



University of
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UNFOLDING STORIES OF SKILLED MIGRANTS: MAPPING MOBILE PRACTICES

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Spatial metaphors for mobility

- **Practices of mobile settlement:** those whose life histories, thus far, have been punctuated by relatively frequent relocations either repeatedly going away and coming back or moving from point to point.
- **Practices of returning settlement:** those who move overseas and eventually return to their country of origin.
- **Practices of linear settlement:** those who relocate and remain in that one overseas location (at the point at which they were interviewed – this does not preclude a return or onward migration).



Academics and government institutions tend to position skilled migrants as the global elite and this is not necessarily an accurate description. By lumping all mobile citizens into such a homogenous group [it] actually works to disguise the voices that these people have. (Jane)

We came partly due to economics. We also came in search of the fabled better life. But to be honest, we came for the same reason that most things happen in life, serendipity met determination to do something more with our lives. (Robin)

The Skilled Migrant experience: pre-determined, strategic or serendipitous mobility?



RESEARCH OUTCOMES: THE GRAMMAR OF CONTINGENCY

1. The pathways of skilled migrants are contingent and dependent upon chance events though they also involve deliberate and planned decision making that extends well beyond the sphere of work.
2. Traditional understandings of the 'skilled migrant' are unsettled by a range of different mobility patterns and visa categories that reflect the continuum of migration experiences over time and space.
3. Exploring the mobile patterns of highly educated and skilled migrants requires a methodology flexible enough to capture the diversity of their backgrounds, points of departure and arrival, attachments and connections.

Relocating migrants in their individual histories informs us about the ways social policy is experienced by those people it aims to target. At the very least, such research forces us to question assumptions about who constitutes a skilled migrant in contemporary society.