Chapter 3

The State and the Highly Skilled Immigrant

3.1 State Policies and Highly Skilled Migration

In the previous chapter we discussed the conceptualisations of the highly skilled and of skilled migration, and the related methodological traps. We also discussed the dominant role of the state in the definition of the highly skilled migrant. In this chapter we will discuss more closely the relationship between highly skilled migrants and the state, and the implications of that relationship for the migrants themselves. State policies not only open or close migration channels for the highly skilled, but they also shape the boundaries of the social field in which the individuals live their migration experience; cultural and social integration processes can be supported to a lesser or greater extent, opportunities for accompanying families can be developed, etc. Also, the opportunity structure for skills to wither or thrive is provided mainly by the country of destination, but the country of origin has its role to play in this part as well, e.g. by providing compatibility of its own education systems with the standards in countries of destination (Weinar 2017b).

In what follows we will discuss the role of both countries of destination and of origin in shaping the highly skilled migration space as potentially different from other migration spaces. We can say that migration space refers to a certain opportunity structure in which the highly skilled move across borders. Following the discussions in Chap. 2 on the underlying role of policies that shape the context of their mobility, highly skilled migrants can be seen as moving under specific circumstances and under specific rules. We will then move to the discussion of the migration experience of the highly skilled within this space. Throughout the chapter we will be paying particular attention to any differences in immigration policies for highly skilled migrants from one region of the world versus another. There are arguably different markets for highly skilled labor from the North and from the South, with those from the North often taking up different jobs from their counterparts from the South, mainly as regards industries and pay. Those from the North and

from the South may also encounter different barriers on their path due to both exogenous and endogenous effects of “country labels”. These distinctions have important integration implications, strongly suggesting that the integration processes of the highly skilled are neither homogenous nor necessarily significantly different from other migrant groups.

3.1.1 Why Countries Develop Highly Skilled Migration Policies

As noted in Chap. 2, interest in highly skilled migration and specially in the related public policies is split between two quite different streams: on the one hand, development scholars tend to focus on the impact of outward migration on less-developed countries of origin and what policies could mitigate this impact, with a shift in recent years toward migration and remittances as a positive force for development; on the other, economists and political scientists often look at the impact of highly skilled migration on the developed countries of destination, including impact on wages, and government policies put in place, for instance, to benefit the local economy.

This dual perspective complicates the task of researchers who try to make sense of the globally evolving trends on governance of the highly skilled migration. This complexity has been well analysed by Mathias Czaika, who edited the most comprehensive account on highly skilled migration policies and their drivers worldwide available to date (2018). In the introduction to the volume, Czaika presents the data on the rise of high-skilled migration policies globally between 2005 and 2015. He concludes that 68% of OECD high income countries developed such policies by 2015 (from 47% in 2005), 50% high income non-OECD countries (from 27% in 2005), 38% middle income countries (from 13% in 2005) and a booming 31% of low income countries (from just 8% in 2005). He notes that, “in 2015 half of the 172 UN member states declared an explicit interest in increasing the level of high-skilled migration either by attracting foreign or retaining native talent. This share has doubled since 2005, when 22% of all UN member states expressed this preference for additional high-skilled labour” (2018, p. 3). This assessment leads to a clearly bifurcated explanation of the drivers of this exponential growth.

In what follows we will consider highly skilled immigration policies developed by high income countries, and highly skilled emigration policies developed by lower income countries. Nonetheless, the presented bifurcation of policies does not mean that high-income countries do not engage in emigration policies, or that low income countries do not bid on the foreign talent. The divergence is rather a question of degree: return is not at the core of policies developed by high income countries, although they often have some innovative schemes (Rogers 1997; Sadowski-Smith and Li 2016; Weinar 2017a); while race for talent is not at the core

of migration and development agenda of lower income countries, some attempt to lure foreign investment (and with it: foreign talent) exist (Gao et al. 2013; Fabry and Zeghni 2003; Kumar 2013).

3.1.1.1 Immigration Policies for Highly Skilled

On one hand, since at least the mid-1990s, Western industrialised countries have been leading the way towards knowledge-based economies, spearheading the global trend of immigration policies that should deliver the knowledge workers needed to support this economic transition (Czaika and Parsons 2017; Williams and Baláž 2014). In these economies, the rationale for specific policy choices included the ageing of their populations and related skill shortages in knowledge-intensive sectors (Basri and Box 2008; Kerr et al. 2016; Triandafyllidou and Isaakyan 2016).

Demographic and economic changes were not however limited only to these high income countries. Indeed, these changes have been felt also by the emerging economies (BRIC and developed Asian countries) albeit to a varied extent. These countries joined the race for talent in the last decade to assure the increases in productivity and further development (Kapur and McHale 2005a, b; Agrawal et al. 2011; Boeri et al. 2012). The advent of what Czaika calls the “global skills market” (2018) and Solimano calls the “global labour market” (2008) has changed the way governments select skilled migrants. The policy makers have adapted to these changes by taking into account the relative attractiveness of their country and highly-skilled migration offer (Czaika and Parsons 2017; Chiswick 2011; Basri and Box 2008; Wiesbrock and Hercog 2012). The most common policies include a special migration stream reserved for a target group of highly skilled migrants, defined on the basis of qualifications, i.e. educational attainment or professional profile, sometimes complemented by salary threshold requirement (see Chap. 2 for discussion). Such streams change and evolve constantly: the German residence permit for highly skilled system has been overhauled several times (Jurgens 2010; Werner 2002; Paul 2016), Canadian and Australian skilled worker point systems have been revamped on an almost yearly basis (Green and Green 1995; Knowles 2016; Wright 2015; Wright et al. 2016), while the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme in the UK has changed following the migration pressures after 2004 (Salt and Millar 2006), went through adjustments during the financial crisis, and will certainly change yet again after Brexit. Still, all immigration programs for the highly skilled usually consist of a series of elements, identified by McLaughlan and Salt (2002; see also Cerna and Czaika 2016). According to their findings, most of these programs offer simplified procedures for a work permit, especially if the migration flow is meant to address specific skill shortages (e.g. in IT or health sectors). Also, several schemes include a series of exemptions, e.g. from the labour market test (such as LMIA in Canada) or even the work permit tout court (e.g. for most intra-corporate transferees or posted workers). One of the more recent elements of these policies is the

development of special paths to residency for foreign students, either foreseen as special fast-track procedures, or one to two years post-graduation grace periods for a job search. However, there is an important difference between the schemes offered by European Union countries and classic immigration countries¹: the first offer strictly temporary stay (providing a pathway to permanency), while the latter offer both temporary and permanent skilled migration entry routes (McLaughlan and Salt 2002). To put it in more straightforward terms, the EU schemes focus more on the demand-side and are concerned with labour market outcomes of immigrant workers, to the detriment of their numbers, while the second type are mostly supply-driven, to accommodate the biggest possible numbers of highly-skilled people (often at the cost of their underemployment) (Czaika 2018; Koslowski 2014).

The changing landscape of highly skilled immigration policies from FDI-oriented to long-term development oriented means that an important shift has occurred with respect to one category of the highly-skilled migrant: in contrast to early writings (1990s–2000s), the category of “organisational expatriate” is more and more missing. While most states are still keen to support multinational companies in their internal professional mobility by designing special clauses for the intra-corporate transferees (Lavenex 2007; Lazarowicz 2013; Yost 1996), in the current economic and social context, in which policymakers seek to maximise their investment in immigration for the economic development, this stream has lost some of its allure. It is not big enough to impact the host economies, nor is it permanent enough to make a change in the workforce (Basri and Box 2008). By the virtue of Mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS),² these migrants do not enter the local labour market and they do not present an obvious value added for the policies designed to counteract demographic and economic transitions (but see OECD et al. 2004). As such, they are thus neither at the centre of the state policies, nor of key concern for business management policies, particularly considering the growing number of so-called “self-initiated expatriates” (Doherty 2013), as well as numerous others, who, as discussed in Chap. 2, often are not captured by official data on the highly skilled.

The policy competition exists, however, when the prize is the highly skilled international migrants, not bound by a multinational company, but constituting workforce to the local businesses. Classic immigration countries are at the forefront of policy innovation targeting this group. Koslowski (2014) attempted categorisation of these forerunners. He noted three models of highly skilled immigration policies: a “human capital” model based on state selection of permanent immigrants using a points system (in Canada); “neo-corporatist” model based on state selection using a point system with extensive business and labour participation (in Australia); and the market-oriented, demand-driven model based primarily on employer selection of migrants (in the US). Koslowski compared these systems as regards their

¹ Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US.

² https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/serv_e/mouvement_persons_e/mouvement_persons_e.htm [accessed 16 April 2019].

outcomes and concluded that the US system, based on H-1B temporary visas as the first channel of entry, attracted more highly skilled than the other two systems based on permanent immigration. Indeed, as the author noted, Canada and Australia had been expanding the temporary highly skilled migration schemes themselves. Aware of the ever-changing elements in this policy area, he noted that “the three ideal-typical selective migration policy models may soon become more historical artefacts than actual descriptions of current government policy practice as the governments of each country move their policies toward other models” (p. 36).

Indeed, the analysis of highly skilled immigration policy trends is tricky, because in most countries the changes and tweaks of particular schemes occur so often that it is challenging to establish any long-term view or set models. What used to be a clear division even three decades ago, now seems to converge across the spectrum because of policy learning and subsequent policy convergence (Castles et al. 2014; Arcarazo and Geddes 2014; Facchini and Lodigiani 2014; Geddes 2018).

Despite these difficulties, some academic works do show how the countries fare in the field of highly skilled immigration schemes. In 2016, Lucie Cerna established an index of states’ openness to high-skilled immigrants (so-called HSI Index) using OECD data and policy documents. She conducted an analysis that led to a policy ranking and their change between 2007 and 2012, taking into account admission mechanism and work permit rights composed of the following indicators: numerical caps, labour market test and labour protection, employer portability, spouse’s work rights and permanent residency rights (Cerna 2016). Her main conclusion has been that the OECD countries tend to learn from each other and incrementally change their policies so they start to slowly converge. That work has been crucial to foster a better understanding of countries’ position versus the highly skilled migration and it also confirms the convergence trends.

Considering this dynamic, several scholars sought to explain why countries still differ in their openness towards highly skilled migration. This topic has grown in saliency amidst the discussion about migration policies in developed countries in general. How the details of these policies are developed is a question that can be answered looking through a domestic or an international lens. Domestically, in the demand-driven systems, the employers and their interest that mostly define the target group for highly skilled policies (Hercog and Sandoz 2018; Kerr et al. 2016; Kolbe and Kayran 2019). Even in supply-driven systems, the voiced needs of employers are taken into account (Knowles 2016). In consequence, the tools used to select highly skilled migrants are not uniform across countries and depend both on the local labour market and the national definition of “talent” and “skill” (see Chap. 2 for a more in-depth discussion). Lucie Cerna offered more insights on how these processes actually occur and why the outcomes differ so much. In looking at the case of the highly skilled, she applied the general migration policy models that explain migration policy making (Cerna 2009, 2016). She proposed a comparative political economy framework to consider the development (or not) of the high-skilled immigration policies in advanced industrial economies. She found differences between national policies despite the seemingly converging policy objectives to admit more highly skilled migrants to fill labour shortages in key sectors. Her

work has brought to light the role that different coalitions – between high-skilled labour, low-skilled labour and capital – play in shaping the policy outcomes and that these outcomes have little to do with the overarching economic interest or goal, but rather with the strength of these coalitions (Lodge 2006; Gawrich et al. 2010).

Another view on how the policies are developed comes from the policy learning perspective on the international level. First insights to this approach came from the field of European integration studies. The idea of policy emulation is inherent to the idea of Europeanisation (Börzel and Risse 2012). Policies concerning highly skilled migration are no different. In the context of the European Union, the perceived risk of losing the talent to the classic countries of immigration opened the door to a significant increase in policy learning and policy development on both national and European levels. More specifically, by 2008, more than half of 27 member states had some sort of clearly developed policy toward highly skilled migrants (EMN 2013; Cerna 2009). The post-communist Eastern European states were over-represented among those states which had not yet developed such policies (Kloc-Nowak 2013; Kaczmarczyk et al. 2012), mainly because the industries that would need highly skilled workers remained underdeveloped in this region. At the same time, the discussion among member states at the EU level on the Directive on migration of highly skilled workers (which became the so-called Blue Card) gave them the opportunity to look critically at their own solutions and think about other possibilities. The so-called Blue Card Directive was approved in May 2009, after long negotiations that juxtaposed national interests and policy-making traditions with domestic definitions of the highly skilled (Cerna 2013a). The impact of this supranational initiative was felt most strongly in the countries that did not have a clear highly skilled migration mechanism prior to 2009, meaning that the Blue Card filled an important policy gap (Cerna 2013b). Similar dynamics can be seen in other regions of the world. As early as 2000, Iredale considered similarities in migration policy patterns in the Asia-Pacific region (Iredale 2000). More recently, the work of several scholars has brought to light policy convergence in both Latin America (Acosta 2018; Arcarazo and Geddes 2014; Acosta and Freier 2018) and South-East Asia (Kaur 2018).

3.1.1.2 Policies Targeting Brain Drain and Brain Gain

While receiving countries focus on attracting highly skilled migrants, the oft-stated goal of the policies of the countries of origin is counteracting “brain drain” and investing in “brain gain”. “Brain drain” and “brain gain” are two concepts that are crucial to the literature on highly skilled migrants, particularly within the field of economics and development studies.

The brain drain debates dominated the scholarly exchanges during the 1960s and 1970s (Zahlan 1981; Bhagwati and Rodriguez 1975; Glaser and Christopher Habers 1978; Docquier and Marfouk 2006), focusing on the detrimental effects of emigration on development of the countries then referred to as “Third World” countries. Scholars, mainly in economics, brought up evidence of disproportionate loss of public funds were spent on education of specialists who later on chose to emigrate

and did not bring expected return on investment to the country. Also, they were looking at the emigration of those educated abroad, as lost potential. These debates were subsequently complemented by “brain gain” debates (Cohen and Kranz 2015; Docquier and Rapoport 2012; Stark and Simon Fan 2007; Commander et al. 2004). Scholars of “brain gain” noted that effects of emigration on the country of origin are multifaceted and complex, and cannot be measured in win-lose binary opposition. This hypothesis suggests that emigration can still have a positive effect on development in the country of origin, considering that human capital of emigrants might be better used abroad (with access to better technologies and superior research environments) and not lost at home (e.g. in the case of unstable political and economic environment), also known as “brain waste”. This approach has been defined as “modernisation of emigration” (Portes and Celaya 2013) (Box 3.1).

Box 3.1: Does Migration Pay Off?

It is a question asked also by economists, whose approach is less individualised than that of sociologists, and rely on large datasets. Assirelli et al. (2019) looked at the labour market outcomes for highly skilled migrants from Italy during the Eurozone crisis. They applied multivariate analyses to a 2011 cohort and showed that young people from upper-class families, foreign citizens, graduates in scientific and internationally oriented fields, and best-performing students are more likely to migrate. Moreover, compared to the “stayers,” graduate migrants enjoy more favorable outcomes in terms of wages, unemployment risks, access to skilled employment, and career satisfaction. These results support the thesis of “modernisation of migration.”

Scholars have also suggested that new knowledge and skills developed abroad can be brought to the country of origin through professional networks, return or remittances. More concretely, this school of the “new economics of brain drain” (Brzozowski 2008) indicates that countries of origin may gain from the emigration of skilled workers in six ways:

- Positive effect of induced education (Lucas 2005; Stark et al. 1997; Mountford 1997; Beine et al. 2001; Schiff 2005).
- This “brain gain” dynamics is explained as an impact of the perspective of emigration on the propensity to pursue education at home. If it is easier to emigrate with a certain type of a diploma in hand or with a certain level of education, more young people would flock to get these credentials. However, the argument goes, as not all of them can emigrate, the country is left with a larger skill pool that impacts positively its development.
- Return migration (Stark and Simon Fan 2007) is a positive force for development, as it brings various forms of new capital (human, financial or social) back to the country of origin and stimulates economic and social progress.
- Remittances (Ratha 2005; Ghosh 2006), i.e. financial transfers from emigrants to the country of origin towards their families or towards their own investments, constitute in many cases a large part of the GDP and thus can boost the economic growth.

- Diaspora effects (Kugler and Rapoport 2005; Breschi et al. 2017) are the influences the emigrants have through their professional and social networks on their societies in the countries of origin. This phenomenon is known also as knowledge transfer, which “in organizations is the process through which one unit (e.g., group, department, or division) is affected by the experience of another” (Argote and Ingram 2000: 15).
- Trade effects (Felbermayr and Toubal 2012; Flisi and Murat 2011), which can include both increased bilateral trade and increased FDI and include also increased bilateral trade and FDIs. Indeed, the highly skilled migrants have been found to reduce information-related risks for investment.

The “brain gain” theories have been both embraced by policymakers worldwide under the migration for development agenda (De Haas 2010) and criticised by economists on the empirical grounds (Faini 2007; Brzozowski 2008). The “brain gain” theory seems to apply in specific circumstances to specific groups. In fact, some scholars observed that especially highly skilled migrants do not remit as much as low skilled migrants, because they tend to invest in their new country of residence rather than back in the country of origin (Faini 2007). Moreover, it is difficult to measure the educational dividend because many migrants leave the country without a diploma pursuing education abroad instead. Finally, as it is the case with most research in economics, most scholars focus on long-term and permanent skilled migrants, and generally do not include temporary movements in their analysis, while important share of skilled migration is temporary or circular. As regards diaspora effects, some scholars uncovered its complex nature, and found evidence of a varied effects among various ethnic groups. Finally, the idea that highly skilled migration has a greater impact on the country of origin through the flow of FDIs and growing trade has been also challenged (cfr. Brzozowski 2008).

Regardless of the inconclusive results on “brain gain,” governments have invested in emigration policies (Weinar 2017a, b, 2019). These policies consist of schemes promoting circular mobility and return of highly skilled migrants, to contain “brain drain” and/or to boost “brain gain”. Middle income and low income countries have been most active in developing this type of skilled migration programs. The reasoning is the same as in the highly developed countries: the need to support economic development in the future world of knowledge economy, and in many cases also demographic pressures that can hinder that development. This is especially true for Eastern European countries that experience adverse effects of ageing while faced with fast-paced development pressures (Davoudi et al. 2010; Hoff 2011). This is often paired with impossibility of attracting highly skilled immigrants from other countries due to fierce global competition. A large number of developing countries have adopted “migration for development” policy agenda in the last two decades and have since engaged in policies that would focus on return and retention of their own highly skilled citizens (Rogers 1997; De Haas 2010; Shima 2010; Agunias 2008; Wickramasekara 2003). This idea goes beyond the use of remittances for development, especially since we know that highly skilled migrants tend to remit less than low-skilled ones, and instead focus on various forms of “brain gain” or

“brain circulation” (Schiff 2005; Harvey 2012; Jöns 2009; Saxenian 2005; Tung 2008). The policies on circulation and return of the highly skilled emigrants are usually divided in those encouraging temporary return (or even virtual return, often for training purposes) and those encouraging permanent return.

Temporary return is usually a return for less than 12 months. The most common length of such return varies between a few days to up to 6 months. One particular subset of temporary return would be circular return, with the returnee spending a set number of days in the home country over a number of years (usually the length of the program, 2–4 years). Policies of temporary return encompass two sets of initiatives that accompany the migrant: initiatives that trigger the decision to return and initiatives that support the migrant in the temporary reintegration throughout the period of temporary return.

Another set of policies are those of permanent return, which encompass three sets of initiatives that support the migrants at each of the three stages of return: initiatives that trigger the decision to return; initiatives that support reintegration in the first 6–12 months; initiatives that support retention after the initial period of reintegration. In this context, state-assisted return programmes (SARPs) (Cohen and Kranz 2015) for the highly-skilled focus on repatriation of the desirable human capital by providing assistance to returnees and their families. At first glance, they do not differ from SARPs which are conceived for other categories of migrants, however, the difference lies in the way they are implemented. They usually are limited in scope, implemented in targeted partnerships with a limited number of stakeholders deemed the best placed to appeal to the highly skilled returnees; they tend to have higher funding, often sustained for longer periods of time; and they include hard and soft measures that are limited to the target group in demand. They focus more on the recognition and appraisal of skills, qualifications and experience to facilitate the brain-gain dynamics in the home economy (see discussions in Sinatti 2015; Sadowski-Smith and Li 2016; Koh 2015).

In contrast to the highly skilled immigration policies, emigration policies have not been a focus of any ranking or serious academic analysis that would attempt categorisations or models. This might be because these policies are relatively new and very similar, supported by international organisations (such as World Bank, UNDP or International Organisation for Migration). In this sense the international dimension of policy creation is more important than the domestic coalitions. In many SARPs the government designs an initiative on its own and seeks support from external partners, such as immigrant organisations and businesses experiencing labour shortages (Shima 2010; Klagge and Klein-Hitpass 2010; Siddiqui and Tejada 2014). However, the core of policy learning comes from the international level with many global initiatives supporting exchange best practice and experience.³ Policy convergence stems from this exposure to international field (Weinar 2010), while the role of domestic coalitions has not been studied so far.

³ See e.g. the Migration4Development initiative <http://www.migration4development.org/> [accessed 12 April 2019].

3.2 Measuring Policy Effects: Many Faces of Success and Failure

How do the policies targeting the highly skilled fare in achieving their goals? The question does not have just one answer, again going back to definitions – here, it is the definition of success of each of these policies, which is highly context-related. While some policies will aim at getting the largest number of highly skilled people to fill in temporary jobs in a particular industry, others will want them to settle and contribute to the society in a more holistic way. While some will target specific professions and skill-sets, other will keep these options open, looking on the wholeness of human capital that is coming in. In some cases the endgame might not be necessarily the attraction of the highly skilled migrant *per se*, as in the case of the Blue Card, which aim is to create a level-playing field within the EU internal market. Moreover, judging from constant changes to the schemes in virtually all the countries, it may seem that at least highly skilled immigration policies are under political scrutiny and thus constantly adapted to achieve better, or different, policy outcomes.

The academic big-scale assessments elaborated to date have not attempted getting into the nuances of setting context-based policy targets. To achieve comparative pool of policy solutions, the indicators must be harmonised, what usually leads to less detail, but allows for a bigger picture to emerge. Consequently, scholars who attempt a measurement of success or failure usually use the number of highly skilled migrants attracted by a specific scheme as an indicator of success. Koslowski (2014) compared the numbers of highly skilled attracted as permanent and temporary residents to draw his conclusion on the efficacy of Canadian, Australian and US models (see above). Czaika and Parsons (2017) also define success as the volume of highly skilled human capital attracted by a policy, yet they go much more into detail on how various elements of the policy can work towards this goal. They combine annual bilateral data on labor flows of highly skilled immigrants for 10 OECD destinations between 2000 and 2012 and juxtapose them towards new databases of unilateral and bilateral policy instruments. They conclude, quite differently from Koslowski, that points-based systems are much more effective in attracting and selecting high-skilled migrants than employer-driven European and US schemes, but they agree that permanent immigration offers are less attractive to highly skilled than temporary immigration schemes, while they do attract less skilled migrants. They also underline the importance of the bilateral recognition of diploma and social security agreements to improve the selectivity of immigrant flows.

As regards emigration policies towards highly skilled, their effectiveness measured by the numbers of returnees is largely contested in literature (Sinatti 2015; Cohen and Kranz 2015). Unfortunately, there is not enough independent research to draw conclusions on these policies. From what we know, the return and reintegration of the highly skilled depends on the same elements as the policies that attract them: additional bilateral agreements, recognition of qualifications, and skill-relevant employment.

Indeed, we should look beyond the numbers to laud a success of a public policy. If the ultimate objective to invite the highly skilled migrant is to contribute to the economic growth, new knowledge-based economy and social development, it is indeed important to consider social, economic and cultural dimension of migrant's arrival. In other words, the real measure of success in our opinion is not the attracted volume of human capital, but its full utilisation both on the labour market and in all other spheres of social life. The issues of over-skilling and under-employment, as well as failed social and cultural integration are thus of primordial importance to the policy impact. In this section we will discuss the effects of policies from this perspective: what are the supports and barriers to the contribution of the highly skilled migrants to the countries of residence, both at immigration and return? Are there any specific groups that are especially vulnerable or especially privileged in their journey? We subscribe here to the observation by Hercog and Sandoz (2018) who state that:

Migration governance needs to be approached holistically, encompassing not only admission and integration policies, but also skill recognition policies, labour market policies and higher education programmes. Altogether, the interplay between policies, discourses and practices influences the composition of immigration flows and guides potential skilled migrants to particular privileges in society. As the historical approach shows us, privileges may also be taken away. Hence, the category of highly skilled migrants is constantly negotiated and contested and can only be used as a category of practice. (Hercog and Sandoz 2018, p. 7).

This approach puts the migrant experience at the centre of examination. In what follows, we will thus turn to the analysis of integration challenges experienced by highly skilled migrants. We will consider how migrants make use of and contest the opportunity structure shaped by macro-level (government policies) and meso-level (organisations and networks) to arrive at their life goals.

3.2.1 Labour Market and Professional Life: Two-Level Approach

Migration of a highly skilled migrant is sometimes depicted through the metaphors of “rucksack” and “treasure chest” (Erel 2010, p. 649). The first metaphor reflects the economic theories of human capital, where the migrant is seen as a rather passive actor in the migration journey and their cultural capital is seen as a constant and not very flexible tool that can fit or not fit the labour market at the destination. The content of the “rucksack” cannot be changed, however, the owner of the rucksack can go to other places, where it can be more appreciated. If it is not, then the choice is rather simple: the emigrant needs to throw away the content and look for a new one (Box 3.2).

Box 3.2: Human and Social Capital

Pierre Bourdieu argued that, if we are to understand our social interactions more completely, then we must broaden our understanding of “capital” beyond being only the economic. Looking at human, cultural and social capital enable us to arrive at a better understanding of the value individuals put into circulation in society, and the value attributed to them.

Cultural capital is broadly understood as the knowledge and cultural competence which a person holds.

Human capital, a broader concept, is usually understood as the formal education and training which a person has, over his or her life, accumulated.

Social capital, finally, derives from the networks in which a person is embedded. These might be as diverse as university alumni/ae associations, villages, families or employees of a large multi-national company.

Bourdieu argued that each of these forms of capital, applied in a market setting, would translate into economic capital. In short, these forms of capital also have innate value. It is this value which is recognized in highly-skilled worker programs.

We can see how, in an international setting, all three of these forms of capital have value, yet the possibilities for misinterpretation and undervaluing are numerous. Assumptions concerning country of origin – Global South – might, for instance, reduce the value of human capital.

In contrast, the Bourdieusian concept of capital is closer to the metaphor of a “treasure chest”, where the treasures consist of three types of cultural capital: incorporated (mental schemes, language, values, results of socialisation), institutional (formal qualifications and skills), and symbolic (cultural objects valued in a given culture) (Bourdieu 1986). In the case of immigrants, it is usually the first two types of cultural capital that are taken into consideration. They are assessed, whether implicitly or explicitly, by a potential migrant, who designs a migration strategy around them. In many cases the individual indeed looks for the closest fit possible (e.g. emigration to a country they speak the language of, or they have credentials from), but it is not always the case. After arrival, these “treasures” are put out in the open and allowed to be valued by the host labour market. In the process, the migrant engages in the negotiation of the value of the cultural capital they bring.

From the migrant’s perspective, the labour market outcomes in migration are to a large extent determined by, what we might call “hard” and “soft barriers” to labour market integration. The “hard barriers” are all policies that control the entry process: visa policy, work permit schemes, labour migration quotas etc. In the case of the highly skilled who qualify for the dedicated entry channels, these hard barriers are lowered or withdrawn altogether, and their entry is thus facilitated. Nevertheless, the mere act of entry to a territory with no hard barriers does not guarantee positive labour entry outcomes. The key element to the success defined in this way is the dynamics of “soft barriers” to labour market integration.

These barriers exist for all migrant workers, on all skill levels, but in the case of the highly skilled they are crucial to maintain the good quality of the human capital that is brought to the labour market in question. Umut Erel calls them “nationally-based protectionism” and in fact, they serve as an additional layer protecting the domestic workforce (Erel 2010). Scholars have identified a number of factors that impede highly skilled workers to achieve their full potential in the host country: a lack of language skills, the non-recognition of foreign credentials, and a lack of country-specific knowledge and job experiences. In most cases, these barriers are not fully removed or are removed only for some groups. In fact, a lack of a soft barrier can be an opportunity structure, giving some migrants a privileged access to the labour market. This is the case in the contexts where countries of origin and destination have privileged bilateral relations as regards language, qualifications recognition and generalised knowledge of each other’s work cultures. This is for example the case of the UK and Commonwealth countries, Quebec and France, and to a lesser extent the European Union countries. If too difficult to remove, these barriers are responsible for the phenomena of brain waste, over-skilling and underemployment. Soft barriers effectively limit the rights of the migrant worker, meaning the full access to the labour market, access to social rights and decent work. Facilitated access to the labour market, even on the par with natives (i.e. without the labour market test) is not a guarantee of an access to the decent work or to the social rights, or mobility rights within the labour market (as it is the case in European Union). Ideally, migrant workers let into the labour market should be able to change jobs and move up the ladder if their skills and experience allow them to. Yet, in many jurisdictions that apply the demand-driven policies, the barriers to access to social rights can incentivize a migrant to stay put with one employer, while barriers to recognition of qualifications can block any advancement to a better-paying job.

Both hard and soft barriers are present on the migrant’s path to integration. Even if highly skilled migrants usually have less of an issue with hard barriers, soft barriers determine the success of their migration project. In what follows we discuss the soft barriers which migrants face on two levels: macro-level and meso-level. We follow here the conceptualisation of Schittenhelm and Schmidtke (2011). Macro-level is where the more formal requirements rest and where the exogenous country labels play out. The characteristics that are endogenous to the country are not mere perceptions, they are rather components of a migrant’s “treasure chest”. They can underpin a “country label” but are measurable, such as level and quality of education, social and cultural development, migrants’ health levels. Therefore, on the macro-level a migrant needs to address challenges to their cultural capital posed by formal/administrative/regulatory frameworks, outside of immigration policies. On the meso-level, a migrant has to face challenges related to perceptions about their cultural capital. The characteristics exogenous to the country, or what might be called the “country label”, is a set of beliefs existing in any given host country vis-à-vis a country of origin and its citizens. These beliefs can result in subconscious bias in the host country towards one group, but also in ungrounded overtly positive attitudes towards another group, regardless of the migrant’s skill level. They can influence migrants ability to progress on the labour market and lead a successful professional career.

3.2.1.1 Macro-level Challenges

On the macro-level, migrants navigate the institutional framework to keep value of their formal qualifications and skills. In their long-term comparison of Canadian and the US system for admitting economic immigrants, Somerville and Walsworth observed that permanent immigrants to Canada have been increasingly over-skilled and underemployed, while the situation was much better for the immigrants in the US. Their main explanation of this discrepancy was that the Canadian point system makes skilled immigrants vulnerable to several risk factors after arrival. First and foremost, foreign credentials and work experience are systematically discounted by Canadian employers (Somerville and Walsworth 2009). Their findings are consistent with a long-standing explanation of why immigrants face these difficulties: already two decades ago the researchers noted that there is no return for foreign experience and foreign education has a lower return than Canadian education (Schaafsma and Sweetman 2001; Buzdugan and Halli 2009). The now notorious concept of “Canadian experience,” i.e. the work experience in the Canadian labour market with a Canadian employer, haunts more recent cohorts of economic skilled immigrants (Slade et al. 2005). This has reached the point that many government and non-government organisations took notice and now provide internship programs that would help these workers improve their CVs. However, the system does not shield newcomers from decreasing their income level, regardless of the fact that they usually hold degrees and experience in the most well-paid fields, e.g. engineering, physical sciences, and commerce. However they all were the most underpaid relative to native-born Canadians (Anisef et al. 2003). According to the results demonstrated by Somerville and Walsworth, the issues of recognition and related over-skilling and underemployment did not materialise so dramatically in the US system, which is demand-driven. The authors suggested that there is not a great difference in acceptance of foreign credentials and experience in the US compared to Canada. However, the very nature of the point system implies embedded discrepancies and information, because the federal government is not allowed to give different weight to credentials coming from different national jurisdictions. The authors cite an example of a chartered accounting designation earned in India, which in 2008, under the federally-run point system awarded up to 25 points required for admission (almost 40 % of all points), thus increasing the chance of applicant and signaling that this professional designation is valued at the labour market in Canada. Upon arrival, however, the professional designation is not recognised automatically and has zero value unless it is recognised by the provincial professional body in charge of recognition of such qualifications. A chartered accounting designation earned in India is often not recognised and the immigrant has to go through years of additional costly training to prove his or her abilities and knowledge. On the contrary, such a credential earned in the UK would be more easily accepted, and in the specific case of French credentials in Quebec, the procedure would be swift and less costly (Beck and Weiner 2017).

According to Somerville and Walsworth, in the US case, immigrants had to go through the recruitment process from abroad, and thus they would come with a job

offer in hand. Those, whose credentials or experience were not recognised or diminished, would not receive the job offer. Moreover, if the job offer was not meeting their expectations, these immigrants would not accept it. The process of pre-selection was thus more efficient in the US system. Still, the US economic immigration program is substantially smaller than the Canadian program, and the immigrants coming through all other routes as well as through the H-1B visa program face the same obstacles to labour market mobility and success as permanent immigrants in Canada.

The results presented by these authors give us a hint to what barriers on the macro-level migrants face when trying to access the labour market. We can thus extrapolate the following issues related to the value of the cultural capital brought by a skilled migrant:

- Difficult access to recognition of professional qualifications: highly skilled migrants everywhere have difficulties getting their professional qualifications in regulated professions recognised. They are thus, essentially, barred from exercising their profession. Obtaining recognition of foreign-acquired professional qualifications is a complex undertaking for immigrants, particularly for recent arrivals. Even when the labour market seems to be open for highly skilled workers, its internal structure of certifications and professional recognitions forms a dense net of barriers not only to employment but a decent life. Even when the correct authority is found, recognition is hardly guaranteed. Depending on the country in which the qualification was earned, the language spoken by the applicant, and a plethora of other factors, many migrants with foreign-earned qualifications find themselves holding rather worthless pieces of paper once they reach their destination (Desiderio and Weiner 2014; Schuster et al. 2013). In a way, the internal, “invisible” obstacles serve to prioritise employment of “natives” and improve their chance on the labour market.
- “Country labelling” embedded in the institutional system: professional bodies responsible for recognition procedure have limited exposure to foreign credentials and thus have little understanding of their value. Usually, the credentials from countries in the same region or in the same political and economic space (like OECD) get more understanding and positive feedback. There are however credentials earned in countries which bring about negative associations and suspicions regarding quality and translatability of education, and thus recognition requires more time and effort. In the same vein, they push migrants to stick to the sectors and occupations where the demand for cheaper labour is the highest causing underemployment and brain waste (Mattoo et al. 2005; Sumption 2013; Pires 2015). There is in effect a glass ceiling, which has perpetuated the duality of the labour market well into the twenty-first century for migrants with mid- to high-skills (Piore 1970).
- Institutional setting limiting the information flow: national authorities which remove hard barriers to immigration of the highly skilled migrants usually do not have the prerogative to remove the soft barriers. They also do not usually give precise information on each individual situation, what reduces opportunities for making informed decision by migrants themselves.

Macro-level policy solutions to the macro-level issues can be found through bilateral cooperation on the state level. The Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) are the prime example on how the states of origin and destination can make access to the labour market less painful and prevent brain waste in the longer run. They are agreements that set standard rules for the recognition of credentials and access to the professional practice that apply to all individuals who obtained their qualifications in a signatory country. The agreements bind the regulatory bodies which enter into an MRA to value the same qualification issued by the same authority in the partner country at any time. MRAs are negotiated through a lengthy and meticulous process of curriculum comparison and translation of learning outcomes. In doing so, MRAs improve transparency and consistency of recognition procedures for participating countries. The success of this process depends on the coordinating ability of the respective governments. The negotiations of the sectoral MRAs between France and Quebec provides a prime example of when governments played this role successfully (Beck and Weinar 2017). In addition, MRAs often include simplified procedures for the recognition of qualifications obtained in participating countries, as compared to the general rules applying for all other foreign qualifications. More fundamentally, in economically integrated regional areas the conclusion and implementation of MRAs serve broader economic and political objectives than that of facilitating the international portability of foreign qualifications per se. That is, they support the provision of intra-regional liberalisation and, in some cases, also of workers' mobility, as it is the case in the European Union (Blitz 1999; Currie 2016).

3.2.1.2 Meso-level Challenges

While macro-level can pose obstacles and offer solutions in terms of broader institutional framework, the meso-level influences employability of a highly-skilled migrant in a different way, mostly through access to employment networks. The employers are crucial for the individual success, and they can support the success of the macro-level policies, as in the case of the US economic immigrant program. However, in many cases there are more obstacles that they actually put in the way of the immigrant when it comes to finding employment on their skill level. The problems derive from the widespread negative perceptions regarding the credentials and professional experience completed abroad, or subconscious bias towards certain ethnic or national groups (Bauder 2005).

To be fair, there is evidence to suggest that there is a gap and variance regarding quality of foreign credentials and professional experience. Research shows that in some cases the title of the credential might be the same, but the content of the study and related skills are not (Sweetman 2004; Li and Sweetman 2014; Aumüller 2016). Yet, the prejudice is more accentuated in the case of immigrants coming from either non-English speaking or non-Western countries. Somerville and Walsworth noted that Canadian employers tend to impose a discriminatory income penalty on minorities (see also Basran and Zong 1998). Authors refer to the research that used longitudinal Canadian Census data comparing skilled immigrants' earnings to earnings

of native-born workers with similar credentials. They conclude that in the last three decades the salary hiatus has been growing (Grant and Sweetman 2004; Li 2003; Picot and Sweetman 2004). This has occurred in the period of the growing diversity of immigration to Canada, where American and European immigrants have ceased their place to immigrants from Asia and Africa. The question of “translatability” of qualifications is thus crucial, well beyond the Canadian case. Indeed, Sardana et al. observed that Chinese and Indian highly skilled immigrants in South Australia faced clear discrimination on the labour market related to their foreign qualifications (Sardana et al. 2016). Benson-Rea and Rawlinson also confirm that Australian employers were often unwilling to recognize foreign qualifications obtained in a developing country as being on a par with local qualifications obtained in a developed nation (Benson-Rea and Rawlinson 2003). The immigrants coming from developing and non-Anglo-Saxon countries were perceived by employers as being less productive, more expensive (cost of training on organisational culture, country-specific social skills etc.) and overall more difficult to integrate into the workforce (lack of soft skills and different relationship values) (Syed 2008).

Meso-level is not only about employers, it is also about available network support. As they maneuver the legal and policy implications of moving their skills abroad, immigrants use the resources available to them through the support networks, which are crucial for information and valorisation of the “treasure chest” (Bauder 2005). In the case of highly skilled migrants, the networks can be of two kinds: traditional ethnic/national networks, and more often: professional networks (Tilly 2007). Social networks can be career-enhancing or binding. The first type provides support and value to the cultural capital of an immigrant. They support the migrant in job search, counteract deskilling and in general are connected to a wider social context of the receiving society or international professional networks. Binding social networks, on the other hand, can be translated into the type of ethnic enclaves built mostly around low-skilled occupations. They offer support and lower general risks of migration, but in the case of the highly skilled are often the reason behind underemployment, because they cannot connect the skilled migrant to the outer labour market, where such skills are sought for, nor can they help them remove the soft barriers to employment or adapt skills to the new labour market (Schüller 2016; Ojo and Shizha 2018). They also do not counteract what Thondhlana et al. (2016) called “warehouse mentality,” i.e. the focus on any employment, instead of the right employment. In the case of the Zimbabwean highly skilled immigrants in the UK described by Thondhlana et al., a recurring theme was thus the immobilizing aspect of non-highly skilled non-professional community as it did not offer resources that promote immediate entry into professional jobs. In the same vein, one of the reasons for failure of highly skilled Canada-bound economic immigrants on the labour market, according to Somerville (2015), was their limited access to networks. Indeed, her research shows that they did not have access to information about the risks and roadblocks towards successful labour market integration on the same level as the US-bound immigrants had prior to arrival. Kin networks to which the Canada-bound immigrants referred had little reliable information about the potential perils of immigration, while professional networks open to international

professionals from various ethnic and national groups are not that well developed (Somerville 2015).

Nurturing networks can support migrant's search for employment providing information about posts that could lead to the further development in professional area, regardless of the soft barriers to be removed. The scope of binding networks is too general to readily offer this type of specialised advice. It is the choice of the migrant to what kind of network they will anchor. The right choice of the network and support structure on the meso-level is crucial for success on the macro-level (removal of soft-barriers).

Schittenhelm and Schmidtke (2011) have shown that meso-level challenges have long-term impacts on migrants and their descendants. In the study, the researchers examined the careers of highly skilled immigrants in Canada and Germany, with degrees in three professional fields: medicine, engineering, and management. The immigrants were categorised according to macro-level variables, i.e. their educational titles (received abroad or in the host country) and residence permits. They were also grouped according to their social embeddedness, to reflect the meso-level. The research showed that the professional trajectories of migrants in the labour market are not simply determined in one given stage; rather, they undergo different stages and are subject to long- and short-term effects. Short-term effects were felt by the immigrant, while the long-term effects were felt even by the second generation. The study uncovered the process by which cumulative disadvantages experienced by the skilled migrants at the beginning of his journey resulted in an increase in inequality over time. Both in Germany and in Canada the challenges to successful application of the cultural capital were similar for the immigrant during the immediate transition phase. Issues of recognition of qualifications, underemployment or over-skilling were rampant, mostly due to the inefficiencies in the meso-level. Moreover, in the European context, the researchers discovered distinct patterns of social and symbolic exclusion over time, with underachievement reproduced well into the second generation, again due to the meso-level. This was especially the case of non-Western immigrants (Schittenhelm and Schmidtke 2011).

The results of studies analysing the meso-level challenges allow us to extrapolate several issues that highly skilled migrants must confront when accessing the labour market:

- Subconscious or conscious bias of employers fed by exogenous country labels. This bias leads employers to distrust qualification, skills or work ethics, even if formally they have been acknowledged as equal to natives. This bias can also work in favour of some groups: we will discuss this in more detail in Chap. 4.
- Limited access to native professional networks outside of the ethnic/national group. This is the case with many highly skilled migrants from the Global South, who have limited access to opportunity structures favouring mobility. Migrants from Global North in general have more exposure to non-ethnic professional networks and their situation can differ: this is tackled in more depth in Chap. 4.

There are a few meso-level solutions to meso-level barriers. In fact, these issues can be tackled through public education campaigns and through people-to-people

contacts. The difficulty to apply policy solutions top-down, leads migrants to find different ways of coping with them.

Some scholars have brought to light the importance of the way the “treasure chest” is viewed by the migrants themselves. In this sense, we cannot conceptually separate immigrant from his country of origin, as the cultural capital is built in the certain habitus, denoted by social and cultural norms, beliefs and values (Bourdieu 2017). The way skills are defined, acquired and valorised in the country of origin influences the future activities and gestures the immigrants will perform on the host labour market. The habitus of origin defines how the immigrants perceive their skills and their position on the new labour market (Bauder 2005). These views may change after exposure to the host country social norms, values, and beliefs about skills. In a way, this is the recognition and acknowledgment of the exogenous and endogenous country labelling at play by the migrants themselves, which leads to a variety of adaptation strategies.

This aspect has been studied by Nowicka, who examined the narratives and practices regarding labour market performance of skilled and highly skilled Polish immigrants in the UK. On the surface, these migrants faced no soft barriers to employment on macro-level, as EU framework assures recognition of educational attainment. However, the gap between home education and the host education blocked them from working on their nominal skill level. They also were bound by the meso-level ethnic networks. Nowicka identified two complementary strategies that the migrants used to deal with this situation (Nowicka 2014). First, the narrative on “useless higher education,” which served as an explanation of underemployment or over-skilling of all her interviewees. All the respondents felt that the Polish educational system values general education and knowledge, but does not provide practical labour market skills needed to succeed in the British labour market at their skill level. They still valued Polish education, as giving more illuminated view of the world, its history, culture and politics, but conceded it to the private sphere. Second, in the work sphere, Polish skilled migrants only used this set of non-practical skills to impress the employers as intelligent and possibly able to perform more complex tasks than other low-skilled workers, building thus employer’s trust and soliciting the opportunity to learn new practical skills and thus enter the outer labour market with credible skilled experience. Nowicka conceptualises this adaptive strategy as “migration skills”. These are skills related to general education that are used only in the context of migration to improve one’s standing on the labour market. This strategy can be called negotiation between macro- and meso-levels.

However, the interaction between the macro and meso-levels can, in some cases, create a specific opportunity structure, in which also non-Western immigrants find professional success. Thondhlana et al. (2016) describe the cases of Zimbabwean highly skilled immigrants who chose to come to the United Kingdom. The macro-level was crucial to their professional development, as they were able to come through schemes such as the UK Highly Skilled Migrant Programme. Their strength was British-styled education and many years of UK-relevant work experience. Zimbabwe, being a Commonwealth country, has several joint professional programs with UK-based organisations that regulate professions, such as the UK

Institute of Engineers. This means that Zimbabwean engineers graduating from these programs become automatically members of the organisation and they don't need to go through the procedure of recognition of qualifications. With this qualification and work experience, the subjects of the study could secure a position in the UK and immigrate as a relocated staff (Thondhlana et al. 2016).

These two cases show that employing strategically the macro-level opportunity can remove barriers to labour market integration for migrants at risk of extreme "country labelling" on meso-level. In fact, the Polish skilled migrants from Nowicka's study, white Europeans with all opportunities offered by intra-EU mobility, did not achieve the same level of professional development as some of the African migrants.

3.2.1.3 Facing Soft Barriers in Return Migration

We must say that there is limited academic literature on the topic of labour market integration of returnees. The dominant literature has been produced on the occasion of various international cooperation projects (Hercog and Siegel 2011; Van Houte and Davids 2008; Van Houte et al. 2015; Koser and Kuschminder 2015; Kuschminder 2014). Still, from what we have seen, the issues regarding the use and negotiation of cultural capital acquired abroad do not disappear in the case of returning highly skilled emigrants. The macro-level obstacles to recognition of qualifications hurt immigrants and emigrants the same (Wickramasekara 2003), when the country of origin does not recognise automatically foreign credentials: e.g. returning Canadian students with foreign medical degree are treated in the same way as immigrants with foreign medical degrees (Weinar 2019). In many cases, even academic qualifications, such as PhDs, are required to go through the equivalency procedure.

The difference might be felt on the meso-level, where returning own national can be perceived by employers as a valuable catch, depending on the country the emigrant is returning from (Kuschminder 2014; Van Houte et al. 2015; Weinar 2002). Many countries of the world value the Anglo-Saxon education or the Western professional experience. However, this bias can change over time. The story of "sea turtles" in China is of particular interest here (Hao and Welch 2012; Hao et al. 2016). Hao and Welch (2012) discusses the changing political and social context of the return of highly skilled migrants to China over three decades. According to the authors, in the early days of the China's opening, a foreign degree was sufficient to ensure a position on the labour market. Thirty years later, these degrees had devalued because of the high supply of such returnees. Labour market in China had adopted discriminatory views of international graduates and also more understanding of a value of a degree from various institutions. This is why the employment opportunities follow strictly the assumed ranking of the foreign institution (see also Hao et al. 2016). This bias, both towards foreign institutions in general, and the ones considered as "top" in particular, resembles the "country labelling" trend. On another level, returnees are cut off from the native professional and social networks because of their prolonged stay abroad during the formative years. They are also

social and culturally challenged. As authors note, many need to adjust their expectations and especially behaviour when seeking for jobs.

The issues experienced on the labour market are valid for most highly skilled immigrants worldwide. However, some groups received a special attention among scholars because of their particular positioning on the labour market and specific migration trajectories that reflect the tensions between privilege and vulnerability. We will discuss their cases in the remainder of this chapter.

3.2.2 From Segregation to Integration? Expatriates and Immigrants

Literature on migrant integration has long considered non-labour market integration issues faced by highly skilled migrants as not interesting. Scholars have started to look into the issue only in the last decade or so. The main reason for this slow onset of interest is the definitional conundrum that has permeated the field for decades, notably the binary opposition of “immigrant/migrant” as set against “expatriate”.

The dominant subject of integration studies are immigrants, indirectly defined as coming from poorer countries to the industrialised countries. Ethnic and racial distinction is very much present in these deliberations. Social and cultural integration of diverse groups, where diversity is defined along religious or cultural denominators, is thus portrayed as a problem to be studied. This dominant approach in the field of migration studies has been juxtaposed by the niche studies of “expatriates,” associated mostly as highly skilled white citizens of the developed countries, living in other (mostly developing) countries on a temporary basis. The notion of privilege has thus defined the mobility of what is perceived as a highly skilled global elite. For a long time, the privilege has been defined through the notions of citizenship, class and race (Kunz 2016) conflating the research on integration of highly skilled with the research on integration of “expatriates.” In fact, highly-skilled migrants were identified as North-North migrants, characterised as “expatriates,” “lifestyle migrants” (Benson and O’Reilly 2009), “cosmopolitans” (Brimm 2010), “Eurostars” (Favell 2011), as “elite migrants” (Beaverstock 2005), or “knowledge migrants” (Ackers 2005). They have been referred as “small, invisible, adaptable uncontroversial segment of migration (C. Knowles and Harper 2009, 7), i.e. people, who do not pose integration issues. Their migration process, from motivation to arrival has been described as different from the “standard” immigration (Favell 2011). The somewhat mythic idea that highly skilled migrants move because of motivations other than economic necessity and live in an undefined cosmopolitan sphere allows for a differentiation between immigrants and transnational knowledge workers (Colic-Peisker 2010), migrant professionals (Meyer 2011), or simply expatriates. Moreover, there is an assumption that while the first group is highly motivated to settle, the second one represents clearly “birds of passage” who do not want to go through the processes of incorporation and “acculturation”. In other words, they were seen as an

inconsequential object of study for integration literature and thus presented as non-immigrants. As such, they have been exempt from the expectation of integration, with, indeed, self-segregation seen as the norm (Beaverstock 2002; Cohen 1977; Croucher 2018; Fechter and Walsh 2010; Smith and Favell 2006). This self-segregation has not been seen as problematic as for example “ethnic enclave” or “ghettoization” phenomena observed among the non-highly-skilled or racialized immigrant population. For some scholars, this segregation, especially in the context of North-South mobility has been seen as a reproduction of the colonial patterns, with similar tendencies to live detached lives (Beaverstock 2002; Fechter and Walsh 2010; Leonard 2010, 2016).

Living in an “expat bubble,” which was typical for an organisational expatriate might not be indeed an issue for a broader integration policy of a country (Findlay 1995; Fechter and Walsh 2010). The term itself has been used in a pejorative sense, like several other terms, e.g. “international jet set” (van Bochove and Engbersen 2015) suggesting that highly skilled immigrants tend to keep social networks mainly between themselves. And yet, this phenomenon should not be looked down upon as a revelation of some colonial prejudices: clearly, sharing migration journey with people who had similar experience of global mobility brings more security to the lives of these migrants, more psychological and emotional stability and thus integration to this milieu can be indeed effortless.

Yet, a closer look into the “expat bubble” shows a variety of ways the migrants themselves choose to approach their migration experience, which varies enormously, not only individually, but also across countries of destination and form of employment. Those who either are identified as expatriates or who call themselves expatriates – although many highly skilled Northerners reject that terminology (Klekowski von Koppenfels 2014) – belong to two groups of people: those who are organisational expatriates, and those who are highly skilled immigrants from Western developed countries. The fact of being called “an expatriate” has elevated them to an elite status in developing countries (Cohen 1977). Studies focusing on Dubai, for example, have shown that community of highly skilled immigrants from Western countries has developed a distinctive identity as different from other groups of immigrants, placed at the top of the migrant hierarchy (Coles and Walsh 2010; Fechter and Walsh 2010). The elite status had less to do with the expatriate status and related privileges (non-organisational expatriates enjoy none), but rather with the exogenous labels given by the society in the country of destination and defined by citizenship, race and class (Kunz 2016). In the same vein, Leonard (2010, 2016) suggests that the globalised labour market offers disparate rewards based on personal characteristics like ‘race’, gender and citizenship. As stated earlier, the “country labels” can be operationalized as the effects of the country of origin (Genova 2017). These labels are important prerequisites that support or challenge integration, but cannot be understood to be absolute across destination countries.

Given these labels, the Western skilled migrants in Dubai were defined in opposition to other migrants, regardless of skill level (Fechter and Walsh 2010). Leaving the expat bubble and refusing the label is virtually impossible in such environment. However, the dynamic of going out of the expat bubble has been observed in the

case of organisational expatriates and highly skilled migrants living in less stringent contexts. Hence the emergence of the notion of the “middling migrant”, not quite an expatriate and not quite a low-skilled migrant (Ho 2011; Luthra and Platt 2016; Maslova and Chiodelli 2018; Conradson and Latham 2005). The notion of “middling migrant” reflects the heterogeneity of the group and various life situations in which these individuals find themselves. Thanks to the new research in this area, the experiences of the highly skilled migrants from Western countries, who move for work across the globe, have been more nuanced. In fact, they have been more often regarded and studied as migrants. We know now that their experience differs from the experience of all other immigrants only to a certain extent. They integrate to varying degrees, and that depends on the context of reception, such as language spoken in the country (Klekowski von Koppenfels 2014; Dervin 2012; Föbker and Imani 2017).

The highly skilled also face stereotypes and bear the burden of acculturation processes (Weinar 2019), where the “expatriate” label often seems to be more of a liability than a help. Van Bochove and Engbersen (2015) demonstrated using the case of expatriates in Rotterdam that even expatriates’ identifications are characterised by fragmentation, with a variety of integration outcomes in specific spheres of their lives: economic, political or social. The majority of their research subjects wished to be more integrated socially with the host society, but at the same time most of their close relationships were back in the countries of origin. This study brings thus to the forefront an important element, definitely understudied in the literature: the social cost of global mobility among the privileged groups. This raises interesting questions: we agree that low-skilled migrant moves out of necessity and the social cost involved in migration is taken for granted; why would then skilled privileged person moving out of choice agree to such a social cost (which remains the same in both cases). What is the calculation of costs and benefits in this case? We might then as well discover that economic necessity, measured against different criteria, lies at the heart of this decision. In some cases, as eloquently presented by Triandafyllidou and Isaakyan in their volume on 2008-crisis migration (Triandafyllidou and Isaakyan 2016), the economic necessity can be quite similar for all levels of skills, but the opportunities to migrate might not.

3.2.2.1 Highly Skilled Immigrants: Importance of a Place

The notion of locality in integration has been prevalent in the literature on integration of highly skilled migrants. The research done in this field has been driven mostly by sociologists and anthropologists, who have delivered many important ethnographic studies, almost exclusively focusing on integration as the relationship between the migrant and the locality in which they live. This place-based approach brings forward the interaction between the host and the foreigner on the micro-level of integration (Smith 2017; Bauder 2001; Meier 2014; Tseng 2011; Ryan and Mulholland 2014a). Comparison of the various cases creates a panoramic overview of how similar people live their integration in different localities. And because they

do experience it differently, we might be prompted to ask why. The most striking difference comes with the treatment of the migrants from the Global North in different parts of the world.

As we have seen, many scholars would argue that the term expatriate is usually and intuitively reserved for ‘Western’ nationals who move abroad, that is to say, for (White) Western migrants. In contrast, citizens from less economically developed regions – who are not part of cosmopolitan elites – are typically termed immigrants or migrant workers (Yeoh and Willis 2005). This happens mostly in North-South migration contexts. As the literature on highly skilled migrant workers to Asia has shown, the “country label” can be the greatest liability. Camenisch and Suter (2019), for example have elaborated that being a Western, white foreign professional in a Chinese city is a double edged sword that not only provides the migrant with valuable human and cultural capital but at the same time restricts their economic activities to certain, albeit potentially lucrative, niches of the Chinese economy in which especially local hires and entrepreneurs face increasing competition by Chinese with similar levels of capital. Also, while European migrant professionals seem to benefit from an overall favourable image of western products and people when doing business or being employed in Chinese cities, not being a Chinese insider at the same time poses obstacles in terms of dealing with Chinese bureaucracy. They are also perceived as Others and not given the trust needed to build strong social relationships beyond the group of Westerners, which is usually a definition of failed integration. Similar issues have been found by Yeoh and Lam in their study of Singapore (Yeoh and Lam 2016) They found that discursive differentiation between “foreign talent” and the “Singaporean core” permeated the society and thus hurt integration efforts.

In the North-North context, to be discussed in the next chapter more in-depth, there is a growing number of non-organisational expatriates from Western countries, who see themselves as just immigrants (Klekowski von Koppenfels 2014; Weiner 2019). This admission reflects integration and adaptation processes that these people had to go through as immigrants to a country. This is especially the case with transatlantic migrations (see Chap. 4 for more in-depth analysis). The lives of Global Northerners in the Global North often hinge on “balancing acts” between local and transnational attachments (Erdal and Oeppen 2013; Dubucs et al. 2017). They can demonstrate what Triandafyllidou calls “plural nationalism,” (Triandafyllidou 2013) as they cherish the attachment to several countries at the same time, which is easy to develop due to the facilitated mobility and communications between the countries (Ryan et al. 2015; Guitart and Mendoza 2008). Also, the Northerners in the North more often skip the kind of enclave settlements and living that is characteristic of communitarian forms of immigrant integration (Trenz and Triandafyllidou 2017; Plöger and Kubiak 2019; Dubucs et al. 2017). Scholars have been interested in the emergence of specific immigration hubs that seem to win the race for talent, mainly from the North (Jöns 2015; Ewers 2017). The emergence of such hubs, or Global Cities, is particularly well researched in the context of intra-European mobility. Highly skilled Europeans tend to move from various parts of

Europe to only a few countries, or even cities (Van Der Wende 2015). London has been a particularly well-researched migration hub, as it “offered opportunity for career escalation, enhanced remuneration, access to globally-connected social networks and onward mobility” (Ryan and Mulholland 2014c, p. 65). What differentiates these hubs from other places is the pull they have for highly-skilled migrants, which are often the result of economic and public policies: such as vibrant economy, multicultural appeal, quality of public services, or specific lifestyle (Beaverstock 2012; Tseng 2011; Ho 2011).

Highly-skilled migrants from the Global South in the Global North face often a different set of challenges (Lowell and Findlay 2001; Purkayastha 2005) that are closer to the experience of the low-skilled migrant than the idealized highly-skilled path to integration. Bauder (2001) describes the impact a cultural system in the country of origin can have on integration outcomes in Canada, arguing that there exists a certain hierarchy of migrants. In similar vein, Habti and Koikkalainen (2014) have analysed the migrant hierarchies in Finland, showing clearly that ethnicity and race play an important role in the integration dynamics. In both cases, the host society has different expectations and requirements towards different groups of migrants, placing those from the familiar cultures at the forefront.

The work on South-North migration has been developing quite fast, and within it a new strand of literature that looks at integration of highly-skilled migrants in the semi-periphery, notably post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The context of such integration is different: not post-colonial and not-quite-Western. Some work has been done on organisational expatriates, or corporate transferees, also under the label of “transnational elite” (Cook 2011; Piekut 2013), which depicts integration processes similar to those Westerners living in the Global South or places like Dubai. Only recently, a study by Bielewska (2018) brought to attention local integration challenges of a diverse group of highly skilled migrants (of the “middling” type) in one of the Polish cities (Wroclaw). She interviewed both white Europeans and an ethnically and racially diverse group of non-Europeans. She showed that all of them felt estranged in the country, but hold some links to the city they lived in. Those who found adaptation difficult were usually at odds with the local language, which they did not speak. Lack of language skills combined with the lack of English language skills among the population of Wroclaw made migrants feel uncomfortable and rejected. Migrants of different races or skin colour felt that they stand out from the population too homogenous to blend into, and they complained of being stared at. Most however have not reported any issues with practical sides of their integration, such as work with offices, or renting an apartment. Yet, their existence in Wroclaw is only in part reflective of the “middling migrant” experience. They tend to form an international enclave, a bubble of non-expatriates.

Highly skilled migrants have been largely thought to be easily adaptable, mostly because of the assumptions on their cultural background and “country labels”. Their integration outcomes become even more difficult to grasp when we add gender to the mix.

3.2.2.2 From “Trailing Spouses” to Highly Skilled Migrants: Gender Dimension of Integration

Globally, perhaps contrary to expectation, more women than men migrate in the contemporary era. Among the highly-skilled, women are also over-represented (i.e. a larger share of skilled women migrate than skilled men) (OECD 2014; Docquier et al. 2009). However, they are often inactive or underemployed, as they often migrate as spouses or are employed as low skilled workers in the care sector, regardless of their training or education level (Kindler and Szulecka 2013; Marchetti and Venturini 2014). Within the highly skilled migration channels, women remain a minority and their presence in “organisational expatriate” flows has similarly also been a minority presence (Raghuram 2000; Vance and McNulty 2014). Indeed, they have been called “invisible” (Kofman 2000) as their presence is not captured by administrative statistics linked to the specific streams. Some countries, like Canada, have started to collect information on education levels and professional qualifications of dependants, but this information is lost when looking at women migrating through other streams (e.g. live-in care giver). All over the world, only women coming in through highly-skilled programs find their way to the statistics as highly skilled immigrants (Kofman and Raghuram 2015). The research into integration challenges of skilled women coming outside the highly skilled streams has been quite developed (Oso and Ribas-Mateos 2013; Triandafyllidou et al. 2016; Callister et al. 2006; Ryan 2019). In what follows, we focus on the questions of migration of women within the highly skilled streams; as dependants, and as the primary migrants.

Migrating Spouses

Migration of the highly skilled is rarely a lonely journey. International mobility of this group is, as it is for other migrant groups, also the mobility of a family. Arguably, temporary highly skilled migrants are more prone to transplant their families than e.g. temporary workers in agriculture, because the policy framework they migrate in allows for such moves. The effects of such moves for the family are felt by each of its members. The children who spend their childhoods moving from one country to another have even been dubbed “Third Culture Kids” (TCKs) (Pollock et al. 2010). Meanwhile, the spouses of the temporary highly-skilled migrants have been classified as “trailing spouses” recognizing that highly skilled migration is not necessarily a move undertaken as an employment-based migration project for both. The “trailing spouse” literature has shown that spouses of highly skilled immigrants are often highly skilled themselves, although many will not have a career. As an identifiable group of migrants, their integration pathways have been included as a research topic in the field.

There has been a rich literature on the “trailing spouse”, usually conceptualised as a wife following her “organisational expatriate” or “corporate transferee” husband (Harvey 1998; Cooke 2001; Cangià 2018; Brandén et al. 2018). Only recently, in the view of the changing labour market dynamics and cultural acceptance, have we seen research on “trailing husbands” (Amcoff and Niedomysl 2015), both in

opposite-sex and same-sex marriages (McPhail et al. 2016). Spouses in the “organisational expatriate” situation have been found to prioritise the careers of the employed partners and forego their own professional development. Researchers have found a strong tendency to engage in socialising lifestyles, focused on children, household and representation (Fechter 2010; Ryan and Mulholland 2014b; Beaverstock 2005). They are said to be at the core of the so-called expat bubble, as they build off-work relationships and networks within the “expatriate” communities. Van Bochove and Engbersen (2015), however, found strong fragmentation among the corporate transferees and their trailing spouses, with numerous patterns emerging, suggesting strong similarity to other migrants. Despite the increase in awareness of some dual career expatriate couples (McNulty and Moeller 2017), McNulty (2012) found that some spouses felt stigmatized by the “negative images” of the trailing spouse (cited in Collins and Bertone 2017, 86). Thanks to these stereotypes, the term “trailing spouse” has some negative overtones for their lived experience. Research into the experiences and adaptation of trailing spouses has found not only great variation in orientation toward different communities (van Bochove and Engbersen 2015), but also variation in adaptation, with many experiencing great difficulty, including identity crises (Collins and Bertone 2017). In some cases, their lack of adaptation leads to the spouse terminating a contract (Braseby 2010). Indeed, many spouses are found to not be satisfied with their lives (Kunz 2016; Fechter 2007; Yeoh and Khoo 1998), even if in a “golden cage” (Fechter 2007). As educated, highly skilled women raised in Western contemporary societies, they are aware of the open opportunity structures created for women as regards self-definition and control of their careers or their social status. They feel that there is an opportunity cost to their choice of living as a “trailing spouse,” which affects their decision-making processes (Box 3.3).

Box 3.3: The Trailing Spouse

In an earlier era of more traditional roles, the trailing spouse was often a stay-at-home mother. In more recent years, however, new and varied patterns have begun emerging.

Increasingly, highly-skilled migration includes two working spouses, sometimes with one commuting. Other patterns include the wife as the primary worker, and the husband as the trailing spouse.

A more recently emerging pattern is that of the same-sex married couple, with one spouse the primary earner and the other the trailing spouse.

The rise of the male trailing spouse – whether heterosexual or homosexual – has revealed the gendered nature of the organisational expatriate social life, centred, for instance, around American Women’s Clubs, which are present throughout the world. American Women’s Clubs may well have a stronger representation of corporate expatriate trailing spouses, rather than a cross-section of overseas Americans, but this is, even so, a pertinent example of the gendered nature of available infrastructure.

The situation of non-employment of the highly-skilled spouses of “organisational expatriates” has been indeed at the core of some changes in the migration policies over the recent years. In Europe and in North America, spouses used to be automatically issued dependents’ visas that would not give access to the labour market (Bauder 2005; Man 2004). The regulatory frameworks have evolved, especially for Intra-Corporate Transferees: under the EU ICT directive or under the Canadian framework (defined e.g. in the CETA), the spouses of skilled migrants moving within transnational companies have access to the local labour market and integration support. This is not, however, the case across the board.

Early research on family migration showed that women migrating as spouses, even if highly skilled, encounter substantial barriers to their career development (Iredale 2005; Aure 2013). The difficulties, as demonstrated here, are mainly created by the overall expectation that a migrating dependent woman would focus on raising a family and slowly improve her skills to match the needs of the labour market. Some scholars suggest that highly skilled migration policies reproduce and perpetuate archaic gender roles, with the men as principal bread winners and skilled workers and women as housewives focusing on the home. They do little to account for the changing reality of highly skilled families, where highly skilled men marry highly skilled women, where both partners have some career goals. For example, Bauder (2005), in his research on immigrants’ integration in Greater Vancouver has found that spouses admitted to Canada for family reunion have less support in integration on the labour market than women who come as highly skilled immigrants in their own right. Weinar (2019) found the same challenges facing highly skilled spouses of European immigrants to Canada. Immigrant spouses would often subdue to the expectation that the career of the primary migrant should be stabilised before they start taking care of their own professional life. Research by Vergés Bosch and González Ramos (2013) has showed that migrating dependent highly skilled women, especially when they have children, are often victims of the family dynamics, where the men focus on their traditional roles, not supporting the career needs of their spouses. However, a supportive partner and the right feminist context can improve women’s labour market integration. Yet, in the absence of those, there is an important brain waste among these women.

Highly Skilled Women as Primary Migrants

Highly skilled migrant women are one component of the highly skilled migration streams. They pursue their career or may follow a partner, but do not necessarily go through the family reunification channels. Their adaptation and integration processes are similar to that of their male counterparts, yet family and social expectations seem to shape their migratory experiences to a greater extent. Researchers who conduct research in this field often reflect on the social embeddedness of women and analyse their career development through the lens of their romantic or sexual relationships (Isaakyan and Triandafyllidou 2014; D’Aoust 2013; Sinke 1999; Mai and King 2009). Van den Bergh and Plessis (2012) noted that migrating highly skilled women have strong agency, choosing to move their careers to another level, or even deciding to abandon them altogether, by migrating in a specific life

phase (see also Vance and McNulty 2014). They found that migration is less challenging for younger women (in their twenties), who are not yet established in their careers in their countries of origin and may find more opportunity to re-invent themselves abroad, while for older women the reinvention process concerns not only a career but also a social network, which is more difficult to establish later in life. It seems from this account that career and social embeddedness are equally important for these migrating women, and the absence of one of these components makes for a failed migration experience. In a similar vein, Dani Kranz, in her study of highly skilled foreign partners and spouses of Israeli citizens, finds that highly skilled women from the Global North experience two key difficulties in their lives: they experience not only professional status deprivation, but also social marginalization (Kranz 2019). In the Israeli case especially, the gendered and ethnicity-bound labour market is closed, she found, to the highly skilled foreign women. This closure is perpetuated by migration laws that exclude foreigners, but especially foreign women from gaining full legal participation in the society (citizenship rights). This legal shortcoming is then combined with the traditional views on the role of women in Israeli society, what can effectively extinguish all ambition on the part of the highly skilled female migrant.

Indeed, in many instances the labour markets do not send positive reinforcement towards highly skilled female migrants. As we noted above, the labour markets are skewed towards male participation and offer a clear gender and ethnic dividend to white males. Even if there is no racial difference (coming e.g. from the Global North), their gender has an adverse effect on their employability or career. This is especially true in some sectors of the economy, e.g. in STEM fields, as found by Grigoleit-Richter in Germany (2017). The process of “othering” in highly gender-segregated sectors combined with ethnic discrimination slows down the career development of white highly skilled women and effectively blocks career development of those coming from ethnic minorities (Richter). These findings are context-dependent, however. Other studies on women coming from more traditional societies in the Global South, show that migration can represent an opportunity to diverge from normative paths and escape from patriarchal norms, giving these women a possibility to engage more fully in professional lives (Kōu and Bailey 2017).

In all these instances, the social relations and networks built by the women in their host countries seem to be as important or even more important than the career itself, which corroborates the idea that women approach their professional international moves in a more complex manner and should be studied as such.

This duality of issues in the case of women is also present in the scarce literature on return of highly skilled women. The few studies that have been done show that return and reintegration is a family project in which the family members can be constraints or enablers of readjustment (Konzett-Smoliner 2016). The challenges to reintegration are quite important for non-native family members and for children raised abroad, and they include the usual challenges of integration: lacking language skills, inexistent social networks, difficulties with recognition of qualifications. Amcoff and Nedomysl (2015) provide an interesting insight on the effects of return on men accompanying women. They find that men are rarely gainer in this

mobility, while women usually either experiences the greatest income increase by moving or compensate for the slighter economic gains with greater social and emotional gains.

Finally, we must underline that gender issues are not necessarily women's issues. However, little is known about other forms of gender experience in highly skilled migration. There has been some research done on the small number of cases where husbands accompany women in their international career moves or join them as spouses (Aure 2013; Cole 2012; Gallo 2006). Other aspects of gendered migration are still to be uncovered, including further research on same-sex couples. There remain areas for future research.

3.3 Conclusions

There has been substantial literature on specific patterns of integration among highly-skilled migrants (Nohl et al. 2014; Duchêne-Lacroix and Koukoutsaki-Monnier 2016; Ryan and Mulholland 2014a, b; King and Raghuram 2013; Piekut 2013; Fechter and Walsh 2010; Fechter 2007), but an examination of the integration of these migrants as migrants is still lacking, as van Bochove and Engbersen note: “studying them [corporate expatriates] as a type of migrants who experience partial inclusion and exclusion in their host society is a more fruitful approach” (2015, 307). Just as highly-skilled migrants are often portrayed as something other than migrants, their integration is similarly often portrayed as a phenomenon separate from that of lesser-skilled migrants. When discussing highly skilled migration, Smith and Favell (2006) argued that integration policy seems to be thought unnecessary for this category of migrants. Yet, integration is a challenge for all migrants, regardless of skill level. Indeed, highly-skilled migrants are still migrants and they face similar set of barriers to the labour market and obstacles in cultural integration. Also, the highly-skilled are the very group that most often experiences employment below their skill level, loss of status and painful adjustment trajectories, which also seem to be exacerbated by migrants' gender (Gauthier 2016; Adamuti-Trache 2011; Purkayastha 2005). Their migration trajectories and possible success are shaped by several factors that can be applied to any migration and have been discussed in literature: the way they enter a country (with a job offer or not); marketability of skills that they have (in IT sector or other sectors), existence of strong networks (Zikic et al. 2010; Mahroum 2000). In addition, highly-skilled often compete for jobs with the highly-skilled natives and that competition is more fierce than the one on the lower skill levels (Cantwell 2011; Schuster et al. 2013). The policy context is also crucial: intra-EU movers will face less hurdles to their integration than transatlantic movers. Also integration support in the host countries focuses on low-skilled immigration: highly-skilled are often left to their own devices to create a life on their own (Buzdugan and Halli 2009; She and Wotherspoon 2013). This often includes painful transitions for trailing spouses and children. Arguably, however, integration seems to be more difficult in the case of the South-North migration, because of the racial

or cultural contexts they find themselves in. As some researchers attest, the same challenges are part and parcel of North-South migrants. They are usually inserted in a labour market but for those who live in an international bubble, any meaningful integration may be nearly impossible (Lauring and Selmer 2010), with negative consequences for themselves and their families. We will look closer into these issues when discussing a specific case of transatlantic migrations in the next chapter.

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