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**Unpacking Agency in Combining Academic Mobility
and the Family: Narratives of Academic Bangladeshi
Married Women**

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Abstract

Academic mobility as a proliferating global phenomena and a gender terrain requires intense research attention. Moreover rather than viewing the mobile academics from a simplistic rational human capital models or the impact of macro-structural factors on their mobility experiences, they need to be studied in the context of other meso-level institution such as family. Nonetheless a gender and intersectional perspective can be more effective to understand the heterogeneity of mobility experiences. Within this contextualization, this research intends to explore how the academic Bangladeshi married women have negotiated their agency in combining their mobility aspiration and family. Under de Haas's 'aspiration-capability' framework of migration and drawing on Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' and Anthias' (2012) 'translocational positionality' as analytical lens the research data were collected through qualitative interviews (as a research tool of interpretive paradigm) with academic Bangladeshi married women. Through exploring and analysing their narratives of mobility aspiration and capability in the context of family domain I have argued that agency for mobility is not only tied to individual rather it is 'relational' and 'contextual to their 'translocational positionality'. Their agency academic mobility and maintaining the familial relationships depend on their embeddedness and move across the field of academia and the family and in the interplay of gender, class and age dynamics.

The main research findings demonstrate the presence of a combination of instrumental and intrinsic aspirations for academic mobility endeavour motivated by individual goal and family strategy. In the face of diversified constraints emanated from the intersection of gender and age, they have utilized the advantages of their class position as facilitating factors in shaping their mobility capability. Throughout the mobility trajectory in combining academic and family life they have resisted, conform and alter gendered expectation and role. The analysis of the research findings show they negotiated agency through intermingling the habitus of two different field namely academia and family. Through partially refuting and partially reproducing the dispositions of both field they utilized the advantages of their positionalities and to overcome the constraints if necessary they even conformed to the established norms to initiate, refine and transform the available opportunity structures.

In conclusion I have argued that negotiation of agency in the arena of gendered mobility is never a straight forward generalization to view women as passive victim or complete challengers of structural constraints. Through suspending many aspects of their gender habitus they paved way to bring some structural changes and in this process a different kind of habitus may emerge in the intersection of two social fields that can motivate both continuity and change. Thus evaluating the agency from an inter-field and rather than intra-field context can be more productive to explore the changing dimensions in gendered experiences of mobility.

Relevance to Development Studies

The relevance of this research to Development Studies stands on three important issues. It contradicts the prevailing simplistic notion in migration-development nexus that views migration either as an obstacle for or a solution for reaching development goals. Rather than viewing migration as result of deterministic economic consideration, it shows how as an expression of people's aspirations and life preferences migration can be an integral part of social change. Moreover in understanding migratory agency it brings to focus assuming that all migrants face diversified range of constraints which is not limited to macro-structural factors rather micro and meso-level conditions enmeshed with complex inequalities can create particular challenges to women. Through a gender and intersectional feminist perspective this research shows that the lived reality of the academic mobility of women may differently experience and their 'translocational positionality' may have significant impact on their agency negotiation.

Keywords

Academic mobility, family, academic Bangladeshi married women, migratory agency, translocational positionality, aspirations-capabilities.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Contextualizing Bangladeshi women academics in gender and academic mobility debate

1.1 Contextual Background

Migration which has always been a constant driver in human history, from the 20th century onwards as a global phenomenon it has become characterized by new qualities and magnitude. Considering this global trend and the necessity to reassess the patterns of motivations several researches have examined the “reasons for, motivations towards and purposes of migration” and considering migrants’ own perspectives and motives have identified a diversity of mobility trends (Lutz, 2019: 14). However, the area of higher education and research has been identified as an emerging area of mobility celebration which is institutionally promoted as virtuous and fetishized as an essential part of education, training and life-long learning experiences for both academics and students (Robertson, 2010). Leung has defined this pattern of mobility as

“academically motivated geographical movements of students, faculty and researchers, generally in higher education, from their home institution to another one, either inside or outside of their home country, to study, teach or take part in research for a period of time” (Leung, 2014: 156).

In general, international academic mobility is directed towards the countries in the Global North which was fostered as part of establishing global authority by the powerful Global North countries in the post Second World War context. Then the introduction of several scholarship programmes specifically by the North American (Fulbright scholarships) or US private institutions (Ford Foundation) attracted a large number of masters and doctoral level students especially from the post-colonial countries under this mobility regime. This trend is still persistent and the usual flow of student and faculty is from the Global South to Global North due to their ‘well-developed education systems and institutions. These student and scholars act as transnational knowledge brokers across multiple nation-state borders and moreover the achieved international credentials and reputation is highly valued in advancing careers in the labour market (Bilecen and Mol, 2017: 1243; Altbach and Knight, 2007: 291; Raghuram and Shondhi, 2021; Bilecen and Faist, 2015; Acker, 2008; Zeng and Xie 2004). In response to this global trend an aspiration for transnational academic mobility persists among both the faculty and students of Bangladesh which is tied to the perception that the local higher education sector is still backwards and in the global economy of knowledge production Bangladesh is peripherally situated (Shahjahan, 2022; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021; Rahman, 2018).

The terrain of academic mobility is deeply cut by gender. Though women entail a large part of both skilled and student migration flows, gendered analysis of academic mobility and particularly international student mobility has been rather understudied. In this arena the significance of class and age is also neglected for the erroneous assumption that all women migrants belong to working class and all education migrants are young and free. But both should be considered in understanding the gendered variations in class mobility and gendered expectations and performances according to age; as experiences of a woman can differ based on having or not having children in comparison to a man of her same age (Dodson, 2021, Raghuram and Sondhi, 2021). Another important consideration is that studies in this area have explored the experiences of mobile students and scholars either as

rational individuals seeking human capital or the impact of macro-structures in shaping mobility experiences while the key meso-level institution, namely the family is still understudied. In this regard it is important to focus on the life course analysis of the women as highly skilled education migrants to explore their parallel careers of migration, employment and household which is still underexplored (Hao and Leung, 2023; Kōu et al., 2015).

In this contextual background of this research I will shed light on a specific group of international education migrants from Bangladesh who are educators at different universities in their country of origin Bangladesh. According to the local recruitment policy a Master degree is the basic criterion for application in faculty recruitment and a further Master (from a foreign country), Doctoral and Post-doctoral degree can advance their career trajectory and can make difference with others. Though a Doctoral and Post-doctoral degree from home country (Bangladesh) also meet the criterion for promotion in public universities, a foreign credential is more valued in academia even sometimes degrees from the Global North countries is mentioned as a compulsory requirement for private university faculty recruitment advertisement (Anwar, 2015; Chowdhury, 2015; Khan, 2010). However, studies show that in Bangladesh a working woman must make a balance between their personal and professional responsibilities as according to gender norms they are expected to carry all household and care responsibilities in addition to their professional responsibilities. This situation causes barrier to focus on their career progression, research and higher education (Basak & Akter, 2022, Hossain and Rokis, 2014).

Through following Anthias's (2012) 'translocational positionality' as my analytical lens I will explore the subjective experiences of agency negotiation in combining international academic mobility and family of the academic Bangladeshi married women who belong to middle/upper class status, aged between 30-45 years and belong to both "family" and "academia" as married and academic women.

1.2 Justification and relevance of this research

The significance of studying the area of agency negotiation of academic Bangladeshi married women in combining academic mobility and family and how their mobility trajectory has been shaped by their 'translocational positionality' should be understood as embedded in the broader Bangladeshi socio-cultural context and a review of literature on academic mobility.

Anwar's (2015) study was aimed to explore how the persistent gendered discourses determined the social relations in the working lives of married female academics. Based on the accounts of returnee, mobile and aspiring academics from one private university of Bangladesh, a key claim of this research was that women were experiencing role conflicts as wife, mother, academic, and student during their years of higher studies abroad which was resulted from the local gendered expectations. Shahjahan's (2022) study on both female and male academics of Bangladesh consisting of aspiring, returnee, and/or immigrant mobile scholars' experiences demonstrates that how the intermingling of the past colonial history of Bangladesh, present condition of higher education sector and prevailing academic mobility aspiration and return to Bangladesh generate temporal possibilities and hindrances in the everyday life of the research participants. It claims that the rationale behind the mobility decisions and choices start with everyday time work and their agency rather than being individual it is entangled with relational context. Hossain (2023) has studied the reintegration experiences of women academics who have returned after completing their higher education abroad. The research findings present how the pre-existing gender roles made their course of study abroad stressed. She also found their dilemma of concentrating on the neoliberal values of individualism at the same time in self-doubt about their role of change maker in bringing gender equality and social justice.

Within this contextual background the relevance of this research stands on two logical ground, firstly a further research on women academic can enrich the contemporary dynamics of academic mobility and secondly following a ‘translocational positionality’ approach can reveal the subjective experiences of agency negotiation by the academic Bangladeshi married women in the intersection of their multiple positioning in the structure of academia and family and the interplay of their gender, class and age identity.

1.3 Research questions and sub-questions

In order to understand migrants’ agency and the subjective experiences of academic Bangladeshi married women I will try to answer the following question

- How do academic Bangladeshi married women negotiate their agency in combining their transnational academic mobility and family?

So, in order to answer my main research question, I pose three sub-questions.

Sub questions

1. What are the motivational aspects for transnational academic mobility?
2. How did they turn their mobility aspiration into capability?
3. How do they combine their transnational mobility and family?

1.4 Methodology and methods

1.4.1 ‘Translocational positionality’ as analytical lens

In this research I am going to revisit Anthias’ (2012:107-108) notion of “translocational positionality” as my analytical lens which she has proposed as an accompaniment to the notion of intersectionality and this notion is useful to understand “the positions and outcomes produced through intersections between a number of different social structures and processes” through providing “importance to the broader social context and to temporality”. According to her proposal through this framework it is possible to analyse the intersection of both mutually reinforcing and at times contradictory social relations in both national and transnational context. Anthias’ approach is useful for its sensitivity to multiple positioning of mobile actors (Amelina, 2021). Accordingly, I want to explore how the mobile academic Bangladeshi married women are positioned in the structure of academia and family and how they are negotiating their agency in combining these two in the interplay of their gender, class and age identity. Anthias’ approach is useful for its sensitivity to multiple positioning of mobile actors (Amelina, 2021).

1.4.2 Data collection tools and analysis

For the purpose of this research, I have gathered my empirical research data following an interpretive paradigm which underlies qualitative research and allows a contextualized understanding of the perspective of research participants, meanings and interpretations of specific events, behaviours or experiences which is shaped by the context of their physical, socio-economic as well as cultural reality. Through participating the study population share and discuss their story in an in-depth interview which is favoured by the feminist researchers as a powerful research tool in exploring women’s experiences and the contexts that organize their experiences enabling the direct exchanges of views and perspectives among

researchers, participants, and readers. To learn the perspectives of my research participants and give them voice I have followed the practice of in-depth, open-ended and semi-structured interviewing as my research tool (DeVault and Gross, 2012:5-37; Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020).

I was inspired by feminists' increasing interest in the contemporary "mobilities" of everyday lives through experimenting with online data collection where videoconferencing can be an alternative to face-to-face interview as well as can extend the geographical range of research (DeVault and Gross, 2012). The appropriateness of online research is present in Fay's (2007) online ethnography among a web based network of feminist academics belong to highly mobile, international globalised elite community. As I have considered the mobile academics of Bangladesh as my research participants who are currently staying in different parts of the world as transnational migrant, being concerned that all of them have access to online, I have followed online interview as my research tool utilizing the zoom platform where I was engaged in in-depth video conversation with all of my participants (one interview was only audio as she was not comfortable with video call). The minimum duration of the conversation was one hour and in most cases the exchange was so engaging that most of the conversations took around two to two and half hours. I conducted eight interviews and among this one interview was face-to-face as she is currently doing her PhD in Netherlands.

The participants of this research were selected through purposive sampling (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020) to maintain a variety of their background and positionality. I have used social networking platform 'facebook' to search them and 'facebook messenger' to inform about my research and invite them to participate. We exchanged a short briefing about my research objective and question and asked if they agree to participate. Those who agreed I asked for their formal consent and based on their time preference I sent them the 'zoom' meeting invitation link through 'messenger' and e-mail.

All of the interview conversation were recorded with consent using the provision of recorder in 'zoom' except two which were recorded in my mobile phone (one due to technical reason and another was face-to-face). In the ground of protecting participants' privacy I have used pseudonym for all except for Sultana who wished to use her actual name viewing it more powerful and emancipatory to share her own story. All the conversations were in Bengali language except some words or phrases. To avoid the potential downsides of overreliance on online and digital technology I have transcribed and translated all the interviews from Bengali to English through a process of repeated listening to tapes. It helped me to overcome the problem of speakers' voice recognition. It also helped me to preserve the nonlexical details of talk, such as hesitation, intonation, and the like.

As my central concern is to understand the narratives of my research participants regarding their migration experiences, in analyzing my data I have mainly followed narrative analysis as Elliot Mishler's (1986) and Sechelski and Onwuegbuzie, (2019) arguing that stories has potential to give meaning to individual's lives which can create distinctive possibilities in maintaining the coherence of people's perspective, have identified narrative analysis as useful to assess what stories people tell and how the stories are told. Following the suggestion of Sechelski and Onwuegbuzie, (2019) that conducting multiple data analyses can enhance analysis saturation and increasing understanding, I have also used key-words in context to identify keywords and utilizing the surrounding words to understand the underlying meaning of the keyword, as qualitative comparative analysis may be used systematically to analyze similarities and differences across the participants of the themes that emerged from the constant comparison analysis to search meaning in my data.

1.4.3 Ethical Issues

The boundedness of all qualitative researchers to follow the code of ethics require informed consent, being concern to participants' concerns and feelings, protecting the identity of the participants and if necessary changing some details in research reports. (DeVault and Gross, 2012). As mentioned above I have taken informed consent before interview and while recording the interviews, have used pseudonym to protect their identity, have not used any information that directly reveal their identity, rather than revealing their exact age I have presented them in certain age group.

1.4.4 Positionality and limitations

In qualitative research “the researcher's background, position or emotions are an integral part of the process of producing data” (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020, p.-19). As a Bangladeshi, married, childless, academic, woman, student, migrant belong to the age group of 30-40 and currently living in the Netherlands (a Global North country) with my spouse who also belong to the above social location except his gender identity as a male, I feel a high degree of resemblance with the positionality of my research participants who are also Bangladeshi, married, with child/childless, academic, woman, student, migrant belong to the age group of 30-45 and currently doing their higher education and research in different international institutions of countries in the Global North. Admitting the fact that my own life and experiences differ in many ways from their lived experiences, I believe that my own unequivocal but wide-ranging migration trajectory has helped me a broader way to connect, engage and understand my participants' journey.

The similarity of my positionality does not confirm that I could overcome all the limitations of conducting a research. Riessman's (1987) in her article “When Gender Is Not Enough” has critiqued her own assumption of finding a common ground as being woman and suggested not to take rapport for granted and to be more strategic while talking with others. Susan Chase (1995) in her book “Ambiguous Empowerment” has illustrated how constructions of similarity and difference influence every aspect of the interview project: shaping the questions researchers ask and don't ask, the ease or difficulty of recruiting informants, the kinds of rapport that develop in the encounter, and the lenses through which researchers produce and analyze interview data. In these ground feminists are aware of maintaining a reflexive awareness that research relations are never simple encounters, innocent of identities and lines of power. Rather, they are always embedded in and shaped by cultural constructions of similarity, difference, and significance. Moreover our interviewees should be acknowledged as agents actively located in history—as makers of the worlds around them rather than as mere victims of an overarching patriarchy (DeVault and Gross, 2012:).

Positionality bears both benefits and burdens (Massoud, 2022). Having common grounds primarily helped me to find out and communicate with my intended research participants and partially overcome the paradox of insider-outsider boundary but I also had to go through a continuous dilemma of thinking and rethinking which question should I formulate as my conversation guide. Even if I put the question sometimes I had to rethink should I ask the question or not and sometimes I could not ask the question at all for example their future mobility plan for retuning to Bangladesh especially those living with accompanying family members. My participants' belongingness to elite migrant category who had to maintain a very strict schedule brought some limitations to make a second interview schedule. Moreover I cannot deny the dark side of online interviews as it allows watching only those parts of everyday life possible within a certain time frame and on screen. Translating interviews from Benglai to English may decrease its nuances and appropriateness.

My positionality may have impact on the interview guide as well as the analysis and interpretation of data.

However considering the limitations of data collection and processing information collected through these interactions were used to develop distinct narratives about the agency negotiation of the academic Bangladeshi married women.

1.5 Structure of the paper

Beside this introductory chapter, this study has six more chapters. In chapter two, I have elaborated on my analytical lens with conceptual clarification of agency and gender in the light of a feminist critique of Bourdieu's theory of practice demonstrating its relevance in understanding the experiences of academic Bangladeshi married women. In the following three chapters I have presented the findings of my three research sub-questions. Chapter six consists of my analysis of the research findings that direct towards the answer of my research objective. In chapter seven which is the last chapter of this paper I have drawn my conclusions and a summative presentation of the answer of the research question.

Chapter 2

Theorizing agency: Women, academic mobility and the family

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the theoretical issues which have shaped my understanding to analyse the narratives of academic Bangladeshi married women in attaining, negotiating and extending their agency in combining their academic mobility and family. Underling the fact that the link between academic mobility and family is very fluid and context specific, rather than viewing migrants solely from a human capital perspective, a gender centered and feminist approach can focus on the significance of migrants' own priorities and aspirations for themselves as well as their families (Hao and Leung, 2023; Dodson, 2021). In this regard I will follow Anthias' (2012) 'translocational positionality' to explore how the mobile academic Bangladeshi married women are positioned in the structure of academia and family and how they are negotiating their agency in combining these two in the interplay of their gender, class and age identity. To understand the multiple positioning of women academics and their negotiation of agency under de Haas's (2021) 'aspirations-capabilities' framework I will revisit Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' (habitus, field and capital) through a gender and feminist perspective.

2.2 The 'aspirations-capabilities' framework

In this research the main theoretical and conceptual tool is de Haas's 'aspirations-capabilities' framework which views all forms of migration as a function of aspirations and capabilities. It proposes that "migration aspirations are a function of people's general life aspirations and perceived geographical opportunity structures and migration capabilities are contingent on positive ('freedom to') and negative ('freedom from') liberties" (de Haas, 2021: 18). Focusing on the importance of taking an active decision and having the resources for migration de Haas (2021) has stated that "Agency reflects the limited—but real—ability of human beings (or social groups) to make independent choices" and structure as "patterns of social relations, beliefs and behaviour" and a realistic understanding of migration processes can be possible through a structurally constrained understanding of agency. In understanding agency he has drawn on Berlin's (1969) concept of negative liberty (absence of obstacles, barriers or constraints) and positive liberty (ability to take control of one's life and to realise one's fundamental purposes) which has similarity with Sen's (1999) concept of capability as enhancing their substantive choices. His emphasis on the prevailing social hierarchies and inequalities resulted from cultural belief systems and existing factors and institutions like class, gender, ethnicity which can limit people's access to social, economic and cultural resources indicates that everyone may not have the capability to fulfil their migration aspiration and the agency of individual migrant is not disentangled from their association with other social institutions like family. In this framework I will explore the aspirations-capabilities of women academics and their negotiation of agency.

2.3 'Translocational positionality' as analytical lens

In this research to understand women's agency I will follow Anthias' "translocational positionality" as my analytical lens as she has described it useful for studying complex mobilities,

“as a tool for making sense of the positions and outcomes produced through intersections between a number of different social structures and processes, including transnational ones. This gives, importance to the broader social context and to temporality and is useful as an accompaniment to the notion of intersectionality” (Anthias 2012:208).

This approach pays more attention to social locations as products of particular constellations of social relations in terms of relationality in temporal and spatial context. It also recognizes the presence of contradictory and shifting social locations where “one might be in a position of dominance and subordination simultaneously on the one hand or at different times or spaces on the other” (Anthias 2012: 108).

Conceptualizing difference and inequality as a set of processes rather than being possessive characteristics of individuals she has clarified “Positionality refers to placement within a set of relations and practices that implicate identification and ‘performativity’ or action” (Anthias 2002: 501). Relating positionality to the space at the intersection of structure and agency, she has identified ‘translocational’ positionality as a way of addressing a range of issues related to belonging consisted of multilayered (or hybrid) identity. The focus on location implies the importance of context and translocational denotes the complex “interplay of a range of locations and dislocations in relation to gender, ethnicity, national belonging, class and racialization” (Anthias 2002: 502”).

For the purpose of this research I will follow ‘translocational positionality’ to explore how the mobile academic Bangladeshi married women are positioned in the structure of academia and family and how they are negotiating their agency in combining these two in the interplay of their gender, class and age identity.

2.4 Structure-agency: A feminist analysis of Bourdieu

To explore women’s agency in combining academic mobility and family under the ‘aspirations-capabilities’ framework and through “translocational positionality’ lens I will now present a feminist analytical revision of Bourdieu’s ‘theory of practice’.

Bourdieu’s theory of practice is established on three concepts namely field, habitus and capital and it is explained through a metaphorical game played by different agents or actors. Though all the agents have the similar chances of investment and profit but the success in the game played in the social ‘field’ (site of competition or conflict for power) depends on the distribution of capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 2000). Bourdieu (1986) has described capital as an accumulated labor (in materialized or embodied form) which enables agent to produce or reproduce profit in identical or expanded form and habitus as ‘socialized subjectivity’ which enables agents integrating past experiences and endowed with a set of dispositions, perceptions and appreciations to enter into the game and play it with more or less success for achievement of infinitely diversified tasks (Bourdieu, 2000, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). And

“the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent structure of the social world, i.e., the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world, which govern its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success for practices” (Bourdieu 1986: 15).

Habitus determines agent’s expectations and aspirations which are adjusted to agents’ positions and to the objective chances. Social manipulation of aspiration occurs in the family which as a masked institution shapes its members representation of their (generic or individual) capacity to act, value and social being (Bourdieu 2000: 216-218).

Bourdieu (2001) in his book *Masculine Domination* has located 'gender' as a particular kind of habitus (male and female habitus) and explained the division of gender as a social construction which is present as natural and inevitable—"in the objectified state -in things (in the house), in the whole social world, and in the embodied state in the habitus of the agents, functioning as systems of schemes of perception, thought and action" (Bourdieu 2001:8). He has analysed the social relations between men and women as the result of the social construction of gender "as a sexually defined reality and as the depository of sexually defining principles of vision and division" (Bourdieu, 2001:9-11). He has termed this formative process of "gender as sexually characterized habitus" through a continuous socialization process as *Bildung* (Bourdieu, 2001:24) and the masking of socially produced power relations between the sexes as *doxa* (an area of beyond questioning) and the legitimization of male power to women as '*symbolic violence*' through which the patriarchal power is ratified.

According to Bourdieu's (2001) explanation of gender as a social construction women's role is assigned within the boundary of house or family which is not applicable in the contemporary society as women are now increasingly involving in outer world activities. So at this point his theory of gender needs a feminist revision. Before going to that point I want to present his research on the field of academia. In "Homo Academicus" (1984) Bourdieu has demonstrated how "the structure of the university field reflects the structure of the field of power, while its own activity of selection and indoctrination contributes to the reproduction of that structure" (Bourdieu 1984:40-41). He has identified different indicators of holding position and powers in the university field such as social determinants of the habitus formation, academic success as well as different forms of economic, social and cultural capitals. Educational success in previous studies, establishment attended for higher education whether it is from provincial, national or international institutions and the overall qualifications acquired carry importance for holding position and power. This reflects the characteristics of the field of academia which requires those belong in this field to acquire further qualities to hold their position in this field.

The discussion presented above shows that there is some element of rigidity, determinism and reproductionist image in Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus and field. In this context the question is to what extent Bourdieu's theory is applicable to understand the multiple positioning of women academics and their negotiation of agency as middle/upper class women, aged between 30-45 years and belong to both "family" and "academia". Drawing on McNay's and Moi's reformulation of Bourdieu's theory, I will present the relevance of Bourdieu in this research.

McNay (1999, 2004) suggests that Bourdieu's work of habitus and social field has usefulness in conceptualizing gender; identity and change with its limitations due to his over-emphasize on gender identity and underestimation of the experiences of women in regard to possible divergences due to social differentiation and different socio-historical changes. Moreover, there is an 'over-emphasis on the alignment that the habitus establishes between subjective dispositions and the objective structure of the field with regard to gender identities' (McNay, 1999: 107).

McNay (1999) suggests that a crucial insight for feminist understanding of habitus and field is to consider the ambiguities and unevenness of gender norms today as women are embedded in and move across diverse social fields which can produce a more nuanced understanding of gender rather than the simple binary of public (men's domain) and private (women's domain). Even the private should be divided into the intimate and domestic which can be potentially emancipatory as it indicates that it is not solely women burdened with the emotional responsibility and women also have access to areas more associated with men. She also argues that, "although Bourdieu acknowledges the destabilizing and po-

tentially subversive effects that might arise from movements across fields, he fails to consider what this might imply for an understanding of modern gender identity” (McNay 1999: 106–107).

McNay’s (1999) proposal to analyse field as a relational concept promote the understanding of society as a differentiated and open structure and provides a framework in which subordination and autonomy are realized in women’s lives. Considering women as moving across fields can yield a more reflexive and differentiated nature of gender identity for a contextual analysis of specific power relations as it can reveal not only the opposition rather multiple ‘disjunction, overlap and conflict’. Considering this analysis I argue that as the women academic belong to both family and academia considering their multiple positioning can provide nuanced understanding of their agency.

Moi (1999) argues that in studying the complexity of the gendered power relation in the contemporary society, which is not entirely doxic, Bourdieu’s theory can be advantageous because of its relational nature. Bourdieu not only asserts on the social construction of gender rather also concerns about the overestimation of one social factor such as femaleness or gender in analysing social position and habitus while the effect of the interconnection of other social factors such as sex, race, class and age can be more complex and can influence and modify each other in different social contexts. Moi’s (1991) arguments resonates with Lutz’s (2019) proposition that as gender role can be changed throughout people’s life-courses (in socialization, education, working life, family life, and old age), rather than following a singularizing and static approaches it is necessary to study gender in relation to other social categories such as class, ethnicity or age.

Bourdieu’s concern about the interconnection of different social factor and positions is reflected in his indication that there is transformation in the condition of women specially those who are positioned as the most advantageous social categories. The increasing number of women’s participation in education, waged work and economic independence has positively impacted their responsibilities in domestic sphere (division of household labour) as well as reproductive role and even change in family structure (increased rate of divorce or emergence of new family types such as composite family). Delaying marriage or childbirth, controlling family size brings less interruption in professional activity (Bourdieu, 2001). Moreover his indication of gender inequality in the field of academia and the power relations between male and female scholars and students (1984) also demonstrate that women are not only confined to household rather also involved in academia.

2.4 Unpacking agency: Academic mobility and family

I will argue that Bourdieu has not completely undermined the possibility of improvisation as he says that though structured and predisposed by the field, habitus is “creative, inventive, but within the limits of its structures” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 19) and that the effect of the rules of the game is uneven producing degrees of continuity and change in habitus (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 96–115). Bourdieu has transcended the antagonism between objective and subjective or structure and agency dualism. His relational understanding of social practice proposes that the endowment of the social agent with habitus enables them to perform and act “within the limits of the structural constraints of which they are the product and which define them” (Bourdieu 2000:138). For Bourdieu an agent’s action is neither resulted from complete impulse or a conscious and rationalized thought rather it is a combination of individual consciousness and the motivating structures that into play, “habitus plays its part in determining the things to be done or not to be done, the urgencies, etc., which trigger action” (Bourdieu 2000: 148).

Moreover he has also indicated that the diversity of conditions and corresponding habitus as well as the diversity of intra- and intergenerational movements of ascent or decline mean that “habitus may, in many cases, be confronted with processes of actualization different from those in which they were produced”. In response to new experiences habitus may change and as characterized by both constancy and variation dispositions varies according to one’s degree of rigidity or flexibility (Bourdieu 2000: 160–1). For Bourdieu (2000) an agent’s possibility to get free from the structural constraints suggests that an agent’s confrontation with the symbolic violence and a long period of living in the condition of domination can create unwillingness to play in the game of power. In the contrary he also acknowledges that people can break the knowledge and discourse of their habitus. They can dream and be hopeful to achieve their personal goal and not to surrender and in this case *doxa* can be acted upon and domination can be overcome (2000:221-236).

McNay (1999) has emphasized on the usefulness of Bourdieu’s theory of embodiment in the context of differentiated power relations for its corrective to the overestimation of certain theories of reflexivity which views individuals as a disembodied agent (McNay, 1999:113). It resonates with Mahmood who argues that “the capacity for agency is entailed not only in acts that resist norms but also in the multiple ways in which one inhabits norms” (Mahmood 2019: 42). McNay also argued that as a complex interaction between the phenomenal nearness of lived experience and social institutions/structures of power and inequality leads to the ongoing process of becoming a subject, so “an idea of experience is essential to an account of agency but that it must be understood in relational terms rather than in an ontological sense as the absolute grounds of social being” (McNay, 2004:175). Emirbayer and Mische arguing that “the structural contexts of action are themselves temporal as well as relational fields” have conceptualized human agency as a “temporally embedded process of social engagement” (1998: 963). Following Emirbayer and Mische (1998) the new theories of agency stress the temporal and social embeddedness of agents which contends that structural aspects are not separable from agency, but must be conceptualized as part and parcel of it (Köngeter and Smith 2015: 7).

de Haas (2021) has identified people’s aspiration and capability to move or stay as well as choice and potential regarding destination and life there as relational to their access to economic, socio-cultural and bodily resources which can be unequally distributed due to social hierarchy and structural inequality. Moreover, people’s life preferences may change throughout the changing social aspects and their own life-course and aspirations can be emanated from both instrumental and intrinsic reasons. He also emphasized on the importance to recognize that all kind of migrants may face diversified range of constraints. Within this context the migratory agency of academic Bangladeshi married women in the terrain of academic mobility which means “studying, training and working in the academic field abroad” (Hao and Leung, 2023: 249) need to be researched in the context of their embeddedness in the family. Rather than viewing them only a rational individualistic migrant or the impact of macro-structures on them, it is also important to analyse the relevance of family as a key meso-level institution in shaping their mobility experiences from a gender-centred and feminist approaches as it highlight migrants’ priorities and aspirations for themselves and their families (Dodson, 2021).

Chapter 3

Mobility aspirations and motivations

3.1 Introduction

In the reality of greater internal and international movement of people the importance of skills and knowledge over other economic production got prominence which has highlighted the importance of education (Bilecen 2020). Leeman (2010) and Leung (2014) in their study in Switzerland and China have demonstrated how the inward and outward geographic mobility and regular exchanges and collaborations with overseas colleagues have been institutionalized and valued as an essential component of academia. Shahjahan (2022) has stated that there is strong aspiration among Bangladeshi students and faculty for transnational education migration. Though these studies show how it has become a normative requirement of a successful academic career, those who move with educational purpose might have multiple reasons behind their mobility decision (Bilecen 2020: 242). In this context, the aim of my first research sub-question was to explore the subjective motivations and aspirations of the academic Bangladeshi married women for undertaking academic mobility paths and from their answer a number of motivational factors were identified which has both similarity and divergences with the literatures on transnational academic mobility in global and national (Bangladesh) context.

3.2 Accumulation of foreign credentials

“In the neoliberal era, the struggle for the ‘best and brightest’ became an expression of economic advantage and competition” (Bilecen 2020: 242). The usual flow of student and faculty is from the Global South to Global North due to their ‘well-developed education systems and institutions (Altbach and Knight, 2007: 291). In the global context Bilecen (2020) has argued that the opportunity of studying in elite universities is very significant and if it is not available in the country of origin, people move to international educational institutions. Moreover rather than the degree, the awardee institution carries more value which has made the Global North countries as popular destination for study.

From the conversations with my interviewees it is very clear that their aspiration for transnational mobility is primarily motivated by their concern for accumulation of foreign credentials as they emphasized the significance of studying abroad as an avenue for career progression. After all in the context of Bangladesh a foreign degree is highly valued and the impact of the university ranking and reputation of specific field is very obvious. Nafisa currently doing her PhD in a high ranked UK university proclaimed that

“My motivation for higher studies abroad was definitely to fulfil my career goal as I am working in academia. Moreover, my current institution is globally renowned and my department is also very well ranked and a PhD will help me to do better research in future and contribute better in academia”. (Interview with Nafisa)

Moreover, Simrin’s motivation depicts another concern for mobility regarding doing specialization in a specific field not available in Bangladesh as it will open new doors to start her doctoral study abroad as she stated that

“My first Master was in Architecture and I was longing for a specialization in housing which is not available in Bangladesh. So I planned for a second Master in this discipline as I will also do my PhD in this field. Besides a foreign degree is highly valued for those who are working in academia. Moreover my disciplinary background in architecture is very much connected with space and I was feeling that exploring a new place as well as their culture will enrich my disciplinary understanding in Architecture”

Similar kind of motivations are expressed in the words of Tabassum who is doing her PhD in UK in Biological and Behavioural Science: “I planned for higher studies to extend my expertise in my field, to get promotion in my job and mainly I always wanted to do my higher studies abroad”. (Interview with Tabassum)

3.3 Mobility as family strategy

Zhu & Qian highlighting the danger of considering singular rationality such as the economic reason argue that migration involves multi-dimensional motivations and outcomes,

“migration is always complicated by needs, aspirations, interests and pursuits that are situated, unpredictable and contingent on the immediate milieus of movement and encounter. Whether migrants have resources and abilities to adapt to such contingencies affects their wellbeing in profound way” (2020: 13–14).

It was revealed in the narratives of the research participants that their mobility aspirations were not limited to gaining international recognition in furthering their career path; rather they were motivated by other reasons. It was not a surprise that in addition to their own achievement almost all women especially those with children considered their mobility to Global North country as a precious opportunity for their family wellbeing also and it was confirmed by Pervin and Rebeka who are doing their MSc and PhD in the USA and Nafisa who is doing PhD in UK and have migrated accompanied by their husband and children. As stated by Pervin:

“From the very beginning my husband and I planned to move together with my son and I cannot deny the fact that I had to think about my child’s future and so chose for the United States, a place having wider opportunities for his future”. (Interview with Pervin)

The family goal is not limited to the future of children rather it extends to as a couple goal as explained by Nafisa,

“Beside my academic goal I was also longing for taking a break from my job in a positive way. As newly wedded I preferred the UK considering some practical issues. Considering my husband’s future there as he will also accompany me as self-funding student; I had to choose an English speaking country and the work opportunity for student migrants there”. (Interview with Nafisa)

The family goal was not one-sided rather vice-versa. As the participants were saying that as mother they were thinking about their child’s future abroad, they also expressed how their international mobility for education was shaped by their family background and upbringing. Several of my participants said that they started to dream of going abroad for higher studies as they saw many of their parental and in-laws relatives to go for higher studies abroad which also inspired them. As stated by Afrin:

“Several of my family members and relatives were doing their higher education abroad and so I also started seeing myself doing my PhD abroad. Though my time was running fast I never thought to start my further study in Bangladesh”. (Interview with Afrin)

3.4 Breaking gender stereotype

The desire for migration is not only guided by the goal of accumulating wealth or living standards but also to travelling through the world to explore the new horizons, meeting curiosity or for adventure and even to escape from the social or individual control. Rather than viewing migrants as rational human capital perspective, migrants' own priorities and aspirations for themselves can also be significant area to focus (de Haas, 2021; Dodson, 2021).

It is evident in the statement of my interviewees that their migration aspiration was also motivated by a very subjective goal to challenge the gendered nature of their working space and also their family space. Simrin and Rebeka expressed their observation and experiences about the prevailing gender stereotyping in academia where women are viewed as less competent and not worthy of achieving something bigger. Simrin expressed her frustration saying that:

“In my professional field a female always has to work ten times harder than a male just to show her potential and make her position. So, whether I am a female and have a family to care I will have to show that I am also capable in this field. All of these force worked as motivation for doing my second Master abroad”. (Interview with Simrin)

The same anguish was confirmed by Rebeka as she explained the reason behind her constant chase and relentless effort for higher studies abroad:

“I saw that many of my male colleagues were moving abroad to pursue their higher studies and I observed a kind of impression in my work place that women are not that capable to take this leap. So, I tried hard to prove my credentials and I am here now. Moreover I also considered the USA as my destination country thinking about my children's future here”. (Interview with Rebeka)

Mobility may also appear as a way to escape oppressive and controlling familial relations. Acknowledging her prior aspiration for transnational mobility for higher study as an academic stimuli (learning new areas of knowledge and as a way for career progression), Sultana expressed how during a specific time and incident of her victimization of domestic violence (battering) by her husband triggered by a silly issue, she immediately chose migrating abroad as a way of escaping her unhealthy marital relations, the disciplinary gaze of both family and the wider society and to manage a survival for her and her daughter. As described by Sultana:

“After that incident I immediately decided to break our marital relationship. It was literally around twenty days after that incident when I started to contact my current PhD supervisor at Indiana University as well as I also applied for admission to ISS. I was just thinking that I will have to escape this toxic space and for this at any cost I will have to leave Bangladesh immediately and that moment it was a matter of survival rather than an academic decision or getting a better opportunity abroad”. (Interview with Sultana)

The above mentioned motivations have some similarities and also divergence with Anwar's (2015) research among mobile and aspiring married female academics of Bangladesh who identified a number of motivational factors ranging from career development to satisfying their thirst for acquiring knowledge, dream fulfilment and developing self-identity.

3.5 Chapter summary

Bangladeshi married women academic's motivation for mobility shows a wide range of reasons among which the purpose to accumulate foreign credentials is obvious. Though the motivation seems as individualistic but it is very important to consider the other complex range of conditions that shape migration decision-making such as in many senses it is also linked to the family specifically the child's welfare, breaking gender stereotyping in workplace and family as well as to find migration as a way of emancipation and survival. It can be said that in women's motivations both an altruistic and a self-interest can co-exist.

Chapter 4 Turning Aspirations into Capabilities

4.1 Introduction

The primary goal of this chapter is to present the findings on how the research participants have turned their mobility aspiration into reality which shows a range of structural constraints impeding their capability for mobility and also their strategies to overcome these in fulfilling their parallel careers of mobility and family. As migrants educational, career trajectories and overall decision for migration are made considering their situation in context of family and life-course factors as well as the social norms and expectations around maintaining family and children (Dodson, 2021) their agency for mobility requires scrutiny. To understand women's agency and choice in mobility Bastia (2013) cites Hirschmann "autonomy is fundamentally about capabilities, specifically about the ability to assess one's options, reflect critically about them, and make choices that allow one to exert some control over one's life" (Hirschmann 2003, 36). She argued that autonomy needs to be understood as embedded within everyday social relations (Bastia 2013).

Against this background the findings on how did they turn their mobility aspiration into capability will be presented in relation to the findings on aspirations described in the previous chapter.

4.2 Class position and family as facilitating factor

From the conversations with my participants it was clear that their own socioeconomic condition as well as their parental and in-laws family mostly shaped their mobility aspiration in a positive way. All research participants were employed in the country of origin and also played the breadwinner role like their husbands. The narratives apparently show that regarding class dimension all research participants were in a privileged position having their own significant income and belongingness to a middle-class or upper class family. Having basic financial security as they earn themselves as well as the financial support as grant or TA/RA ship offered by international educational and funding institutions and also the paid study leave opportunity from their employer provided them financial resource to exercise agency in advancing their international mobility. Moreover their aspiration to move to the Global North (as a space in a dominant position globally (Lutz, 2019) also put their advantageous position in agency negotiation. Moreover they could invest their own money in the preparation stage of their academic mobility such as application fee or language test coaching or exam fee or employing maid to do household work or taking care of the children. Rebeka's statement reflects how she overcame the discouragement of her in-laws about higher studies abroad due to her own determination, financial capacity, hard work, good understanding with her husband regarding her academic goal. As stated by Rebeka:

"My in-laws were not very encouraging about my higher studies abroad, but I did not pay heed and determined about my goal. I never hesitated to spend money to smooth my household work and employed two maids for taking care of my two kids. I spent less time in my home and spend more time in office to do my official work as well as preparing myself for higher studies abroad". (Interview with Rebeka)

The beneficial aspect of the financial solvency was also confirmed by Sultana as she said:

“Though not formally but at least mentally I became separated with my husband after that incident and decided to move with my daughter and you know it requires a lot of money and I did not have that much money that time. But I was privileged to get a good amount of money as loan from my university in addition to the grant provided by my intended university in the USA”. (Interview with Sultana)

Researches show that in overseas education the socio-economic condition bears remarkable impact on mobility aspiration through familial socialization as well as influencing or determining the mobility decision through providing material and immaterial support (Hao and leung, 2023, Waters and Wang, 2023). It was present in my participants’ narration that their family (both parental and in-laws) as well as their partner’s educational and professional background was beneficial for them. Some of my participants said that they started to dream of going abroad for higher studies as they saw many of their parental and in-laws relatives to go for higher studies abroad. Conversely it was not also a surprise for the family that their daughter/daughter in-law may desire to go abroad for higher studies. Pervin’s statement reflects this:

“I would say the family of my in-law was a blessing for me. My two brothers-in-law are doing their higher studies in the USA and Norway. So I would say they are a modern and educated family to understand the importance of my higher studies abroad”. (Interview with Pervin)

Afrin was saying that:

“When I was struggling to manage a scholarship my father-in-law said that if you want you can go, I will provide you the financial support. They could understand the importance of my career. Even in my absence they took care of my one year old daughter”. (Interview with Afrin)

4.3 Bargaining on partners’ career and family strategy

In the family domain we can understand the patterns of action and interpretation displayed by actors and the standards, values, and aims for which they thus strive (Köngeter and Smith, 2015). Though the possibility of achieving a good life seemed as a prospect for family the findings depict diversified constraints impeding mobility decision while a series of discussion, arguments, sacrifice and the possible pros and cons of moving to a country of Global North balanced the aspiration and capability. Family life ties together the life courses of individual family members where partners have their individual professional aspirations as well as their other private and public involvement, children with their caring and development needs, elderly with their care needs. In such context it is not possible to understand life course as individual trajectory rather “they have to be seen as coupled or linked among each other” (Kruiger & Levy, 2001:161). Considering the timeframe, doing an MA or doctoral/postdoctoral study requires at least one to five years of staying abroad which poses two kinds of challenges. Firstly, maintaining a long distance relationship may cost the emotional burden. Secondly, convincing the partner to move with her as a trailing spouse may affect his career. These ranges from taking unpaid leave from the employer or resigning from current employment or business share to having the financial uncertainty (unemployment, deskilling, downward mobility) in the destination country due to their restrictive immigration policy. Nafisa’s story shows how they made a plan of even borrowing

a large amount of money to pay for husband's tuition fees in the UK university (Nafisa got a grant but her husband did not):

“My husband is a banker and he could manage a two years unpaid study leave to start his Master in UK. Though this degree will not add that much value in his profession, but he moved with me as I convinced him to do so”. (Interview with Nafisa)

It is found that migrating as trailing spouse was comparatively more prevalent among those who were not engaged in any permanent/contractual job back home. In some cases moving to the Global North with wife was like opening a door to explore new opportunities. Beside this economic calculation, the cultural norms was similarly important about taking the decision as still women's mobility is more tied to their husband than vice-versa. Pervin explained how she and her husband could come up with a mutual decision after a round of discussion:

“I don't say that we did not have any tension when he had to take the decision of moving out for me. He had to withdraw his share in family business which was his source of income and it was really difficult to decide on that. But I could convince him to overcome the confusion by saying that I have got funding here and we had an opportunity to explore the developed life chance, so let's try. If we cannot do it we can go back”. (Interview with Pervin)

4.4 Hindrance of restrictive gender norms and strategies to overcome

Migrants educational, career trajectories and overall decision for migration are made considering their situation in context of family and life-course factors. The study of balancing family and work requires examining the social norms and expectations, negotiations on household care and reproductive labour (Dodson, 2021). In the context of Bangladesh an important barrier for working women is their responsibility of simultaneously maintain their professional and personal responsibilities (Basak & Akter, 2022, Hossain and Rokis, 2014). The narratives of the research participants reflect the gender norms regarding marriage in association with age, child birth and caring responsibilities. It was not any surprise when one of the participants expressed that she had to postpone her endeavour for higher studies abroad until she got married as she will be overaged for marriage after return according to the cultural standard of perfect age for marriage and also the fear of the stereotype of “promiscuous female overseas student” as described by Martin (2022: 169) in his study among Chinese overseas students. Participants' narratives reflect their experiences regarding these restrictive gender norms. Nahar said:

“After joining academia, I was feeling that it is time to start my planning for higher studies abroad. Then as a woman I experienced the first constraint from my own mother as she said that I cannot allow you to go abroad before marriage”. (Interview with Nahar)

Though in the first section of this chapter family was found as facilitating factor in mobility decisions, the constructed gender norms in the family context can be viewed as repressive. When Nahar got married and was planning to start her mobility preparation she realized that marriage did not solve her problem rather multiplied it with the arrival of further family responsibilities as well as the reproductive role of giving birth in time. This is also evident in Afrin's words who could not ignore the societal pressure and her own tension to face the fear of possible infertility with aging:

“I got married in 2005 and delayed my decision to take my first baby till 2009 and was trying to get a scholarship opportunity for studying abroad as having a child might impinge my mobility. But I could not stand on my decision fearing that with aging my reproductive capacity might be at risk and decided for my first child”. (Interview with Afrin)

Giving birth adds new challenge as the caring responsibility of the children is very much gendered and primarily concern goes to mothers and women by the established gender order. Rebeka's statement reflects the contradictions and complexities an academic with motherhood responsibility experiences in their mobility endeavor:

“When I was planning for higher studies abroad I was mother of my first child. After completed my relevant application preparation, I eventually discovered my second pregnancy. Though it was a bit shocking for me, I could not take the risk of continuing my pregnancy and going abroad together and so postponed my application that year”. (Interview with Rebeka)

Narratives show how they perceive the motherhood and caring as unavoidable responsibility for them and so delayed their mobility decision until their child become younger, as Simrin stated:

“I was thinking for a long time to start my application as time was running fast but as a mother I could not convince myself to take steps for going abroad and so delayed the process until my son turns seven”. (Interview with Simrin)

The above narratives reflect the complexities of gendered mobility where women had to advance with their own strategies to achieve their capability. In this regard breaking the gender stereotype and moving forward requires strong determination as mentioned by one of the participants:

“I want to say one thing very straight that at some point the woman needs to motivate and boost up herself. In the context of this patriarchal society if you can boost up yourself, your husband too will boost you up. Nobody can be the protagonist to achieve your goal. So, the woman herself will have to be the prime mover. When I got the admission and scholarship I could start my negotiation with my family for mobility”. (Interview with Afrin)

Escaping an exploitative relationship may also cause determination for mobility which is obvious in the mobility experience of Sultana. Her mobility decision was a strong combination of fulfilling her dream of studying abroad which was also ignited by her desire to become physically separated from her abusive husband to end or at least temporarily suspend their marital relationship. She expressed how hard she worked to get admission and scholarship abroad. When she could finally manage this and waiting to leave the country leaving her only daughter (due to visa complexity) and husband she experienced the negative strength of gender power structure:

“Just two weeks before my departure to the USA my family tried to make us mutual and I forgave my husband's previous misdeeds. But at the same night he suddenly told me that ‘you are such a woman who will not change her decision of going abroad even if your daughter dies today’. I was so shocked that I could not take that anymore, became traumatized and had to be hospitalized for few days”. (Interview with Sultana)

4.5 Chapter summary

The findings presented above show that the family had pivotal role in migration decision making in a highly gendered way. The narratives reflect how the advantages and disadvantages of their ‘translocational positionality’ constrained and enabled them to exercise agency during the process of migration. Diversified factors such as long uncertainties, expanded periods of tensions, negotiations of conflicts, resistance, if necessary conformation to traditional gender norms in transforming mobility aspiration in capability are clearly prevalent. In the intersection of career goal, division of labour specifically the reproductive and caring role as well as the complexity of emotions a migrant needs to advance strategically through utilizing the material and immaterial resources they have.

Chapter 5 Doing family as mobile academic

5.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters I have presented the findings on the primary motivations of my research participants for their mobility aspiration and how they have negotiated their agency in turning their mobility aspiration into capability. It is obvious that their embeddedness in family life does not end with their flight to destination countries rather various transnational familial networks develop with it which impact both the trans-migrants and those family members leaving behind or accompanied with them. As stated by Bryceson, “transnational families are not new but they are definitely more numerous now than ever before. They are an evolving institutional form of human interdependence, which serve material and emotional needs, in the twenty-first century’s globalising world where the breadth and depth of family relations will fluctuate according to the specific needs, be that economic or emotional”(cited in Christou and Kofman, 2022: 59). In this regard, this chapter will present the key findings on how did the transnationally mobile married academic women form and transform their family relationships and roles in combining their academic goal and familial responsibilities.

5.2 Intimate relationships, emotion and care

In international education migration based on emotive relational concern such as persons with care need requires strategic considerations in mobility decisions and as it requires continuations it is carried out alongside or within a transnational household arrangement (Geddie, 2013). Research findings regarding management of transnational family ties demonstrate a wide range of issues among which the most important concern was the dilemma of maintaining long distance relationships with the family especially husband and children with care needs. Besides a few exception, almost all of the research participants included their family (either husband/children/both) in their migration planning which was relational to the destination country’s immigration policy, their own financial back up, the future maintenance and caring responsibilities of children and their husbands’ condition and willingness to move as a ‘trailing spouse’. The gendered aspect of international mobility attached to the preference of mobile masculinity and immobile femininity that prefers women mostly left behind to take care of the children is reflected in the anguish expressed by Sultana. Just after her arrival in USA from Bangladesh she was scolded by her husband blaming her as a hypocrite, inhumane, careerist woman who was only concerned about her own career and could leave her little daughter for higher studies abroad. She stated that:

“Think about the contributions of the wives of our male colleagues who are taking care of the family in Bangladesh in the absence of their husbands who are studying abroad, do those women get any recognition or it is just seen as their duty? But when the gender role alters, a female wants to go abroad then the whole society goes against her throwing a question mark of how you could do this to your child?” (Interview with Sultana)

However, in the condition of one or more family members’ migration a new situation arises in the family structure. In 'transnational family' arrangement though living apart members remain connected and contribute to a sense of wellbeing and unity to maintain the 'family hood' even across the borders (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). In the reality of spatial and temporal distance, in order to overcome and bridging the gap especially with

their children the mobile women go for alternative transnational practices for child-rearing through the use of mobile phones and the Internet which allow them to participate in the everyday life of their children across distances of hundreds of kilometres (Tuider, 2015). The participants' narratives show how their separation with left behind husband and children cost emotional strain and how they tried to mitigate the gaps with technological assistance. Simrin expressed her opinion about the adversity of leaving behind husband and maintaining a long distance relationship as it requires extra effort to keep it workable. She also mentioned how she and her son suffered due to their physical distance. She stated that

“Throughout my stay I had to convince him (son) through regular calls, making promises to buy his desired gifts and spending more time with him after my return and assuring that during my PhD I must take him abroad”. (Interview with Simrin)

When mothers are expected to take care of the children in their absence this responsibility also mostly goes to the female family members back home. All of the participants who left their children said that though their husbands played their emotional roles as father, caring roles were mainly played by the female family members back home. Nahar acknowledging that her husband took care of her son during her higher study abroad with the help of her mother and in-laws, but she thinks it happened in an unavoidable circumstances:

“When I moved for my masters I left my son with my husband with a future plan to take him with me after three months. After my departure I came to know that it will not be possible to bring my son due to restricted immigration policy. I think if we clearly knew the immigration policy before my departure the situation could be different”. (Interview with Nahar)

Simrin also expressed though her husband was in Bangladesh, it was her mother and mother-in-law who mainly take care of her son. These words reflect how the caring responsibility is recognized as women's duty. Pervin's experience also reflects the evidence of the similar practice as she said “I kept my son in my in-laws house and my mother-in-law, sister-in-law and sometimes my sister stayed there to take care of my son”. (Interview with Pervin)

5.3 'Trailing spouse' and complexity of gender norms

The conventional representation of women as tied mover and secondary migrant is challenged in the mobility trajectory of the research participants where the female are the primary mover with financial resource in the form of scholarship or employment opportunity in the Teaching/Research Assistant position in the host country. The mobility decision of husbands those moved as trailing spouse was relational to the destination country's immigration policy as well as their current employment status back home. It was found that those with less stable employment or unemployed back home were more prone to move with wife where a major motivation was to gain value for him and also for the family from his 'trailing spouse's experiences in the Global North country. The restrictive immigration policy of the host country especially in USA impose conditions on the accompanied migrant on the provision of work opportunity which ranges from unemployment, deskilling, undervaluation of previous degrees and in this situation they start further study or training to gain credentials to compete in the host country's job market.

Narratives show despite the fear of future challenges husbands' mobility as part of a very well planned mobility decision calculating the pros and cons of moving together or not reflect the changing trend of depicting women as 'tied mover' who leave their career or study back home to accompany their partners. Nafisa said how she and her husband

planned together moving to the UK (her husband joined as a self-funded student to be with her wife during her PhD journey:

“My husband never had a plan for higher studies abroad; he actually moved for me, there is no other reason. If he returns and join his banking job again it would not add any value in his current position except he switches to any private bank”. (Interview with Nafisa)

This collaborative mobility was not all about the story as they also mentioned the persistent tension embedded in this practice of male as trailing spouse. The narratives demonstrate how the resulting downward social mobility/deskilling/unemployment contradicts the established male breadwinner role. Rebeka said how her husband’s presence, who left her profession as a doctor in Bangladesh, made her mobility journey easier in some point but she cannot neglect the apparent social gaze especially from close relatives as they could not accept her husband’s decision of leaving his job to accompany his wife abroad and doing nothing productive there. Triggered by this he has again started studying at the USA to gain job credentials:

“I always had a plan to move for higher studies abroad but my husband never had such plan and actually he came for me. He was a doctor in Bangladesh but he left his career there. When I will return after five years I can join my job but it is not be easy for him to start over again”. (Interview with Rebeka)

Pervin also expressed how just in two months of her family’s move to the USA, she and her husband started to be worried about his husband’s future in USA as he is not allowed to work there:

“Though we did not face much difficulty regarding financial issue there is tension. As a man he still could not accept that he is not doing anything here unless taking care of our son. As due to immigration policy he is not allowed to work, we still have to figure out what he will do in future”. (Interview with Pervin)

5.4 Balancing academic and family role

In everyday interactions “doing gender” promotes that gender is suggested, pre-structured and controlled by institutional framework rather than being an arbitrary, individual activity. (Goffman1977). Underling the importance that for an immigrant woman maintaining a proper balance between family and work depends on their negotiations on household, care and reproductive labour (Dodson 2021), in this part I will focus on how they have paired their role as a mobile academic, wife and mother.

All of the interviewees living with their accompanying family expressed how they had to maintain a proper balance between their study and research work as well as their gender based household responsibility. Pervin expressed how she suffered mentally when leaving her only son back home. On the contrary after two months with the arrival of her husband and son in the USA her emotional stress was lessened but it extended her duties as she had to do cooking, caring responsibility of her son and simultaneously doing her own study, research and work as a RA in her host university. Rebeka detailed how she had to spend a significant portion of her time in cooking for her four member family without almost any help from her husband as he is currently preparing himself for a certification exam in USA to get job there. She justified her double work in maintaining the family, her own study and the teaching work as her husband moved here leaving his job back home to accompany Rebeka. Moreover if her husband gets a job in USA it will positively impact their living. This unequal distribution of household labour is also evidenced in Tabassum’s story. Her husband who decided to stay in the UK after getting a government job there has to spend eight hours daily in his office. Tabassum also spends long hours in class and research lab

even sometimes till 8-10 pm but whenever she returns home cannot ignore her cooking and other household duties. As she said:

“My husband knows nothing about cooking except making tea. I do cutting, cooking and cleaning at home, sometimes my husband helps if he has day off. Sometimes I have so many things coming together at university but I find no way to escape my cooking responsibilities and that time I feel that I just hate cooking”. (Interview with Tabassum)

During the conversations they were giving the impression that men do not cook because they do not know how to cook and they are also not very interested to learn cooking. Women were showing their conformity through taking this double responsibility as a strategic step to fulfil their mobility goal as well as to support their husbands as they have moved with their wife. They also gave the impression that due to downward social mobility they cannot afford a helping hand in opposition to Bangladesh where they could employ maid to do household work to lessen their work load.

On the contrary Simrin expressed her realization about the difference of her daily output in academic work during her solo stay abroad as she did not have any direct pressure of household and caring responsibilities. She could simultaneously do her study, research and publication work here.

Another important concern is their reproductive role which is very connected with age and found to have a strong impact on the mobility trajectory. As all of the participants were in their reproductive age, those who still have no children expressed their constant dilemma and mental stress about having their first baby concerning their biological clock. Moreover another concern was how they will simultaneously manage their pregnancy and motherhood with their study and work responsibilities. As stated by Tabassum,

“I am truly upset. I am married for eight years but I delayed my decision for having my first child just thinking about my higher studies abroad. Both my mother and mother-in-law were continuously imposing their will to have a child. My sister-in-law also directly indirectly asked why I am not taking a baby”. (Interview with Tabassum)

Nafisa was also very anxious about her age and having a baby. However she also mentioned how as couple they decided to wait until her PhD and even her husband comforts her saying that if she cannot give birth in future they can adopt a child or even go for IVF.

5.5 Distress, self-determination and satisfaction

The mobility trajectory of female academic women in the family context and its subsequent impact as a gender terrain is very complex. On the one hand the mental stress of separation from children or family is very obvious as it creates feelings of guilt on the other hand achieving own dream as well as creating a future for children and family is also satisfying. Rebeka's words reflect her determination and satisfaction to achieve her mobility aspiration:

“I went through the continuous dilemma in my mobility decision regarding family issues but I never stopped my effort. I chose to prove that I have that calibre to achieve the opportunity of studying abroad, after achieving that I will decide whether I will go or not”. (Interview with Rebeka)

Afrin expressed her distress about a bitter experience of her mobility. She moved for her higher studies abroad leaving her one year old daughter. After three months her husband moved to her with their daughter and at the first day of their meeting Afrin discovered that her daughter is not recognizing her own mother. However she also expressed her feelings of happiness as she could ensure a satisfactory living environment for her children

in Europe. Sultana was saying about her own struggle and success as she could save money and invest it to bring her only daughter in the USA.

5.5 Chapter summary

The above findings show that in the academic mobility trajectory of women the life-course processes of individuals and their linked family members employ a huge impact in a gendered way where women have to play double role if necessary.

Chapter 6 Analysis and Discussion of the Research Findings

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I have presented an analytical discussion of my research findings in relation to the theoretical framework, conceptual tools and analytical lens. I have connected each of my research sub-questions to the findings in understanding migrants' agency and the subjective experiences of academic Bangladeshi married women's negotiation of agency in combining their academic mobility and family. The basis of my analysis is the findings presented in the previous chapters which have been drawn from the participants' narrative accounts, supported by the relevant quotations from our conversations.

6.2 Mobility aspirations as expression of life preferences

According to de Haas (2021) the notion of migratory agency has been expanded through the concept of migration aspirations as it reflects both people's general life preferences and their subjective perceptions about opportunities and life elsewhere. These aspirations can be affected by their culture, identification, personal disposition, education, information and images to which people are exposed. Suggesting a distinction between the instrumental and intrinsic dimensions of migration aspirations he has identified labour or student migration as example of instrumental aspiration. He argued that while the instrumental aspiration reflects the 'functional' or 'utilitarian' aspects of migrants, the intrinsic aspirations are more related to their subjective preferences and both can simultaneously occur and reinforce each-other.

The findings of the first research sub-question on the motivational aspects for transnational mobility among academic Bangladeshi married women demonstrate a variety of motivational factors which reflect a combination of both instrumental and intrinsic aspirations as suggested by de Haas (2021).

The instrumental aspirations were ranged from the desire of obtaining foreign credentials through better and diversified education from globally high ranked universities, achieving higher income through work opportunity in the destination country and also through obtaining promotion after return in Bangladesh context. Considering the background of the research participants who are currently engaged in higher education and research in different international education and research institutions of the Global North as transnationally mobile academic their aspirations according to de Hass' (2021) classification, can be identified as instrumental aspiration which reflects the 'functional' or 'utilitarian' aspects of migration.

These instrumental aspirations can be conceptualized after Bourdieu's notion of different forms of capital in the form of financial, cultural, social and symbolic capital (1986). Nonetheless his research presented in "Homo Academicus" (1984) demonstrates how in the field of academia universities and also individuals belonging to this field compete to achieve different indicators of holding position and powers. Individuals' motivation for competition to prove their academic success is structured by the rules of the structure of academia and the possibility to win in the competition depends on the amount of their accumulated capital through research, further degree, funding and prestige.

The findings show that, the research participants' belongingness to the field of academia in Bangladesh where for recruitment and promotion foreign credentials are valued inspired them to aspire for transnational academic mobility. Narratives confirmed that

achievements of foreign credentials will bring them the institutionalized form of cultural capital (ideas, knowledge and skills) which will pave their way to gain financial capital through scholarship or employment opportunity abroad and getting promotion back home.

The intrinsic aspirations behind their mobility motivations ranged from establishing networks in the transnational academic field through collaboration with global professors and researchers, working in the rich research lab, creating prospective for further foreign study endeavor throughout the periods spent abroad. All these aspirations can be categorized as transnational social capital as defined by Bourdieu 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu 1986/2004: 21). Moreover this social and cultural capital can also bring symbolic capital such as achieving higher status and power in the field of academia having foreign credentials, reputation and social prestige through being global, receiver of scholarship, and prospect of achieving powerful position in the academia and also in the broader social field. Bourdieu (1986) claims that those who already have access to different forms of capital they tend to maintain and improve their position in the class structure through more capital accumulation which is evident among the women academics who already belonging to middle to upper class status in Bangladesh and tending to achieve more capital from the Global North. Though the application, enrolment and the study process abroad requires huge labour, their indifference to do PhD in Bangladesh reflects how a foreign PhD degree is valued in academia.

Though the instrumental aspirations are in some way reproducing the structure of the university field, the future prospect of their increasing financial capital and capacity to offer better opportunity or future for family (especially for children) may also upgrade their position in the family field. Moreover the intrinsic aspirations can be termed as more agentic specially the motivations of breaking gender stereotype through proving one's potential as a woman, deciding to take a break from monotony of work and exploring new societies, and as a means of separateness or survival from abusive relationship and familial or social control. These aspirations are reflection of their general life preferences as well as their subjective perceptions about opportunities and life elsewhere (de Haas, 2021). These aspirations are motivated by their agentic ability to overcome structural constraints resulted from their belonging as female to gender habitus which have negative impact on them not only in the 'family' field but also in the field of academia as some narratives reflect their anguish against the prevailing gender stereotyping in their workplace. As according to McNay (1999) contemporary women move across fields and Bourdieu's (2000) acknowledgement that agent can break the knowledge and discourse of their habitus suggests that as the women academic belong to both the family and academia; the intersection of their gender and class identity have shaped their mobility aspirations considering the advantageous and disadvantageous outcome and possibilities of the past, present and future.

6.3 Capability as freedom

The availability of potential freedom to be mobile whether it is used or not is a valuable aspect of people's sense of enhancement of wellbeing and so lack of this access can be considered as a form of wellbeing-decreasing deprivation. de Haas has defined "human mobility as people's capability (freedom) to choose where to live – including the option to stay – instead of a more or less automated, passive and 'cause-and-effect' response to a set of static push and pull factors" (de Haas, 2021:2). The socio-economic background of the research participants and their instrumental and intrinsic aspiration for mobility demonstrate that they are not only fulfilling personal or family goals rather it also reflects their feelings of having the options and freedom to move wherever they want to use it or not. In

this respect the research findings on the second sub-question on how they have turned their mobility aspiration into reality shows that their capability is relational with their 'translocational positionality'. As academic married women the participants of this research are positioned both to the 'field of academia' and 'family field' and their dispositions are characterized by two different habitus which is described as a 'socialized subjectivity' which enables agents integrating past experiences and endowed with a set of dispositions, perceptions and appreciations enter into the game and play it with more or less success for achievement of infinitely diversified tasks (Bourdieu, 2000, Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Bourdieu's (2001) identification of 'gender' as a particular kind of habitus and explanation of the division of gender as a social construction present in the objectified state such as in the domain of home and in the embodied state in the habitus of the agents, "functioning as systems of schemes of perception, thought and action" (Bourdieu 2001:8). Moreover the large part of domestic work, maintaining the solidarity and integration of the family and kin relations are all assigned to women (Bourdieu 2001:97) which is evident in the narratives of the participants. Narratives show they had to follow the normative expectations of the society to get married in a certain age and giving birth their first child at least before thirty, playing the caring responsibilities of the children and in general the whole maintenance of the family to perpetuate the production and reproduction of the social capital in the family domain. The findings show how their dispositions of gender habitus in the field of family and the socially constructed division of labour conditioned by their gender, marital status and age structured and constrained their mobility capability or freedom to move.

However Bourdieu (2001) also acknowledged the transformation in the condition of women specially those who are positioned as the most advantageous social categories and also concerned about the danger of the overestimation of one social factor such as gender and suggested to examine it with other factors such as class and age (cited in Moi 1991). So considering the "translocational positionality" of the research participants, their narratives reflect how their own class position as well as belonging to family (both parental and in-laws) with advantageous socio-economic condition as well as their partner's educational and professional background already provided them economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capitals as well as necessary support and inspiration which worked as a platform for their mobility capability.

Bourdieu (2000) exhibits that action can be determined by the habitus but it reveals and fulfils only in appropriate circumstances and in the relationship with a situation" (Bourdieu 2000: 148-149). De Haas (2021) suggests that migratory agency should be understood through people's perception and notion of 'good life' and opportunities 'here' and 'there' and as a function of aspirations and capabilities to migrate within given sets of perceived opportunity structures. Bourdieu (2000:216) has argued that though all the agents have same chances of material and symbolic profit, agents have powers which are very unequal and so the subjective hope of profit tends to be adjusted to the objective probability of profit which governs the propensity to invest (money, work, time, emotion, etc.) in the various fields.

The participants move across fields (as suggested by McNay, 1999) and multiple positionalities determine their hindrances and facilitating factors. Bourdieu (2000) states that in the field as a site of struggle an agent can seek way to achieve dominance which is dependent on the amount of social capital they can acquire. The participants of this research belong to both university and family as different field of competition which has their different rules of game. The research participants positioned as the most advantageous social categories for being highly educated, professional, having economic independence due to their engagement in waged work and assurance of partial/full funded scholarship from their host institutions or origin country research fellowships provided them access to symbolic,

social and cultural capital. After getting admission and financial assurance they could persuade their partner and other family members about their endeavor for study abroad. They also hold the prospective of providing a 'good life' for her accompanying children and husband on the chances of accumulating cultural and economic capital through study or work opportunity there. These enabled them to exercise their freedom and agency in chasing personal goal of higher education abroad. All the research participants grew up in the family where they received advantage and inspiration for higher study. The most obvious social stigma they suffered was the normative expectations of gender roles due to marital and reproductive age which posed vital constrain during their mobility process. Findings show how they had to conform to social norms in certain context such as getting married and giving child birth according to the prescribed social order to exercise agency to further their mobility process. This resembles Mahmood's notion of agency 'the capacity for agency is entailed not only in acts that resist norms but also in the multiple ways in which one inhabits norms' (Mahmood, 2019: 42).

6.4 Maximisation of effort in combining academic and family role

The findings of third research question on combining family and academic life as mobile academic reflects how participants negotiated their transnational agency in the context of their familial responsibilities. These show the fluctuation of the breadth and depth of family relationships during specific needs and in this case especially the emotional needs. Participants' experiences regarding spousal movement, adjustment roles and caring support provided by family members (spouse and other family members) for left behind children reflects Parella's (2013) view that "migratory flows generate micro-social processes that require families to make adjustments over time and across space within the constraints exercised by broader, complex and interconnected economic, political and social processes" (p-312). But it is also important to contemplate the unequal power relations within it (gender relations, intergenerational relations), as well as to explore how specific identity is constructed based on the allocation of differentiated roles as well as the reproduction of its members' welfare. There is also an important concern about feminization of care work as in most cases the left behind children were taken cared by female family members which demonstrate the unequal distribution of emotional resources as mentioned by Hochschild (2000). The sharing of emotional burden carried out by the husband regarding partnership and parenting cannot be ignored at all. The women with accompanied husbands demonstrates the changing stereotype of 'only female as tied mover' and male as the breadwinner or the bearer of family wellbeing in the migration context. It resonates with Bourdieu's (2000) acknowledgment that in certain situations habitus can be changed depending on the flexibility and rigidity of the agent. Moreover it was also obvious in the narrative accounts that those accompanied by their husband and/or children, change of place or change of breadwinner role could not change the gendered role of household domestic division of labour in many respects, such as cooking or maintaining the household. It was also explicit in the narrative accounts that women were feeling guilt regarding their tied partner's job insecurity resulted from their decision to be with their wife. These represent how women are also dominated by and reproduce their gender habitus in the family field while achieving their academic goal. Moreover the narratives that show though men are sharing emotional burden but not the caring or cooking roles of their household resonates MacNay's (1999) proposal of the division of the private into the intimate and the domestic to understand the contemporary complexity of gender relations.

People's capability (freedom) as an important aspect of migratory agency to choose where to live, including the option to stay (de Haas, 2021) resonates with how the immigration law of the host country put restrictions on the mobility of the family members, restrict

work opportunity of the 'trailing-spouse' and thus constraint the mobility decision of the female academic and continuation of family relations. Moreover, husband without any or less prospective job and capital were more inclined to move which positively impacted decision making process in the context of the possibility of accumulating it through wife having more capital or by him after moving to the global north.

Moreover the condition of returning to the country of origin after completion of their degree as part of employment and study leave rules and also the host country's restrictive policy for family reunion or life opportunity for the accompanying family policy restrict their agency in diversified way and the narratives show how they dealt all these pros and cons during individual and family mobility as part of their mobility trajectory.

6.5 Chapter summary

From the above analytical insights it can be summarized according to McNay's (1999) revision of Bourdieu that the research participants' embeddedness and move across both the field of academia and family in the interplay of gender, class and age reflect the complexity of the terrain of agency negotiation as the intersection of their dispositions of two different fields influence and reinforce each-other. As active agent of mobility they both unsettle and are entangled in the gender power structure where challenging and conforming both occurs simultaneously.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This research was aimed to explore the negotiation of agency of academic Bangladeshi married women in combining their transnational mobility and familial responsibilities. Based on the ‘aspirations-capabilities’ framework on studying migratory agency, this research has provided insights on an integrative understanding of agency through the lens of ‘translocational positionality’ and a feminist analysis of Bourdieu’s ‘theory of practice’. Research findings and my analysis presented in the previous chapters have demonstrated that agency for mobility is not only tied to individual rather it is ‘relational’ and ‘contextual to their ‘translocational positionality’ constituted by the interplay of gender, class and age as well as their move across the field of family and academia.

The research data collected through qualitative interviews with female mobile academics served as windows to explore their negotiation of agency where? The findings of the first research question consist of a range of instrumental and intrinsic aspirations. Among these the instrumental aspirations specifically the desire for better and diversified education from globally high ranked universities, achieving higher income through work opportunity in the host country and also through obtaining promotion after return in Bangladesh context can be identified as the desire for accumulation of economic and cultural capital. The intrinsic aspirations namely establishing networks in the transnational academic field through collaboration with global professors and researchers, rich research lab, creating prospective for further foreign study endeavour throughout the periods spent abroad can be categorized as transnational social capital. All of these capitals can also bring symbolic capital such as achieving higher status and power. Other forms of intrinsic aspirations such as breaking gender stereotype (the dominant male breadwinner model or prevailing glass ceiling at work) through providing better opportunity/future for family (especially children) and proving one’s potential as woman in the work place, as a means of separateness or survival from abusive relationship/familial/social control indicate their possibility of overcoming the *doxa* of their gender habitus. Their intention to take a break from monotony of professional life and exploring new societies are reflection of their general life preferences as well as their subjective perceptions about opportunities and life elsewhere. Moreover these aspirations are motivated by their agentic ability to overcome structural constraints resulted from their positionality as female in the gender habitus as well as in the field of ‘family’ and ‘academia’ as well.

The findings on capability indicate a variety of constraining and enabling factors relational and contextual to their positionality in different social locations impacting their mobility experiences and processes. Constraining factors are predominantly determined by their socially constructed gender roles associated with their age. Narratives indicate how in contrast to their aspiration of transnational mobility for getting better position and breaking the ‘glass ceiling’ in the field of academia, in the family or domestic sphere they are socialized to partake the reproductive role in the family sphere. While the normative gendered expectation of marital and reproductive age posed vital constrain during their mobility process their conformation to gender norms through getting married and giving childbirth even if taking the double burden of maintaining both productive and reproductive role to achieve their mobility goal reflect Mahmood’s (2019) notion of agency as not only resisting norms rather inhabiting it. This is the result of the masking of socially produced power relations between the sexes which Bourdieu (2001) has termed as ‘doxa’ (an area of beyond questioning) and legitimization of male power to women through ‘symbolic violence’. The gendered division of labour also encompasses an unequal distribution of emotional resources and feminization of labour as the female members of the family become responsi-

ble for the caring needs of the left-behind children. Moreover the sharing of emotional burden by the husband in partnering and parenting cannot be ignored which show the rationality of a division between domestic and intimate relations suggested by McNay (1999).

Enabling aspects of mobility emerged from their own financial capital as holder of job in Bangladesh, assurance of study/research grant from the host country as well the parents/in-laws/partner's financial solvency. Moreover the prospective of living opportunity for their husband/children as tied mover in the Global North country provided them bargaining power in making mobility decision. Yet, the circumstances of partners as 'tied-mover' leaving their occupation back home and staying as jobless also create tension in the established gender order. And the women academics expression of unhappiness and guilt about this reveals how the gender norms are embodied and it can be reproduced by both men and women.

The above mentioned illustration portrays the complexity of the negotiation of agency in the arena of gendered mobility. It is never a straight forward generalization about women as passive victim of gender habitus or complete challengers of unequal gender power structure to exercise their agency. Rather negotiation of agency took place in relation to their positionality emanated from the juxtaposition of their habitus due to their embeddedness and move across the field of academia and the family as well as their contextual and situational relations and practices in the interplay of gender, class and age dynamics. Evaluating the agency from an inter-field rather than intra-field context can be more productive to explore changing dimensions. The results of the research show women academics have negotiated their agency for action through intermingling the habitus and through partially refuting and partially reproducing the dispositions of both field. To exercise their agency in combining mobility aspiration and family they have utilized the advantages of their positionalities and to overcome the constraints if necessary they even conformed to the established norms to initiate, refine and transform the available opportunity structures. I would argue that they could exercise their migratory agency in various ways as their narratives demonstrate they were not completely bound for mobility but through being mobile they could achieve their life preferences from both individual and family context combining their instrumental and intrinsic aspirations. Through suspending many aspects of their gender habitus they paved way to bring some structural changes and in this process a different kind of habitus may emerge in the intersection of two social fields that can motivate both continuity and change.

7.1 Practical, theoretical and policy implications

When I encountered my research participants I deeply realized how contemporary the topic was as during my communication and interview almost all of my research participants were saying that this kind of research is very significant. They seemed very interested and attached to this research even one of them was saying that she was feeling both empowered and relieved through participating in this research and sharing her own story. The research data presented here also says the significance of working in this area. Moreover, the result of this research can bring to light some important issues regarding still persistent gender inequality and on the contrary the positive aspects presented in this research can encourage other women. The aspect of male as tied mover or women leaving children back home in the care of husband or other family members can break the long standing gender stereotype of women as tied mover as well as the absolute caring role of mother.

National and international policy changes can positively impact the gender and migration terrain. Development of local infrastructural and research facility in Bangladesh can undermine the preference of the Global North as mobility destination due to global geopolitics of knowledge and also encourage academics doing their higher studies and research

at home country. Moreover changes in the restrictive visa and immigration policy can ease the persistent tension in the case of separation with family due to migration as well as risk of deskilling or unemployment of the 'tied-mover'.

As argued by de Haas (2021) migration theories should conceptualize how macro-structural change shapes people's migratory aspirations-capabilities and should perceive human mobility as an intrinsic part of broader processes of social change. I would argue that the everyday dynamics at the micro and meso level such as individual and family and the relational, contextual and temporal practices is important aspect for understanding the migratory agency. Moreover the results of this research can enable us to move beyond the debate over whether migration or sedentary behaviour is the norm as well as the simplistic dichotomy between forced and voluntary migration. The mobility experiences and processes of academic Bangladeshi married women as a specific kind of migrants who belong both to student and skilled migrant category can be a resource in studying gender and migration.

7.2 My reflection and intake from the research

Throughout navigating my own positionality and mobility freedom as a married women academic from Bangladesh I was profoundly encouraged to do this research. Due to the similarity of our positionality during interview I also exchanged my own mobility experiences with them and discovered a wide range of similarity and also a number of divergences. My mobility aspirations were also motivated by a number of instrumental and intrinsic aspirations and negotiation of agency was relational to different contexts. While the gender defined reproductive role and age seemed to me as constrain like them but I experienced my gender role differently in the sphere of household management and division of labour which depicts the situational and contextual reality of subjective experiences.

7.3 Future research

Acknowledging that gender should not be equated with only women and men should be studied with equal importance, I have selected female academic as my research participants as a special group of migrants who belong to both the category of skilled and education migrants. Further study on unmarried women, unmarried men, married men with or without children and also considering the different age group can be resourceful in the gender and migration study. The incorporation of face to face interview, participant observation and focused group discussion in future research can enrich the research data. The trend in South-South education migration is also an important area to explore through future research

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Profile of the research participants

| Pseudo Name | Age-Group | Professional Identity in Bangladesh | Country of Migration | Current Study Level | Number of Children | Living with Family (Husband/children) |
|-----------------------|------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Afrin | 40-50 | Faculty in University | Netherlands | Doctoral | 2 | Only children |
| Nahar | 30-40 | Faculty in University | Australia | Doctoral | 2 | Both husband and children |
| Nafisa | 30-40 | Faculty in University | United Kingdom | Doctoral | 0 | Husband |
| Pervin | 30-40 | Faculty in University | USA | MSc | 1 | Husband and Children |
| Rebeka | 40-50 | Faculty in University | USA | Doctoral | 2 | Husband and Children |
| Simrin | 30-40 | Faculty in University | Netherlands | Msc | 1 | - |
| Sultana (actual name) | 30-40 | Faculty in University | USA | Doctoral | 1 | Children & Divorced after migration |
| Tabas-sum | 30-40 | Faculty in University | United Kingdom | Doctoral | 0 | Husband |

Appendix 2 Interview guideline

| How do academic Bangladeshi married women negotiate their agency in combining their transnational academic mobility and family? | |
|---|---|
| Research sub-question | Related questions |
| 1. What are the motivational aspects for transnational academic mobility? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you please share your professional and academic background and migration history? • What was your primary motivation for academic mobility? • Was it completely your personal motivation or there was any family motivations or interest? |
| How did they turn their mobility aspiration into capability? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you experience full freedom in making your mobility decision? If not-What constrained you? • How did you overcome those constraints? • Was there any factor that facilitates your mobility process? • How did your different family members react to your mobility decision and how did you respond to that? • Can you please share the distribution of household work in your home in Bangladesh? • How did the immigration policy of your destination country impact you mobility experiences? |
| 2. How do they combine their transnational mobility and family? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did any of your family members accompany you and if yes, can you share the process? If not what was the reasons behind this? • How do you maintain your transnational family network and responsibility? • Have you experienced any change of gender relations/role after your emigration? If yes what was that? • Did you experience any emotional stress regarding familial expectations and maintaining intimate relationships? • Can you mention about any specific strategies that you have followed to |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>achieve your mobility goal?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How would you explain your overall experiences of mobility trajectory? |
|--|---|