

Conceptualising International Student Mobility: Geographies of Embodied and Institutionalised Cultural Capital

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This paper explores the conceptualisation of international student mobility and graduate employment, developing Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) notion of cultural capital. It draws upon fieldwork in Hong Kong, Canada and the UK, as well as a burgeoning academic literature, to unpack the symbolic meanings and practical consequences of international education, student mobility and the employment outcomes of 'overseas educated' graduates. The paper proffers a geographically sensitive account of the relative value of international credentials, arguing that the meanings of credentials and education are often context-specific and tied to particular place-based transnational social networks. International education is also profoundly embodied. The intention here is to help build a conceptual framework for understanding both the broader drivers and experiences of international student mobility and the role of international education in the reproduction of privilege in contemporary societies.