October 2018
**Volume**: 15, **No**: 4, pp. 545 – 559
ISSN: 1741-8984
e-ISSN: 1741-8992
www.migrationletters.com

# A migration industry for skilled migrants: the case of relocation services

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**Abstract**

The aim of this article is to clarify the role of the organisations that support skilled migrants after a relocation, using the analytical concept of migration industry. The concept is used as a tool to explore the gap between the macro and the micro levels and by that stresses the crucial meso-level when it comes to conceptualizing (skilled) migration. I use 30 semi-directive interviews with skilled migrants and six interviews with key informants in the migration industry as a basis for the analysis, leading me to distinguish three main services at the heart of this industry. Each service is covered by distinct private actors: the basic needs of the family by relocation offices, the education of the children by international schools, and the careers of the partner by outplacement agencies.

**Keywords**: Migration industry; skilled migration; international work; meso-level.

## Introduction

For some, migration is a business and skilled migration is a source of profit. This last aspect has been scarcely studied. While a large number of studies focus on the professional trajectory of skilled migrants and expatriates (Al Ariss, 2010; Altman and Baruch, 2012; Beaverstock, 2005; Biemann and Andresen, 2010; Black, 1988; Iredale, 2001; Harzing, 2002; Salamin and Davoine, 2015), others rather aim at analysing the lived experience of the partner and more broadly the family (Känsälä et al., 2014; Kofman, 2000; Kõu et al., 2015; Liversage, 2009; Meares, 2010; Riaño et al., 2015; Ryan, 2011; Ryan et al., 2009; Schaer et al., 2016; Shinozaki, 2014). Most of these studies acknowledge the significance of organisations supporting skilled migrants while moving, but do not specifically focus on them.

In this article, I argue that the various service providers, which support the mobility of skilled migrants, form a "migration industry," as they offer services which facilitate the mobility and the subsequent settlement of their clients. I show the kind of assistance that this "migration industry" provides and reveal the mechanisms which contribute to render skilled migration partly unproblematic. Many skilled migrants – especially when being employed by a multinational company – have financial means (either through their income or through the financing by the employing company) to pay, for instance, to find a flat after a relocation or to send accompanying children to an international school. Yet, the concept of "migration industry" has been mostly used in the

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context of undocumented migration (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen, 2013; Hernández-León, 2013; Salt and Stein, 1997; Spener, 2015). In this context, Hernández-León defines it as "the ensemble of entrepreneurs who, motivated by the pursuit of financial gain, provide a variety of services facilitating human mobility across international borders" (2013, 156). Drawing on this definition, I show how and with which social consequences private, mostly profit-seeking organisations support skilled migration. Indeed, what does a relocation office do if not facilitate human mobility? Some studies already demonstrate how skilled migration relies on a strong organisational structure (Counihan, 2008; Di van den Broek et al., 2016; Groutsis et al., 2015); but, how does the support concretely look like? Furthermore, can parallels be drawn with the existing literature on the "migration industry"?

This article consists of two parts. Part one reviews the existing literature on skilled migration from a meso-level perspective. Part two outlines the three "core businesses" of a "migration industry" for skilled migrants and details the relations between the "migration industry," the migrants, and the companies that employ them.

## Theoretical Contribution

Research stresses that the meso-link completes our understanding of migration phenomena (Faist, 2010). While the micro-level highlights the everyday life, the macro-level emphasises social institutions; in between, scholars point out the meso-level, which corresponds to "transnational organisations" (Pries 2007) and/or "transnational networks" (Vertovec, 2002). Castles (2012) understands the "migration industry [as a] development of migration networks (…) which includes travel agents, lawyers, bankers, labour recruiters, brokers, interpreters and housing agents" (ibid.: 172). These for-profit organisations have an interest in promoting migration because it is their business (Salt and Clarke, 2000: 327). In a neoliberal context, they participate in the "commodification of migration" (Cranston et al., 2017: 4), as governments outsource services formerly part of their prerogatives (Menz, 2013). The concept of "migration industry" refers to the individuals or companies offering these outsourced services; yet, it also refers to illegal "services" such as human smuggling. In sum, the "migration industry" corresponds to private organisations, profit-seeking, supporting/exploiting migrants, and having an interest in perpetuating migration.

Analysis exploring the "migration intermediaries" forming a "migration industry" dedicated to skilled migration from a sociological perspective remains scarce. The recent work of Van Riemsdijk (2015) is one of the few examples of this (rather new) stream of research in migration sociology. She analyses those organisations supporting skilled migrants in Oslo, focussing mostly on "the role of migrant organisations in the acquisition of local cultural competences" (2015:

80). Van Riemsdijk (2015) opens up a fruitful path for further research. Besides, political scientists analyse the implications of "migration intermediaries" on governance structures (Groutsis et al., 2015). To the best of my knowledge, we still lack studies analysing how "migration intermediaries" support the mobility of skilled migrants and in what way they modify the lived experience of migration. In this article, my objective is to bring together the works of Groutsis et al. (2015) and of Van Riemsdjik (2015) by focusing on "migration intermediaries" *at work*. While Groutsis et al. (2015) trace "the state's withdrawal of authority to these agencies" (ibid.: 1561), I, rather, tackle the issue of interactions between skilled migrants and the "migration intermediaries." While Van Riemsdijk (2015) analyses the interactions between skilled migrants and organisations that support "local incorporation," she does not focus on "migration intermediaries" such as relocation offices or international schools. I set out to highlight how a wide array of "migration intermediaries" form a "migration industry". It contributes to constructing skilled migration as unproblematic by recruiting and training professionals who support skilled migrants while they settle in a local space and/or when they need to move away from it.

**Methods**

I rather refer to "skilled migrant" than "expatriate" (Cohen, 1977) or an "elite" (Beaverstock, 2005) because "both the latter terms have connotations beyond skill level (…), suggesting a 'super rich' status (Beaverstock, 2011) and/or a self-segregation from the host society (Fechter, 2007)" (Ryan et al. 2014: 6). For the OECD, migrants are (highly-)skilled when they have at least tertiary education or occupying a position requiring it (Chaloff and Lemaître, 2009: 4). In Switzerland, it corresponds to a large share of the migrant population who arrived within the last decades, reaching 61.80% in 2000 (Pecoraro, 2005: 77). Thus, skilled migrants are a large and diverse group. While all expatriates are skilled migrants, not all skilled migrants are expatriates. I believe the use of the term "skilled migrant" is adequate in the context of the "migration industry" as the latter does not exclusively dedicate its services to expatriates.

Between 2015 and 2017, I conducted 30 semi directive interviews with skilled migrants using qualitative methods of social science research (Beaud and Weber, 2003; Becker, 2008; Flick, 2009; Lamnek, 1993; Van Campenhoudt and Quivy, 2011; Witzel, 2000). The first part of the interviews focuses on the professional career and the family life; the second part tackles the support they received while settling. The interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. I conducted them either in English or in French in a face-to-face interaction. All respondents have at least a Bachelor degree and moved to Switzerland for professional reasons. The sample echoes the heterogeneity of profiles of skilled migrants. Table 1 offers an overview of the interviewees' characteristics. While

some interviewees made use of a significant number of "migration intermediaries", others hardly used any. Furthermore, I conducted six interviews with employees of "migration intermediaries" and I did online research to understand what the organisations are proposing in terms of services and what kind of information they make available for people who are about to settle in a new location. I also participated in three workshops and meetings dedicated to newcomers in the country.

**Table 1.** Interviewees' characteristics, absolute numbers.

| | Number of respondents (N=30) | | Number of respondents (N=30) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | | Economic sector | |
| Male | 15 | Management | 14 |
| Female | 15 | Marketing | 6 |
| Age (years) | | Research | 5 |
| 25-29 | 1 | Finance | 2 |
| 30-34 | 3 | No paid job | 2 |
| 35-39 | 5 | Education | 1 |
| 40-44 | 8 | | |
| 45-49 | 7 | | |
| 50-54 | 4 | Highest formation | |
| 55-59 | 2 | Doctorate | 6 |
| (Dual) Citizenship | | Master | 19 |
| France | 8 | Bachelor | 5 |
| Germany | 5 | | |
| US | 5 | | |
| UK | 3 | Family situation | |
| Indonesia | 2 | Married | 18 |
| Austria | 1 | Partnerships | 4 |
| Brazil | 1 | Divorced | 4 |
| Portugal | 1 | Single | 4 |
| India | 1 | | |
| Israel | 1 | | |
| Italy | 1 | Children | |
| Japan | 1 | Yes, at home | 18 |
| Netherlands | 1 | Yes, not at home | 3 |
| Russia | 1 | No | 9 |
| South Korea | 1 | | |

Inspired by Van Bochove et al. (2013)

The Canton of Vaud in Switzerland is a relevant case to witness the development of a migration industry because of its demographic and economic

growth since the beginning of the twenty-first century. We can find global or European headquarters of major MNC, such as Nestlé, Nissan, Monsanto, Philip Morris, Sunstar or Vale, which contribute to developing the local labour-market. All in all, they contributed up to 30% of the total employment in 2010 (BCV, 2016: 58). Also, research institutions, such as the *Ecole polytechnique de Lausanne* (EPFL), and sports federations, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), create many professional positions held by skilled migrants. The same can be said about the financial sector in the Canton (banks, financial institutions, companies of raw materials trading, a.o.).

**Empirical Analysis**

Analysing the interviews reveals, unsurprisingly, the many actors supporting skilled migrants. They are by no means all profit-seeking, sometimes not even private. The local administration, for instance, offers advices to newly arrived migrants. Thus, I created a list of "pre-set codes" to sort out the organisations which are private (not funded by the state) and which are asking for a payment in exchange of their service (as some organisations may be not-for-profit associations but still relying on contributions to survive). Furthermore, through "emergent codes" I identified three realms in which the interviewees ask for support. To take an example, a couple with children coming from France and speaking French will have different needs in terms of support compared to someone coming alone from South-Korea, as a third country national,[1] speaking Korean and English in a French speaking area. By combining the organisations and the needs, I spot what private organisations at the meso-level do for payment. Doing so, I highlight a market on which a demand aims at finding an offer. To qualitatively assess this market, I use the idea of the "core business" of an organisation, defined as "an idealized construct intended to express that organization's 'main' or 'essential' activity" (Kotler and Keller, 2012: 76). I distinguish three of them. The first one focuses on settlement, for instance, by helping migrants to deal with the local administration. It is what I refer to as the "basic needs," typically, the relocation agencies. The second core business relates to the schooling of the children by providing an education in an international or foreign system. International schools obviously play an active role here. I refer to this as "education services." The third one supports those spouses and partners looking for a job. In this domain, outplacement agencies, career coaches and head-hunters are the most important actors. It is what I refer to as "career support."

[1] A Third Country National (TCN) refers to nationals of a country which is not under the Agreement on the free movement of persons between the members of the Schengen Convention.

**Basic Needs**

Organisations active in the first "core business" guide skilled migrants as they deal with various local actors. They play the role of a "middleman:" they communicate – if not negotiate – with local real-estate agencies, insurance companies or immigration offices. The competencies of the relocation offices are based on their local know-how, their language skills and their "integrity." These organisations can be understood as trustworthy resource providers for settlement. They prospect for an accommodation on the behalf of their clients. Concretely, the clients express their needs and the relocation office searches and proposes potential fitting accommodations. *La Cote Relocation*, a relocation office active in the Canton of Vaud, defines the support of finding an accommodation as follows:

> On the basis of our exchange and your search criteria, we will proceed with the following: email you a selection of properties, organise the viewing of your preferred properties, send your application to the landlord or rental agency and follow it up, support you in drawing up the lease agreement, help you with the inventory of fixtures.[2]

Relocation offices support and make proposals to skilled migrants. The latter have, however, their own constraints. That is, to find accommodation quickly, as was the case with Abigail, a senior executive in marketing, working for a MNC. Her company paid for the services of a relocation office. The company first provided a corporate apartment for the first days and, second, payed the relocation office for a defined amount of time. Therefore, she was asked within a few months after her arrival to find her own apartment, using the support of the relocation agency:

> So, when they [the people of the relocation office] do find things available, they shoot and you know it is not something you can drag out because I was in a corporate apartment for two months so it is kind of 'here is your choices pick one and go' (Abigail, American, 51yrs).

The employing company offers a "corporate flat" and outsources the search for an accommodation to a relocation office. In that sense, the mobilisation of "migration intermediaries" is backed up by the employing organisation itself. Arriving without support is much more challenging. Ema, 28 years old, is a French engineer hired by a MNC that did not get any support: she was hired on a local contract even though she was coming from Southern France. For her, the biggest difficulty was finding accommodation. She had, however, a close relative living in Switzerland. Without this support, her settlement would

[2] La Cote Relocation. (2017) "Search for accommodation". Retrieved September 12, 2017, from http://www.lacoterelocation.ch/services/recherchedulogement-en.html.

not have been possible, she explains. In such cases, the mobilisation of other networks becomes necessary.

Another service of relocation agencies is to deal with the local administration; be it public or private. The relocation office supports the skilled migrants to fulfil the bureaucratic tasks asked by the immigration office, the insurance companies, the banks, car registration, etc. It explains why skilled migration is often seen as unproblematic as they are professionally active and supported in their administrative procedures. Concretely, it means dealing with the state's administration and the other obligatory services. When they receive support from a relocation agency, the persons I interviewed considered this to be mere "paperwork;" as for Sophie, an American microbiologist working for a pharmaceutical company:

> [The relocation office] did all the paperwork and I signed, le *Contrôle des habitants* [Residents' Registration Office][3] and the Canton Office. So, they took me everywhere and it was very nice and our Human Resources department did a lot of the papers and I just had to sign. That was great (Sophie, American, 41yrs).

The relocation offices facilitate the settling process, but not for free. The role of the employing company remains, however, fundamental. The "real" migration facilitator is the employing company itself as the company pays the relocation office. Furthermore, the conditions under which people get a working and residence permit in Switzerland necessitate professional activity and an income. The relocation offices are supporting the practical needs of the skilled migrants; yet, having a job position within the country removes the state's barriers to immigration.

The third service of the relocation offices is to provide translations, as the language is constitutive for the experience of mobility. Being able to speak and to write in French is not a condition for the professional activity of the interviewees since they mostly work in an English-speaking environment, yet the administrative tasks required while settling require French. Therefore, some relocation office can "write letters and other messages in French (…) and provide you with speedy translation services into French, English, German, Italian and Greek".[4] At the same time, many relocation offices offer orientation services, that is providing central information to the skilled migrants about how the Swiss social security system works, the different education systems available – private or public – and who can help them to complete a tax return.

In sum, the first "core business" refers to the "basic needs" of migrants directly after a relocation and to the needs related to reorganising the daily life. These

[3] Original quote in French in the interview of Sophie

[4] Acropolis Services (2017). "Services". Retrieved September 12, 2017 from http://acropolis-services.com/services/.

organisations contribute to create skilled migration as unproblematic as the migrants are supported while dealing with, for instance, the local administration. They help the migrants to orientate in a new local space as we all need a roof, a doctor, and to pay taxes. A group of dedicated organisations offers the services corresponding to these needs.

**Education Services**

The second core business of the "migration industry" is the international school(s). These provide an education to the children while allowing a family to maintain "motility" (Flamm and Kaufmann, 2006). Motility – which is the capacity to be mobile – is key for parents deciding to send their children to an international school, which offers the following kinds of motility.

First, *during* the years of schooling, the international schools allow the children to avoid the locally anchored "path-dependency" (Pierson, 2004) of a public school system. Richard relocated to many countries during his career, being a senior manager in a pharmaceutical company. Choosing an international school for his children stresses the importance he gives to motility:

> Because we didn't know wherever we would move again. We want to keep it flexible because wherever we would move the international baccalaureate was available so that was one of the key drivers (Richard, British, 48yrs).

For the children, it means that they do not need to adapt to a new school system in the case of a further move. The international schools provide a standardised curriculum in many different local spaces: the main teaching language being English. The development of internationally recognised diplomas like the "International Baccalaureate®" (IB) makes a further move easier for the family. The IB functions as an umbrella for authorized schools, offering a certain standard of education and, at the same time, guaranteeing the transferability of the education received. Thus, the IB system is available nearly worldwide. The IB system maintains the possibility of further relocations for the family and by that it is oriented towards enabling migration. Often, the respondents told me they would accept to move to a specific local space only when an international school for their children is nearby.

Second, *after* the years of schooling, international schools underline their capacity to ensure that children continue their studies somewhere else in the world. The schools make it clear that the education they provide allows students to attend universities around the globe. According to the figures available on the website of one such international school in Lausanne, only approximately 10% of the former students went on to university in Switzerland and more than

60% went on to universities in the UK, the US or Canada.[5] It is a discourse valorising and encouraging further mobility. Yet, the international schools are expensive (approx. 22'000 € a year for one child) and by that exclusionary. They are not a public service, but reserved to the ones able to pay them. Though they are not-for-profit organisations, they are still offering their services in exchange of payment.

The international schools represent a private education system in a local space and are highly internationalised in their structures and outcomes. The IB system is not only an example of a "transnational network" which "creates multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of the nation-state" (Vertovec, 1999: 447); but also, an argument in favour of situating these "migration intermediaries" within the realm of a "migration industry." Indeed, the service they offer is valuable for people who would need otherwise to cope with two or more national educational systems. The originality of these schools is to offer a standardised system across the borders of the nation-state allowing their pupils to circumvent to challenges of joining a local school in which they do not know the language and the structure. They contribute to overcome a possibly problematic aspect of migration.

**Career Support**

The organisations active in the third core business help partners to find a local professional activity. As is the case for the two other core businesses of the migration industry, the employing organisations are said the main clients of private outplacement agencies, according to the director of an outplacement agency, even though the service is oriented towards the partners of the employee:

> Multinational companies are the main clients of [the outplacement agency], when they [the MNC] bring in people from abroad, they subcontract. My company helps the spouse to recreate a career here (Sandra, Outplacement Agency 1).[6]

As with the relocation agencies or the international schools, it is the presence of a "demand" in a local space which enables organisations active in the third "core business" to develop. In this case, the "demand" comes from someone seeking employment in the labour force. This person is able to pay as his or her partner works for a company which supports "dual couple careers." In fact, it is very often the partners' employing company which ultimately pays.

[5] International School of Lausanne. (2017) "University Placements – Matriculation Statistics by Location 2017". Retrieved October 16, 2017, from https://www.isl.ch/page.cfm?p=4942&LockSSL=true.
[6] Les entreprises multinationales sont les clients principaux de ***, quand elles font venir des gens de l'étranger, elles sous-traitent à ***. L'entreprise aide le conjoint à recréer une carrière ici (own translation).

Some partners stop working in order to follow their spouse through many relocations. Some others refuse to give up their professional career for the sake of their partner's career. Therefore, they ask for support and put it as a condition for the move. The most inclusive form of support is highly personalised and is either offered by an outplacement agency or a career coach. It is also the most expensive option. These agencies offer workshops and individual sessions to job seekers in view of improving their chances of finding a job that corresponds to their skill level. Even someone who is well qualified may have trouble finding a job if he or she is not able to put his or her skills forward. This is one of the main tasks of the outplacement agencies. The outplacement agencies, career coaches and human resource consultants offer help in mainly three areas (1) how to present oneself during job interviews, (2) how to prepare an application to fit the specificities of the local labour market[7] and (3) how to build a professional network in Switzerland.

Manon, who arrived with her former husband when the headquarters of the company employing him were relocated to the region, describes her job search. Both partners are senior executives and it was out of question that she gives up her professional activity. Therefore, she prepared her arrival in the region with an outplacement agency, paid for by her husband's company:

> The first time I went there and met them, they gave me big files with questions. Then, we had sessions with other people who went to Switzerland/who had moved to other countries and other companies. It was not just me, but they taught us how to present in three minutes and then what are your strengths, what are your weaknesses, what are your competencies, well plenty of things (Manon, French, 54 yrs.).[8]

The outplacement agency furnished her with tools to find a job within her field. It helped her to develop a familiarity with the international niche within the local labour market i.e., where to look for a job. It remained, however, a strong individual investment for her. Eventually, she had to look for the job by herself, despite the support she received.

In the long run, many put their professional careers on hold (sometimes indefinitely) because they struggle to find a position that matches their qualifications. An accumulation of moves makes this choice more likely. Couples that move often, in and to various countries, face difficulties to coordinate both careers. The facilitating role of these agencies or coaches

[7] This encompasses the crucial aspect of the recognition of the skills and the diplomas.

[8] J'y suis allée une première fois, je les ai rencontrés, ils m'ont donné des gros classeurs avec des questions et après je suis allée pour les rencontrer pour/et puis on avait des sessions avec d'autres gens qui allaient venir en Suisse qui étaient déménagés mais d'autres pays d'autres entreprises, hein, il n'y avait pas que moi mais du coup ils nous apprenaient à comment se présenter en trois minutes et puis bon quelles sont vos forces, quelles sont vos faiblesses comment vous vous voyez, quelles sont compétences enfin plein de choses quoi (own translation).

becomes clear when we look at those partners who do not have help finding a job. The main problems faced by such job seekers are the local professional network, the recognition of the diplomas, and the language, as in the case of Sara who followed her husband to Switzerland after he found employment there. She did not receive any support and had to do everything by herself, "you have to start from zero in every way" (Sara, American, 32yrs.). Ultimately, she did not find a job in Switzerland and moved to New York where she found something. I do not know whether she and her husband remain a couple.

The third "core business" aims at facilitating the access to the labour force of the partners and is close in its outcomes to "the business of temporary staffing" (Coe et al., 2010): a central aspect of the "migration industry."

**Discussion**

Concerning the research question of whether the "migration intermediaries" conceptualised here through three "core businesses" form a "migration industry," I come to the conclusion that they do; yet, each in their own specific way. As a reminder, the three aspects are the profit orientation, the interest in the continuation of migration, and the support offered to migrants. I discuss below each aspect when it comes to a "migration industry" for skilled migrants.

Concerning the first aspect, the relocation offices and the outplacement agencies, accordingly corresponding to the first ("basic needs") and the third ("career support") "core businesses" are private, for-profit organisations. The second "core business" ("educational services") is composed of (semi) private not-for-profit organisations; yet, the fees to attend to these schools are high. Thus, none of these services are free of charge. All are exchanged in a market composed of three actors: the "migration intermediaries," the employing companies, and the migrants. They all require high financial means and are, by that, exclusionary.

Concerning the second aspect, the "migration intermediaries" contribute to the continuation of migration by "celebrating" the local space they are active in; underlying, for instance, its international orientations, the opportunities for skilled migrants, and a high quality of life. It is a direct implication of their need to sell a service. They communicate about the environment they boast. In that sense, they aim at the continuation of migration by portraying a local space temporarily full of opportunities and services for skilled migrants. Conversely, their presence in the local space is used as an argument by the local economic promotion. The local Chamber of Commerce advertises, for instance, for the "migration intermediaries" on its website. Thus, the "migration intermediaries" share the same objective than the local economic promotion of creating the local space attractive to skilled migrants, favouring the continuation of migration.

Concerning the third aspect, the support offered contributes to render migration less problematic to skilled migrants. The challenges after a relocation are similar amongst the respondents and the three "core businesses" of the "migration industry" provide answers to deal with them. Finding an accommodation or a school, dealing with the local administration or supporting a partner who seeks employment in the labour force are some these recurrent challenges after a relocation. Though the very practical forms of support vary, all the three "core-businesses" aim at creating migration for skilled migrants unproblematic. Favell stresses the risks of opposing unreflexively a "controlled migration" to a "frictionless mobility" (2014: 135). The case of a "migration industry" for skilled migrants underlines the mechanisms by which some frictions are removed or circumvented. Revealing these mechanisms overcomes an unreflexive conceptualisation of a "frictionless mobility." Thus, getting an operational concept to analyse a part of the meso-level offering services to skilled migrants provides a way to articulate how mobility is supported and encouraged for some, while being hindered and discouraged for others.

## Conclusion

The present article conceptualises a "migration industry" and provides an operational concept for studying the meso-level: it highlights the kind of support skilled migrant families receive. The access is expensive and differentiated – *à la carte* yet, able to answer to the most important challenges after a relocation, as this industry helps migrants cope with those all-important domains of life that mobility destabilises. Each "core business" assists skilled migrant families in a very concrete way. Past studies of this kind only take into consideration the "migration intermediaries" – be they profit-driven organisations or cultural associations – which support the skilled migrants working in the labour force (Groutsis et al., 2015; Van Riemsdijk, 2015). This article shows that it is not only the skilled migrants working in the labour force who receive support but rather the whole family, as "migration intermediaries" offer services to all of them. "International schools" allow skilled migrants to maintain motility by offering specific (and transferable) curricula to their children. The support that the partner and children receive reveals the interdependency between professional career and private needs. Further research could therefore analyse how the "migration industry" contributes to favouring dual career couples, and more broadly, its support when it comes to the division of care work and work in the labour force in a partnership. In other words, we need to investigate whether the mobilisation of the "migration industry" has an impact on the gendered inequalities between the partners.

## Acknowledgements

The Swiss National Science Foundation as well as my years of teaching-assistant and PhD student at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland,

made it possible for me to write this article. I would like to thank the two editors of this special issue, Metka Hercog and Laure Sandoz for their patience and perseverance. I also would like to thank Gianni D'Amato and Anna Amelina for their continued support as well as colleagues at the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies, in Neuchâtel, for their advices and comments on the several versions of this article.

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