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Abstract

Internationalisation is a dominant policy discourse in the field of higher education today, driven by an assemblage of economic, social and educational concerns. It is often presented as an ideologically neutral, coherent, disembodied, knowledge-driven policy intervention—an unconditional good.

Mobility is one of the key mechanisms through which internationalisation occurs, and is perceived as a major form of professional and identity capital in the academic labour market. Yet, questions remain about whether opportunity structures for mobility are unevenly distributed among different social groups and geopolitical spaces. While research studies and statistical data are freely available about the flows of international students, there is far less critical attention paid to the mobility of academics.

Drawing on semi-structured interviews with 14 migrant academics from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Roma and Latin American communities, and the theoretical framings of the new mobility paradigm and cognitive and epistemic justice, this article explores some of the hidden narratives of migrant academics' engagements with mobility in the global knowledge economy. It concludes that there is a complex coagulation of opportunities and constraints. While there are many gains including

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transcultural learning, enhanced employability and inter-cultural competencies, there are also less romantic aspects to mobility including ‘otherness’, affective considerations such as isolation, and epistemic exclusions, raising questions about whose knowledge is circulating in the global academy.
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