

Cross-border childhoods in East Asia: the role of education

Johanna L. Waters

This paper will discuss the relationship between migrations/mobilities and education amongst children and young people in East Asia. Drawing principally on research in Hong Kong, the paper will attempt to conceptualise so-called 'educational mobilities', in order to understand why they are so prevalent amongst particular populations and what are their wider implications.

This paper explores the role played by children in emergent transnational topologies and reflects on the significance of this for understandings of 'migration'. Foregrounding children's mobilities evokes the idea of 'embodied statecraft', discussed recently Mitchell and Kallio (2017) in relation to Jennifer Hyndman's work on feminist geopolitics (2001), where states (and borders) are made through quotidian movements. In this paper, we argue that children are harbingers of future migration. They are migrants 'in the making' and their educational mobilities are crucial formative experiences with wider geo-social implications.

Young people's migration in search of educational opportunities is an increasingly prevalent facet of contemporary mobilities. Over the past decade, research in social science has paid more attention to the importance of 'educational migrations,' which encompass, but are not limited to, the movements of international students and other categories of migrants with the aim of securing different, or 'better' academic credentials. This paper examines contemporary educational migrations through the lens of children and young people, drawing on data from several research projects, including one on daily cross-border commuting (Hong Kong-Mainland China) for schooling and another on trans-Pacific, transnational migration for schooling and higher education. In this paper, I focus on asking how children's cross-border schooling is indicative of broader questions around transnational migration, global householding and the 'geo-social' (Ho, 2017). I will consider the wider implications for understanding the relationship between migration, education and society, including the embodied politics of border crossing for education and how it intersects with other bordering migrations and wider political concerns.

Biographical Note

Johanna Waters is an Associate Professor in Human Geography at the University of Oxford, who specialises in migration, transnationalism and (international) education. Her work has focused, largely, on East Asia and on trans-Pacific educational mobilities. She has researched

'split families' and the transnational dispersal of households as they accumulate types of 'capital' at different global sites. She has also focused, specifically, on university students and recent graduates, to explore the role that mobility plays in their educational and employment experiences. She has recently completed a large study on transnational education in Hong Kong and is just embarking on a project on cross-border schooling (daily commuting across state boundaries for education). Her most recent publications include: Brooks, R. and Waters, J. (2017) *Materialities and Mobilities in Education*. London and New York: Routledge; Lin, I., M. Leung and J. Waters (2017) Degrees of Value: Comparing the contextual complexities of UK Transnational Education in Malaysia and Hong Kong *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*; Waters, J. and Leung, M. (2017) Domesticating transnational education: fortifying discourses of social value and self-worth in 'meritocratic' Hong Kong. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 42 (2): 233-245 and Waters, J. (2017) Education unbound? Enlivening debates with a mobilities perspective on learning. *Progress in Human Geography* 41 (3): 271 - 298