child migrants in Ní Laoire's (2020) study developed nuanced attitudes towards moving. While they appreciated the value of global mobility and the accompanying capitals, they also valued 'the right to immobility' (Forsberg, 2019) - to stay put and accumulate local place-based capitals. Ironically, their previous global mobility trajectories have resulted in them losing out on locally based capitals (e.g., social networks, local knowledge) that could aid in securing occupational and status advantages in the home country. Ní Laoire's (2020) findings highlight the need to examine expatriate and globally mobile children's changing understandings of capital accumulation and their attitudes towards global mobility as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

Challenges and limits to the familial global mobility project
Capital: Accumulation, conversion, transfers
As we have highlighted earlier, the familial global mobility project is often embarked upon with the expectation that capital accumulation and intergenerational transfers from the parents to children can take place. However, it has to be noted that capital in various forms do not constitute fixed sets of properties and attributes, and have varying exchange values across countries, social settings and situations (Basaran & Olssen, 2018; Jarvis, 2020). In addition, due to various contextual and intersectional factors, there may be limits to capital acquisition, conversion, and transfers (Igarashi & Saito, 2014; Hanisch, 2020; Waddling et al., 2019). In other words, global mobility in and of itself does not translate directly and unproblematically to higher forms of capital (Basaran & Olssen, 2018), for the purpose of intergenerational social reproduction and mobility.

In many familial global mobility projects, there is a tendency to assume that the capital accumulated in one location can be easily converted into privileged forms of capital in another location. However, the literature suggests that such an assumption may not be necessarily true. This is because certain types of capital (e.g. habitual language, location specific informational knowledge, social networks) are locally embedded and situated in geographical contexts. This means that the capital in question may lose meanings and value once it is disembedded from its context. As Waddling et al. highlight in Bourdieusian terms, it is the inertia of habitus (enduring habits, skills and dispositions shaped by past experiences) as embodied capital (2019, p. 714) that poses challenges for cross-border capital conversion and habitus establishment in new and different sites and spaces.

While expatriate and globally mobile families may be relatively better positioned than other migrant families in regards to the acquisition of mobility capital, the same cannot be said about the success of intergenerational social reproduction and mobility at the transnational level. In their discussion of cosmopolitanism as a form of capital that sits at the intersections of globalization, education and stratification, Igarashi and Saito (2014) highlighted key factors that complicate the accumulation, conversion, and transfers of such capital. Firstly, there is variance and heterogeneity within the category of expatriate and globally mobile families (p. 227-229).[2] This means that families may have unequal access to different forms of mobility related capital that they can utilize. Secondly, there are also diversities and stratification in parental ownership of capital and their abilities to transfer those capital to their children (p. 229-231). As we have discussed, parents with pre-existing mobility and related capital may be better positioned to create opportunities for their children to attain similar forms of capital. Additionally, individual parents may have accumulated a mixed bag of emplaced and mobile resources - some of which can be more easily converted into capital in transnational contexts than others.

Finally, the benefits of cosmopolitanism are unevenly distributed as its value may differ across locations and contexts (Igarashi & Saito, 2014, p. 231-233). For example, mobility related capital may lose their value in localized contexts where locally embedded capital carry more weight and recognition (Jarvis, 2020). By contrast, in transnationalized contexts, those exact capital may be prioritized and valued. We have argued elsewhere that Anthias' (2008) concept of translocational positionality[3] aptly captures the shifting and contradictory value of capital as borders are crossed (Koh & Sin, 2020). The concept calls for attention to differential social position(ings) where individuals are located at different times, places and spaces. This helps to uncover the situated nature of migrant experiences, in this case, the varying degrees of success in mobilizing and transmitting capital.

In contexts where parents are successful in transferring various forms of capital to their children, the children may not profit equally from those capital. Depending on context and circumstances, there may be mismatches or unexpected loss of value between parental accumulated capital and children's inherited capital. Furthermore, there is diversity and heterogeneity within the broad category of 'expatriate and globally mobile children' that needs to be taken into account.[4] For example, in terms of the differential propensity for siblings to embrace mobility, '[i]n the same family, some will be more mobile than others' (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002, p. 57) due to differences in personality and desire to live a globally mobile life. We add that personal characteristics such as age, gender (Koh and Sin 2020)

and order in the family can further complicate individual aspirations and experiences of expatriation and (im)mobility. We did not find any literature which explored in depth the intersectional workings of social positions and social positionings that frame children's roles in family mobility/capital projects. This is a crucial area which future research should work on to understand not only the possibilities but also the limitations that expatriation and global mobility represent.

Competing values of capital and transnational (im)mobility
Another key factor that challenges and limits the parent-led project of global mobility is the fact that accompanying child(ren) may disagree with the parental ascription of value to certain forms of mobility and related capital. As we have highlighted earlier, children do have agency, perspectives and subjectivities that may differ from their parents'. They may also develop their own preferences and aspirations that are independent of the family's or their parents'. This is especially so for expatriate and globally mobile children who grow up on the move - they may instead yearn for a more sedentary lifestyle tied to a location, seeking a sense of stability, certainty and belonging that they never really had. More importantly, they may develop alternative understandings of the value of capital.

Sander (2016, p. 89) observed how German-born and raised Chinese expatriate youths in Shanghai straddled shifting cultural and linguistic systems as they faced a tension between parental and school ideals of what constitutes good values, speech and behaviour. The youths performed Western-related cultural capital (e.g., critical thinking and questioning) in the international schools they attended while switching to Chinese-related cultural capital (e.g., deference to parents) at home. The parents' choice of international schooling for them in addition to housing in upscale gated communities reinforce a local/expatriate divide in Shanghai which limited the children's immersion into cultural capital linked to the host country. There can therefore be contradictions in the valuing of capital within the family.

All the expatriate young people from the Middle East and North Africa region in Wilkins' study (2013) chose to study in the United Arab Emirates, basing their decision on parental preference. It is not certain how much of this decision had to do with a higher valuing of regional cultural capital but what this suggests is that parent-child relations frame and at times, constrain possibilities of capital accumulation and future (im)mobilities. The findings also suggest that there is value in place embeddedness (Ní Laoire, 2020), and expatriation and global mobility projects may not necessarily result in the imperative for hypermobility. The former Irish child return migrants in Ní Laoire's (2020, p. 8) study articulated their need for safe and secure careers in addition to being close to familial, emotional and social ties in Ireland. Immobility (but with financial stability for occasional international travel) or temporary transnational mobility (with a view of returning permanently to Ireland) made pragmatic sense to them as they navigated the tension between the need for security and support embedded in place, and aspirations for further transnational mobility.

In their study of young women (aged 14-18 years) attending elite private schools in England, Maxwell and Aggleton (2016) found that the majority of their respondents who had grown up in expatriate and globally mobile families were ambivalent and circumspect about committing to a mobile lifestyle for themselves and their future children. While the young women did not discount the benefits that they had personally gained from their familial global mobilities (worldliness and a more matured outlook compared to their peers), the authors suggested

that they sought an alternative life locally where cultural capital could be equally if not better pursued. This is because they were at the cusp of entering prestigious universities in the local vicinity (e.g., Oxbridge, London) which would not entail further global mobility, at least in the near future. Maxwell and Aggleton's (2016) findings reiterate the importance of examining young people's views and responses to the familial capital accumulation project. It cautions against the easy assumption that hypermobility is the be-all and end-all for those who have led a mobile life.

Unintended consequences and human cost

The 'success' of transnational mobility - at least at surface value and in terms of physical mobilities - can bring human costs which have received less attention in the literature. It is not uncommon for expatriate parents to feel guilty (Nukaga, 2012) for relocations as their children constantly experience grief and losses in relationships, activities, and places and objects of familiarity and comfort (Van Schalkwyk, 2017). There is abundant literature on the emotional and psychological negotiations of identity and (un)belonging amongst TCKs (e.g., Eidse & Sichel, 2004b; Gilbert & Gilbert, 2011), but a relative dearth of literature on other aspects of the human cost of global mobility, especially in terms of parent-child relations.

Being on the move entails having to depend on the family for physical, emotional, social and spiritual support, and this has to some extent, brought families closer together but also manifested tension between children and their parents in Mclachlan's study (2007, p. 236). Fathers tend to spend less time with their children due to work-related travel while mothers tend to give up time and in most cases, their careers to attend to caring responsibilities (Adams 2014; Mclachlan 2007; Van Schalkwyk, 2017). Former Norwergian Foreign Service children in Bjørnsen's study (2020, p. 131) felt a sense of emotional estrangement towards their parents and within themselves as they assumed a silent narrative within the family to embrace the privileged status and exceptional opportunities that came with global mobility, and not display insecurity towards their many relocations.

While the children of Hong Kong astronaut families in Vancouver in Tse and Waters' (2013) study understood the rationale of their parent-led familial migration project, they resented being treated as young children who were incapable of independence. Their parents and extended family members' sporadic visits were perceived as inconveniences that disrupted their lives in Vancouver. As they transitioned into adolescence, they developed alternative imaginaries about their future mobility pathways that differed from what their parents had planned for them. However, like Tu's (2019) participants (Chinese student-turned-labour migrants in the UK) who were bounded by notions of filial piety and life-long reciprocity between parent and child, they felt a sense of responsibility to achieve the family's dream of foreign (Western) cultural capital appropriation. For Tu's (2019) participants, this involved studying and eventually working and remaining in the UK where the symbolic capital of mobility could be maximized by their parents in China. Symbolic capital was important for their parents and in some cases, justified their continuing financial investments in their adult children (e.g., remittance to the UK).

While Tu's (2019) and Tse and Waters' (2013) participants may not fit the label 'expatriate', their narratives capture the shared and competing roles children including expatriate and globally mobile ones play in parental aspirational transfers beyond childhood and national borders. The human cost to the mobility/capital seeking family project involves long-term

uncertainties, emotional struggles and intergenerational compromises as the now-adults were caught in between continuing their parent-led transnational mobility strategies and their lack of commitment in remaining overseas. These studies highlight the everyday tensions of family and parent-child relations that develop in unexpected ways as the familial mobility project materializes in transnational spaces.

Parent-child decision-making

Extant literature has noted that expatriate and globally mobile children have different degrees of involvement in the familial migration decision-making process, ranging from not being included to negotiating with their parents and right through to exerting some choice in their aspirations for geographical and social mobility (Bjørnsen, 2020; Hutchins, 2011; Sander, 2016). It has to be emphasized that the inclusion and exclusion of children in familial decisions on migration and capital accumulation are not a one-off process but occur at different mobility and life stages, as the following works highlight.

Hutchins (2011, p. 1233) argued that different conceptions of childhood operate in parallel within the family and particular conceptions may be invoked at different times of migration. The conceptions involve the notions of childing (when adults position themselves as decision-makers to dependent, developing children), adulting (when children assert their independence in relation to adults) and interdependent relations (balancing adult interests with children's interests). Hutchins found that childhood was mostly constructed based on childing relations among migrant families in her study - the parents placed their self-interests ahead of their childrens' as the primary motivation for migration to Australia, as much as those interests involve a consideration of the ideal family life (e.g., work/life balance, safety for children) they wished to live. Where children's interests were taken into account, they were mainly constructed in terms of their future adulthood, that is, the better life the parents aspired for the children in future.

Some studies involving migrant families highlight the consequences of childing that arise when aspiring middle-class parents kick start the familial mobility project without directly consulting their then pre-teen children or failing to re-evaluate their children's desires later on (Hanisch, 2020; Tse & Waters, 2013). The children may have agreed with the family's strategies for capital accumulation and the roles assigned to them at the onset of the familial global mobility project. However, partaking in the familial project may result in the curtailment of the children's independent mobility options in the future (e.g., early childhood migration resulting in lost opportunities to accumulate locally-embedded capitals at home that can facilitate return migration) in ways seen and as discussed earlier in Ní Laoire's (2020) study.

Hutchins' (2011) different conceptions of childhood are noticeable in studies on expatriate and globally mobile families. For example, former Norwergian Foreign Service children in Bjørnsen's study (2020, p. 129) felt pressured to conform to an adult-centric narrative of a successful expatriate family which was projected onto their childhood. As children, they were culturally constructed as becoming and not being, that is, their future adulthood were given more attention than their personhood (Hutchins, 2011). In turn, the then children felt compelled to assume and perform characteristics such as having freedom of mobility, having bountiful resources, and becoming internationally competent and economically successful. They learned to put their anxieties and exhaustion aside to live up to expectations of a privileged expatriate childhood.

Expatriate and globally mobile children are commonly positioned by their parents as vulnerable and requiring decisions to be made for them, a position which the children usually passively accepts – at least at first. Adams and Agbenyega (2019) used the term 'futurescaping' to describe how mothers in their study imagined futures of a better life beyond national borders for their children based on their own personal experiences. Having received passive education in the home country where rote learning and compliance were emphasized, the mothers aspired for their children to escape the system through transnational mobility and international schooling. Transnational mobility was imagined by the mothers not in terms of the social reproduction of educational experiences but an intergenerational advancement in the acquisition of valuable mobility related capital such as active learning skills and global world view that would position the children favourably for competitive global employment.

Wilkins' (2013) study of the higher education choices of expatriate young people in Dubai further illustrates the strong influence that parents can have on children's (im)mobility and capital accumulation. A vast majority of his participants chose universities in countries (primarily the UK and United Arab Emirates) where their parents and/or immediate family members were or would be located. The reason for their decisions lie in their need for a sense of home, not so much defined in terms of a physical space but in the strong socio-emotional relationships formed with their parents and families while on the move (Van Schalkwyk, 2017; Fail et al. 2004). These studies remind us of the need to explore the familial capital/mobility project throughout the life course, involving both parents and children equally.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed some of the key works on intergenerational capital accumulation and transfers among expatriate and globally mobile families. It explored the perceived role of expatriation and global mobility in enabling familial social reproduction and mobility. We paid particular attention to children's perspectives shared by children themselves and children-turned adults in order to uncover how these individuals position themselves or are positioned in relation to their parents in familial mobility/capital projects. We made the argument that these perspectives are crucial to understand fully the processes, practices and outcomes of familial expatriation and global mobility at different times, life stages and locations. Importantly, children's individual characteristics and circumstances as well as familial relations, dynamics and social position(ings) of different members have to be taken into account. A closer look at children's voices and choices offers insights into the dislocations and discomfort that they face, essentially bringing to the fore the complexities and relatively unspoken vulnerabilities and limitations of this purportedly privileged and homogeneous group of migrants.

To gain deeper insights into children's perspectives of and roles in intergenerational transfers of capital and transnational im(mobility), we propose a few research methods. The methods involve *longitudinal* (e.g., involving the same migrant actor over longer periods of time at different life stages - as a child, adult, parent), *multi-sited* (to take into account the transnational social fields where the individual and the family's mobility trajectories come to be embedded in), and *intergenerational* research (e.g., involving comparisons of various members of the family, especially parent-child comparisons and involving the grandparents

where relevant) (see Ní Laoire, 2020; Oso & Suárez-Grimalt, 2017) that can take into account the multiple and relational subjectivities in the familial migration project. Child-centred creative arts and participatory methods such as multimedia ethnography (Kang, 2013), storyboarding (Cranston, 2020), drawing (Hutchins, 2011), and photography (Hatfield, 2010) are useful as they position and empower children as knowledgeable about their own lives. They recognize children as independent agents with the ability to articulate and reflect on what matters to them in the migration process.

For children in younger age groups who may not be as articulate in their thoughts and perspectives, creative observational methods can be used. For example, Adam's (2014) combined use of observational videos (at schools and homes) and video interviews (with parents, teachers, and children) alongside field notes and photographs facilitate the triangulation of data in examining younger age child(ren)'s reciprocal relationships and interactions with others and their environments. The data can then be cross-examined with more traditional research methods such as face-to-face interviews and questionnaires when the child enters adolescent, young adult, and adult life stages. Essentially, using different single and combined research methods that are appropriate to life stages enables more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the shared and shifting values of transnational (im)mobility and capital to children and their families.

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Notes

[1] Due to the lack of literature on children's perspectives, we include studies of adults reflecting on their globally mobile childhood. We take children to mean anyone below the age of 18 but will refer to those between 14-17 years as young people where specificity is required.

[2] See Waddling et al.'s (2019) point on the diversities and stratifications within the global middle class.

[3] Originally used to study migrant identity construction and belonging.

[4] See Tanu (2015) on the diversities within the category, TCK.