Chapter 3

Gendered Labour

As we saw in Chap. 1, the gendered transfer of labour globally and within Europe has been the focus of attention and the core of the discourse concerning the feminization of migration. Whilst gendered labour migrations are not new, their composition, extent, and how we analyse them, theoretically and methodologically, have evolved. As data show, migrants and especially females, are heavily concentrated within certain sectors producing not just a migrant division of labour (Wills et al., 2010) but a gendered migrant division of labour. Some sectors such as household services (domestic work and care) or social reproductive labour are not only predominantly female but, especially in Southern Europe, overwhelmingly filled by migrant women. Although this type of work has attracted much attention in studies of female labour migration, other sectors, both lesser skilled and more skilled, have also relied heavily on female migrant labour but have been much less studied. Mirjana Morokvasic (2011) questioned the basis of our preoccupation about migrant women as subaltern and victims, exclusively filling low skilled sectors. Thus domestic and care workers have become the emblematic figures of globalised migrations in stark contrast to the easily mobile male IT worker (Kofman, 2013). This is not to deny that domestic and care work globally employ more migrant women than any other sector, and that demand has not grown in response to the inadequacies of public provision across different welfare regimes, leading to the search for cheap solutions to fulfil reproductive needs by using migrant workers, including men. However it does raise issues around our lack of attention to other low skilled sectors such as hospitality and contract and commercial cleaning in hospitals, offices and public spaces, which also employ large numbers of migrants. Skilled labour (IOM/OECD, 2016), especially in welfare sectors, such as education, health and social work is also sourced globally to make good shortfalls in professional reproductive labour (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015). Thus at all skill levels migrant women are employed disproportionately in diverse sectors of social reproduction in sustaining the wellbeing of the household and of society more generally.

Theoretically the focus on domestic and care work and the privileging of the household as the key site of labour (Kofman, 2013) adopted the framework of an

international transfer of gendered labour based on the concept of global chains of care (Hochschild, 2000). Despite its critiques and extension to nursing as a skilled sector (Yeates, 2009), we argue that we should consider a broader analysis of gendered division of migrant labour drawn from a range of sources, European and beyond. We also need to place the demand for migrant labour in a broader context of the transformation of labour markets, deregulation and the intensification and embedding of neo-liberal capitalism, so as to capture the different sectors, skills and sites in which migrants work (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015; McDowell, 2016; Williams, 2018).

Methodologically studies have often focused on a particular sector without tracing the trajectory of individuals into and out of a sector over time (Ryan et al., 2016). Yet the aspirations, personal projects and changing life course shape the attitudes of migrants towards their working lives and strategies they use to deal with their situation. Many remain trapped in precarious, low paid and devalued work but even within low skilled work, there may be opportunities to move out of the most exploitative strata, for example through becoming regularized and accessing publicly provided services, as Moré (2019) shows for domestic workers in Barcelona. Those who have a legal status even where there is little exit from the domestic and care sector may find satisfaction in their employment if earning decent wages, highlighted in a quantitative study in Italy (Barbiano di Belgiojoso & Ortensi, 2019).

Others may take entry level jobs, such as domestic work for women and construction for men, as they learn the language and how to navigate the labour market before managing to move into better paid and higher level employment, as has been the case of a number of Eastern Europeans in the UK (Parutis, 2014). The ability to resist, find alternative employment and contest individually or collectively (see Chap. 6) their working conditions and discriminatory practices they face will depend on class, gender, race and age as well as on legal and employment status. Although migrants may face exploitation, deskilling and over qualification in their workplaces, emancipation, empowerment and the fulfilment of personal projects may also be the outcome of migratory trajectories.

In this chapter, we firstly trace the development of analyses of gendered migrant labour which tended to focus on female labour migration with less attention paid to male migrants or to predominantly male sectors. Secondly, we outline how the growth of domestic and care work led to theorisations of the global transfer of labour and the focus on this sector in relation to women's increasing participation in the labour market, neo-liberalisation of welfare provision and the commodification of this kind of work. Thirdly, we extend the study of gendered labour to encompass other less skilled and skilled sectors and highlight the stratification between and within sectors. Finally we examine overqualification and deskilling faced by many migrants and suggest this should be understood within a transnational and spatio-temporal perspective.

3.1 Early Studies of Female Labour Migrations

The analysis of women and migration in the 1980s (Morokvasic, 1984; Phizacklea, 1983) sought to make migrant women visible in the labour force and examine how they were incorporated into labour markets. The dominant narrative was of a post war migration comprising males, usually single, with women entering as dependants after the stoppage of labour migration in the early 1970s. This view, however, was contested by a number of scholars. Even though men were the majority, women contributed significantly to labour recruitment as domestic workers, in manufacturing for their nimble fingers, and in the health sector as nurses (Kofman et al., 2000). The flows included women from the Caribbean (Byron & Condon, 2008), Eastern Europe (McDowell, 2005, 2009), Southern Europe (Oso, 2005) and from Turkey (Erdem & Mattes, 2003). From the 1980s female migrants clearly dominated flows in Southern Europe (Campani, 1993) as the need for domestic labour, formerly supplied by internal migration (Escriva, 1997), emerged to fill gaps in provision. By the 1990s, Eastern Europeans could move within Europe without visas and began to contribute to the supply of labour. Female migrants from Poland to Germany, for example, adopted pendular mobility or 'settling in mobility', often moving for short periods between neighbouring countries to work in rotation as cleaners, babysitters and care workers or traders (Morokvasic, 2004). As interest turned to international labour migration to Europe and North America, the earlier concern with internal migration in the Global South (Bunster & Chaney, 1985; Chant, 1992) slipped into the background.

At the beginning of this century two key scholars (Morokvasic, 2007; Phizacklea, 2000) reflected on what had changed in the past two decades of feminist research on migrant women and labour markets, what lessons could be drawn from this body of work, and how it could be situated in relation to broader theoretical developments in migration and economic and political changes in Europe and globally. In reviewing 30 years of studies of women migrant workers, Morokvasic reflected that gender orders and hierarchies have not been overturned. The segregation of women into a number of generally low paid reproductive occupations has reinforced gender hierarchies. For Morokvasic (2007: 92) the reproduction of the gender order in migration reveals contradictory outcomes. She argued that most migrant women look for 'compromises rather than confrontation and rejection of the gender division of labour and values'. Differences in terms of class, ethnicity, age and occupation are likely to shape such outcomes. In a recent study of Ukrainian care givers of elderly persons in Italy, Tyldum (2015) concludes that exploitation and empowerment may coexist. Though the conditions of work may be exploitative in Italy, it is often better than the situation in the Ukraine where they are often performing similar care work unpaid and dealing with problematic marital relationships with limited access to divorce.

Similarly, looking back at several decades of studies of female migrant workers, Phizacklea (2000) critiqued the earlier structural neo-Marxist political economy analyses treating migrant women as cogs in the capitalist world order. She advocated endowing migrants with more agency through a structure-agency approach (Goss &

Lindquist, 1995) and engagement in transnational processes from below as a means of subverting the logic of transnational capital. At the same time, she noted that this may not be equally available to all, as we see in the access to the internet and social media.

The view of the role of migrant women in the labour force since the earlier waves of migration has also changed. In the 1970s domestic work was considered to be pre-modern, evoking labour contracts and relationships of bygone eras (Friese, 1995), and thought likely to die out. What demand existed was being provided by working class women and/or internal migrants, although a few studies highlighted the presence of women from the European periphery in the wealthy areas of cities, as with Spanish maids in Paris (Oso, 2005). Nonetheless, some writers (Gorz, 1988) noted the increase in the servant class in the 1980s in response to the push towards economic rationality and growing inequalities in income between the middle classes and working classes whose work was far less well remunerated.

3.2 Care and Social Reproduction

It was the emergence in the 1990s of domestic and care work as forms of reproductive labour across a range of welfare regimes in the Global North, which generated extensive empirical research and a theorization based on the transfer of labour within a global system. Care can be defined “as the work of looking after the physical, psychological, emotional and developmental needs of one or more other people” (Standing, 2001: 17) which includes a wide range of people requiring care, some of whom are vulnerable (children in care, homeless, frail elderly, mental health) or with a pronounced degree of dependency (young children, those with disabilities). The commodification and marketisation of care, especially after the financial crisis of 2008 and ensuing austerity policies, led to downward pressure on the remuneration of domestic and care workers. The number of migrants has expanded dramatically to meet the inadequacies of welfare provision and ageing populations (Farris, 2015; Lutz, 2008). The female domestic’s work, though increasingly indispensable, is lowly valued, poorly remunerated and minimally recognised in European immigration policies. The skills required for these services are embodied (McDowell, 2015; Wolkowitz, 2006), transferred from practices in the domestic sphere, and thereby depicted as innately female.

Theoretically, the concept of global chains of care (Hochschild, 2000; Parreñas, 2001), denoting the transfer of emotional and physical labour from poorer households in the Global South to those in the Global North, became the dominant lens through which this transfer was construed. In turn, those in poorer countries generated another chain, usually drawing in poorer women or other family members to supply the care deficit, though this aspect only drew attention some time later through an interest in children and elderly left behind (see Chap. 4 on transnational families). The concept caught on rapidly and was quickly applied to the use of migrant labour from beyond Europe and later within Europe from poorer countries in the East and South East as well as on Europe’s borders (Lutz & Pallenga-

Mollenbeck, 2012; Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2013; Vattinen, 2014). Indeed in Europe, we can discern cascading care chains with migration from Eastern and South Eastern Europe to Western and Southern Europe and the replacement of labour by migrant women from beyond the EU, for example, Ukrainians to Poland and the Czech Republic (Sowa-Kofta, 2017).

However, the concept has been subject to a number of criticisms. In its initial version, the global chains of care focused narrowly on transnational mothers as the vehicle for transferring care, thereby ignoring the familial diversity of transnational carers and its heteronormative assumptions (Manalansan, 2006). It has also been critiqued for its narrow focus on a particular form of care, failure to take into account changes in caring relationships and circumstances throughout the life course.

While child care underpinned the global chains of care perspective, care for the elderly has come to play a much bigger part and the elderly person, female or male, may themselves be the direct employer of the worker (Cangiano et al., 2009). So too have elderly family members, often unpaid, formed a care chain quite different to the original version. Transfers of labour also included older women, as in the case of Ukrainian women to Italy (Tyldum, 2015) and migrant men supplying care, especially for the elderly (Gallo & Scrinzi, 2016).

More recently, new perspectives have sought to place recourse to migrant labour in a broader context of the political economy of care and transnational labour operating at different scales (micro, meso and macro) (Williams, 2018) and across different sites of the market, state, NGOs and households in what has been called the care diamond (Razavi, 2007; Kofman & Raghuram, 2015). The crisis and contradictions of care in neo-liberal capitalism, especially after the 2008 financial crisis (Fraser, 2016) and the role of the state through its employment and social policies in shaping household demand for services (Carbonnier & Morel, 2015; Shire, 2015) are also seen as having contributed to marketisation and privatisation of low waged and low skilled labour (Aulenbacher et al., 2018). The discourses behind the expansion of household services in a number of European states (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Sweden) have revolved around providing employment for the low skilled and curbing informal employment, responding in a more cost effective way to social needs through private schemes, promoting female employment and supporting the productive potential of the highly skilled. Whilst care activities especially for the elderly and disabled, have been targeted through the use of vouchers, tax credits and legal employment of 24 hour carers, as in Austria and Germany (Haubner, 2020), eligible household tasks encompass a range of services well beyond care, including cleaning, home maintenance and gardening in other countries (France, Sweden).

This range of activities serves to support the social reproduction of households, especially those of high income households who tend to be the main beneficiaries. By social reproduction we mean the production of people through various kinds of work – mental, manual and emotional – aimed at providing what is necessary to maintain existing life and to reproduce the next generation. It includes:

how food, clothing and shelter are made available for immediate consumption, the ways in which the care and socialization of children are provided, the care of the infirm and the elderly, and the social organization of sexuality. . . And the organization of social reproduction refers to the varying institutions within which this work is performed, the varying

strategies for accomplishing these tasks, and the varying ideologies that both shape and are shaped by them (Laslett & Brenner, 1989).

Social reproduction thus encompasses a range of activities, including but not restricted to care, within and beyond the household. And very importantly it is not limited only to those who are dependent such as children, the frail elderly or the disabled. It also includes tasks often undertaken by migrant men such as household maintenance (Kilkey et al., 2013), gardening (Ramirez, 2011) as well as domestic work and care (Davalos, 2020; Gallo & Scrinzi, 2016).

Given that much of the employment generated by these employment-generation policies has been part-time and of variable hours, low skilled and poorly valued, that is non-standard employment relations, it is not surprising that migrants, and especially recent as opposed to more established ones, have disproportionately filled these sectors. Furthermore, income earned from mini jobs in Germany is capped (Haubner, 2020) whilst in Belgium and France travel time is not included (Morel & Carbonnier, 2015).

The role of migrants in providing household labour differs between countries and regions, types of tasks involved and whether live-in or live-out. It depends on immigration policies, welfare regimes, gender ideologies and cultural attitudes towards provision of care within the household and externally. The countries with the highest reliance on migrant labour for domestic work and care are the Mediterranean ones which are part of familial welfare regimes in which migrant women in particular have replaced the housewife and other family members in household tasks and care of children and the elderly. In Italy, for example, 90% of domestic workers were foreign-born (Rostgaard et al., 2011). In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the employment of migrant labour in the household is well below the European average. The use of migrants in the household also varies between tasks eg. cleaning and care for children and the elderly (Box 3.1).

Box 3.1: Outlines the Hierarchy Between Different Forms of Household Employment in France

Within household employment, there exists a hierarchy. For example, the foreign-born in France comprised 40% of cleaners but only 15% of child and elder carers (Avril & Cartier, 2014). Among domestic workers overall, 60% had no qualifications with 29% of the group being foreign; among home caregivers 36% had no educational qualifications with 8% of this group being foreign-born according to the 2011 French Employment Survey (Devetter & Lefebvre, 2015: 163). Cleaning, whether domestic or contract, is often an entry job, especially for those without knowledge of the language (Abbasian & Hellgren, 2012; McIlwaine, 2020; Parutis, 2014). In the Swedish study (Abbasian & Hellgren, 2012: 171), there were, on the other hand, over 20% female and male migrants with a university degree. Although there may be an overlap between domestic work and care givers, the symbolic significance and social recognition of the two is quite different (Devetter & Lefebvre, 2015: 163).

The extent to which migrants are used in household work also varies between localities and regions. It is likely that migrants contribute to household labour more in large cities. In the UK, while London and the South-East have high percentages of migrants both from the EU and non-EU, in most other regions, the percentage is much lower. In London only 60% of care workers are British compared to the North East, the region with the lowest percentage, with 96% British. Similarly the proportion of minority ethnic groups employed in the care sector is much higher in London where some local authorities have over 80% from minority ethnic groups in care employment (Howard & Kofman, 2020).

3.3 Understudied Sectors and Gendered Migrant Division of Labour

Though domestic and care work have provided a major source of employment globally (ILO, 2018), other forms of labour have also generated employment with non-standard employment relationships, such as part-time, fixed term, zero hours, and precarious work (Vosko, 2010) for migrant workers as states strive to fill low paid and often poorly regulated work. In the EU, both EU migrants from Central and Eastern Europe as well as non-EU from Latin America, Africa and South East Asia provide labour across the different sectors. We should also note that those in the labour force may enter through a variety of routes (van Hooren, 2012), such as family reunification (see Chap. 4), asylum seekers and refugees (see Chap. 5) and students (Maury, 2020). So, while construction is overwhelmingly male dominated, and household services female, in OECD countries the majority of sectors are to varying degrees mixed as Table 3.1 shows.

For EU-27 countries (see Table 3.2), migrant labour is also spread across a number of sectors beyond those employed by households. It is only in Southern Europe, in what has been called the migrant in the family welfare model (Bettio et al., 2006), that migrant women are concentrated in the household as employer

Table 3.1 Gendered division of migrant labour by sector (percentage)

Sector	Male	Female
Agriculture and fishing	71.9	28.1
Manufacturing, mining, energy	67.8	32.7
Construction	93.8	6.2
Wholesale and retail trade	57.8	42.2
Hotels and restaurants	55.4	44.6
Education	37.7	62.3
Health and social work	40.6	59.4
Household services	15.4	84.6
Administration	53.6	43.7
Other services	59.5	40.5

Source: OECD (2017)

Table 3.2 Employment of male and female native- and foreign-born workers, 25–54 years, by occupational category in EU-27 in 2008^a

Sector	Native-born	Foreign-born
<i>Men</i>		
Manufacturing	22	22
Construction	13	19
Wholesale and retail activities	13	12
Accommodation and food	2	8
Transportation and storage	8	8
Administration and support services	3	5
Human health and social work	4	4
Professional, scientific, technical	5	4
Information and communications	4	3
Public administration, defence, security	8	3
<i>Women</i>		
Human health and social work	17	18
Wholesale and retail	15	13
Manufacturing	12	11
Accommodation and food	4	10
Activities household as employers	1	10
Administration and support services	4	8
Education	4	4
Professional, scientific, technical	5	4
Other services	3	4
Public administration, defense	8	4

Source: Eurostat (2011: 46)

^aThe subsequent 2014 ELFS ad hoc module focuses primarily on indicators of labour market integration, such as activity rates, employment status, unemployment and overqualification rather than sectors

sector. Such a concentration is much greater than in any of the male dominated sectors such as construction. In the accommodation and food sector, both foreign-born women and men are disproportionately present. However, the important health and social work sector, covering a variety of skill levels and sites of public and private sector employment, is also one in which there is generally not a large disparity between the presence of native and foreign-born proportion of the working population though they may occupy different strata within an occupation.

The almost exclusive focus on the female domestic/care worker in feminist research of gendered labour markets, though understandable, is problematic. It reinforces stereotypes of migrant women (Catarino & Morokvasic, 2013) and fails to recognise the much broader gendered migrant division of labour extending across a diversity of skill levels and sites (private and public). As we have outlined, the household has captured our attention and become a privileged sector of employment for the less skilled encouraged by state and EU policies. However as both Michael Bittman et al. (1999) and Mignon Duffy (2005) have asked, though in slightly

different terms, why do we not study the outsourcing of labour from the household stemming from changing consumption patterns. Sassen's (1992) dissection of the global city has also drawn attention to this aspect. Precarious employment typifies both the labour insourced (domestic and care work, gardening) into the household as well as that which is outsourced, such as production of ready-made food and its external consumption, which have dramatically altered reproductive labour in the household. This outsourcing has been accentuated in large and global cities, resulting in precarious employment becoming a dominant feature of social relations between employers and workers in the contemporary world (Standing, 2011) and constitutive of a new global disorder (Schierup et al., 2014). Welfare restructuring has also led to costs of social reproduction and transactional costs (making applications, travel to interviews for a series of temporary employment) of entering and continuing in the labour market being increasingly borne by individual and families. Thus the growth of global labour migrations has been accompanied by the intensification of non-standard employment relationships, contracting out of services and deregulation of labour. And as Linda McDowell (2009: 7) has commented there is a "hierarchy of desirability within the category of 'economic migrants'".

Among the less skilled, the gendered division of labour encompasses a wide range of sectors (Amrith & Saharoui, 2019; Dyer et al., 2011). Female-dominated sectors or those with substantial numbers beyond those employed by households, include hospitality (Adib & Guerrier, 2003; Batnitzky & McDowell, 2013; McDowell et al., 2009, 2012), contract cleaning in hospitals (Stourmara, 2020; von Bose, 2019), offices and public spaces and bodywork, such as beauty parlours, hairdressers, manicurists (McDowell, 2009; Wolkowitz, 2006) and sex work, to name a few. What is seen as dirty work is often divided along gender lines such that cleaning and care are undertaken by women while refuse collection and street cleaning are male domains. Work that is physically tainted or physically dirty may be identified with particular class, race and migrancy characteristics where workers' bodies are seen as being suitable for this kind of work (McDowell, 2009; Wolkowitz, 2006) or what has been called 'suitable embodiment' (Simpson & Simpson, 2018). Privatization and worsening and precarious working conditions and social security since the 1990s have made these jobs even more 'suitable' for migrants than ever. For example, in Sweden at the beginning of the century cleaners represented one of the 20 most common occupational groups with 80% of women and 31% of foreign origin, of whom those in hourly and part-time work were more likely to be from non-EU countries. Among migrants there tend to be more men in this sector than among the native population.

Sex work has been commonly associated with trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women (Kempadoo, 2005) without recognising that it may stem from other forms of work or that women, men, transgender people and children can be trafficked into diverse forms of exploitative labour (Howard, 2019). Nonetheless the gendered and sexualised victimisation of migrant women is still a dominant paradigm in the field (Palumbo & Scurba, 2018). Sex work has also generated polarised views. So whilst some have portrayed women as passive victims of trafficking, a number of authors have begun to challenge this particular framing which presents

women in a way, which negates their agency and decision-making capacity when opting for sex work (Agustin, 2005). ‘Sexual humanitarianism’ (Mai et al., 2021) is a concept which analyses how migrant sex workers (men and women) are impacted by policymaking and social interventions based on their presumed vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation (see Chap. 5) and “neo-abolitionist discourse, which systematically conflates prostitution with trafficking, seeking its abolition by removing the demand for sexual services”.

Studies using ethnographic methods, including films, have given women their voice, showing how they decided to undertake sex work. Research over a number of years with women from the North of China who had migrated to Paris after losing their jobs following economic restructuring in China in the 1990s. (Lévy & Lieber, 2009) showed how having found themselves in an unexpectedly precarious situation, they utilised sex as a resource through diverse sexual-economic arrangements, such as cohabitation with a fellow national, marriage with a French man which could lead to regularisation of their legal status or prostitution. The latter situation, though looked down upon, brought them much more money than working for South Chinese families as child minders which was the most demeaning for them. Nigerian women in Italy have been associated with sex work and therefore assumed to have been trafficked (Plambech, 2017), which may make it difficult for them to have their asylum claims or the violence they experienced in their home countries and on their journeys, taken seriously (Rigo, 2017). In Italy and Spain many migrant women, including from the recent EU enlargement countries such as Romania, are hired for seasonal and temporary labour in agriculture. Their dependence for future contracts may make them vulnerable to exploitative sexual relations (Palumbo & Sciruba, 2018).

The dominant focus on less-skilled employment pushes into the background the circulation of skilled female migrants and endorses the paradigmatic separation of (male) skilled and (female) less-skilled understandings of migration. Females working in skilled sectors tend to dominate reproductive sectors, such as health, social work and teaching, which often do not pay as much as male occupations, although many educated women work in mixed or male dominated sectors (Raghuram, 2008). So, too, is gender largely absent in studies of international student migration (Sondhi & King, 2017; Raghuram & Sondhi, 2021) due in part to the assumption that female migrants are largely of working class origin, yet the gendered mobilities of students may feed into flows of skilled migrants.

3.4 Skilled Sectors and Gendered Migrant Division of Labour

Skilled immigration, as Boucher (2007) commented “has slipped by as a genderless story in which the androgynous skilled migrant is the central character and economists do most of the storytelling”. Meares (2010: 473) stated that “despite the now

significant body of scholarship on the relationship between gender and international migration, scant attention has been paid to the gendered transition experiences of highly-skilled migrants". Yeoh and Willis (2005) too make a strong argument for more research in this area, noting that existing work on the devalued and often "racialised" labour of unskilled women must be complemented by a greater focus on professional and entrepreneurial women who remain largely absent in the broader analysis of 'transnational elites'. Yet the current global race for talent in which states seek to attract skilled migration, "is profoundly gendered, with significant implications for the skill accreditation, labour market outcomes, rights of stay, and gendered family dynamics" (Boucher, 2016: 30).

Furthermore, Dumitru (2017) argues that theories of feminization linked with the analysis of globalization and international division of labour have tended to ignore the educational qualifications of women. Dumitru asks whether we should be referring to feminization of migration (see Chap. 1) as skilled migration since women migrants are increasingly educated and a higher percentage of those with tertiary education are migrating more than men (Docquier et al., 2009; Dumitru, 2014). For example, tertiary educated among female migrants rose from 18% in 1980 to 40% in 2010 so that women now form a majority of skilled migrants (Weinar & Klekowski von Kopenfels, 2020). Discriminatory practices in employment, family practices and public participation may also act as drivers of migration (Ruysen & Salamone, 2018). However being highly educated does not mean either entering through skilled routes or working in skilled occupations (Boucher, 2020; Carangio et al., 2021), hence the conversion of education into skilled employment post migration may be fraught with barriers, especially where income constitutes a major determinant of entry through skilled channels (Boucher, 2016; Kofman, 2014), as in the UK and the EU Blue Card. Women in skilled sectors are concentrated in regulated professions where they encounter barriers to recognition and consequently circulation.

Furthermore, large numbers of educated female migrants enter through family migration (see Chap. 4) but we know little of their work aspirations or experiences. There is some evidence that they may face particularly high levels of deskilling (Ballarino & Panichella, 2018; Triandafyllidou & Isaakyan, 2016 (see Sect. 3.5). Migrants, and particularly the skilled, who are able to benefit from bringing an accompanying spouse or being reunified with them, will frequently migrate together. For example, among Indian migrants many males enter the IT sector, while female highly educated spouses often come with or follow them shortly afterwards and succeed in entering the labour market (Kōu et al., 2015). Though entering the labour market, they are often simply described as trailing spouses (van Bochove & Engbersen, 2015), a term that goes back to the 1980s when there was a concern about obstacles to the international migration of those in management positions (Weinar & Klekowski von Kopenfels, 2020). It is only with more interest in the gender dimensions of skilled migration that questions are being asked about spouses of the highly skilled who themselves are highly educated.

In general, studies of skilled migration streams focus on the economic realm where the social dimension barely intrudes. Studies of skilled migration reproduce

the notion of economic man and social woman (Kofman & Raghuram, 2005; Schaer et al., 2017). As Kōu et al. (2015) state: “There has been little attempt to link highly skilled migrants with life course analysis so as to study their parallel careers of migration, employment and household. . . and gain a deeper understanding of the influence of life paths, social networks, diasporas and immigration policies”.

Box: Gender Inequalities, Academia and the Lifecourse

One sector in which studies have explored how gender inequalities are reproduced through work demands and life course changes is that of young academics and researchers (Ackers & Bryony, 2008). Studies (França & Padilla, 2017) have found that academic careers follow a male linear career structure with little room for family responsibilities to impinge and thereby reproduce gendered inequalities, such as glass ceilings, gender pay gap, sexual harassment and exclusionary dynamics, found in other domains of the labour market. However, Schaer et al. (2017) note that gender inequalities in academic mobility may acquire a complexity beyond a traditional representation. They reflect on examples of both female and male tied movers to counteract a simplistic view of the trailing spouse and a rather negative view of what spouses do when they accompany partners. In some cases, and especially when it is planned, the spouse may elect to train or to study (Raghuram, 2004). Yet in other cases, women’s migration may lead to downward mobility for their husbands, who find themselves doing jobs as security guards, retail and carers, as was the case of spouses of Nepalese nurses in the UK (Adkikari, 2013).

Studies of health care professionals have tended to focus on macro issues of supply and demand with much less attention paid to working conditions or the family and social dynamics of their lives. It is a sector where, despite reductions following the 2008 financial crisis, recourse to migrant labour subsequently increased to fill shortages due to an increase in demand as a result of population ageing, technological advances and higher patient expectations (Castagnone & Salis, 2015), combined with inadequate supply arising from attempts to cut back expenditure and training as well as poor working conditions (Yeates, 2010). Nursing, as a mobile profession, has become a major sector of migrant women’s employment globally (Kingma, 2006) based on an export-oriented production system combined with recruitment strategies from wealthy countries (Wojczewski et al., 2015; Yeates, 2009). In Europe, those from new EU countries in particular have filled the gap. In most countries, with the exception of Germany, there has been a reliance on recruitment agents to navigate entry restrictions and barriers to recognition of credentials which are faced by non-EU healthcare professionals in Europe and in other major countries of shortages, such as Australia, Canada and the United States (Walton-Roberts, 2021a). Together with a range of actors, including the state and recruitment agents in both countries, connections between countries form complex global and highly dynamic chains of nurse care framework (Yeates, 2009) and

Table 3.3 Percentage of female migrants in the healthcare workforce

Sector		Germany	Spain	Italy	UK
Doctors and health professionals	Foreign	72.3	47.0	64.4	57.9
	National	72.1	58.2	49.6	61.1
Nurses	Foreign	90.1	89.9	83.1	82.5
	Nationals	86.0	83.3	75.5	90.2

Source: Villosio (2015)

pathways (Walton-Roberts, 2021b), encompassing both circuits in the Global North and between the South and the North. Thus the United States takes nurses from Canada which recruits both from the UK and countries in the South. The UK in turn is the main recruiter in Europe attracting both those from the European periphery, especially Portugal and Spain after the 2008 crisis and Romania since enlargement, as well as countries in the South. Certain countries such as the Philippines, India and Vietnam have developed nurse export strategies and emerged as the main source countries for nurse migration (Thompson & Walton-Roberts, 2019; Yeates, 2010).

The pathways from poorer countries to their insertion in the wealthier are not always smooth for nurses (Näre & Nordberg, 2016). They may confront racialized attitudes from other healthcare workers as well as patients. Data on their working conditions in selected European countries reveal that they may have to do more unsocial shifts and have less secure contracts (Castagnone & Salis, 2015).

Although nursing is an overwhelmingly feminised profession (see Table 3.3), there are male migrants who in the UK are more prevalent than native men. Some come from countries where men have trained as nurses in the country of origin as with the Philippines, while others come from countries where it is unusual for men to work in this sector but who have taken it up as a profession at a time when there were pronounced shortages and opportunities for training. This was the case with Zimbabwean men who as black men also encounter racism at work. Yet as Panopio (2010: 12) comments: ‘there is a lack of contextual analysis that allows for intersections of race, class, sexuality, and other identity formations in mainstream accounts of male nurses and international nurse migration’. In Panopio’s study of Filipino male nurses in London, most had been helped by family members into a profession that endowed them with social mobility and would enable them to help others in turn. Some, especially gay men, also wanted a softer or more feminine environment to work in but within nursing tended to orient themselves to male spaces of work, as in operation theatres. And the possibilities of social mobility through a global profession attenuated to some extent the feminine resonances of the profession.

In contrast, there is little gendered analysis of masculine sectors of work (Grigoleit-Richter, 2017; Raghuram, 2008), such as IT, which unlike the regulated professions have little state control of accreditation and for which barriers to mobility are lower, especially for those only moving temporarily. As Raghuram (2008) comments, it is particularly interesting to compare female and male migrants in this sector. In Europe and other major countries of permanent migration, the number of women in STEM has declined while in a number of sending countries of

highly skilled ICT migrants, such as India, women form a notable proportion of students in STEM subjects (over 40%). So too has ICT employment grown rapidly among women in India (30% in 2016) compared to its stagnation in many countries in the West. This is not a migration of survival; for women in particular, it gives them the opportunity for career development, travel and, for some, to move away from restrictive cultural and social practices (Kõu et al., 2017). The intersectionality of gender and class plays out very differently to other skilled sectors such as nursing which is at the lower end of health care professions. Indian ICT migrants, for example, are from a solidly middle class background and women, even more than men, have both parents who work and mothers with tertiary degrees (Sondhi et al., 2018).

3.5 Deskilling and Devaluation

Despite the growing number of highly educated migrants (Dumitru, 2017; OECD, 2018), both those from the European Union and non-Europeans have faced considerable levels of deskilling (Sert, 2016, OECD, 2018) and devaluation of their cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1986). Over-qualification (higher educational qualification than what is required for the job) in Europe affects 36% of migrant women and 31% of migrant men compared to 22% of native women and 20% of men. It is particularly pronounced in Southern Europe countries where for migrant women it may reach 50% level of over-qualification (OECD, 2018).

The poor labour market integration of highly educated migrant women is linked to issues of foreign degree recognition, emphasis on host country work experience and a preference for local accents in relation to language skills. The latter is shown to disadvantage women, particularly considering their concentration in relational work such as support, service, and caring labour, and in regulated sectors such as health care, in contrast to male-dominated financial and technical occupations. National privileges may result in occupations being reserved for national and EU citizens forcing migrants to be employed on less secure and less well paid contracts, for example, with doctors and nurses in hospitals (Castagnone & Salis, 2015). Differences in national regulations and difficulties of obtaining accreditation may mean that migrant nurses are unable to continue to undertake routine duties in the destination country and are forced to work instead as nursing assistants or care workers in residential homes and private households (Cuban, 2013).

Racial discrimination on the part of recruiters and co-workers may mean that they are forced to accept positions they are overqualified for, or do not have the same opportunities for career progression as co-workers (Wojczewski et al., 2015). Female migrant workers therefore often face a double penalty in terms of labour market segregation and discrimination. And as previously discussed in relation to dirty work, migrant women and men, such as Eastern Europeans (Fox et al., 2012) and Latin Americans (Cederberg, 2017), may be racialised and stereotyped as being appropriate to perform certain kinds of low skilled work. Women from Central and

Eastern Europe in the UK, as Samaluk (2016) comments, are portrayed either as objects of desire for front-line service work or as traditional and docile workers suitable for domestic and care work. Indeed Favell (2008: 711) presented the dangerous outcome of free movement of “ambitious ‘New Europeans’ ... becoming a new Victorian servant class for a West European aristocracy of creative-class professionals and university educated working mums,” with female migrants holding a teacher’s diploma or even a PhD working in Austria in the fields of child or geriatric care.

Migrants may thus experience contradictory class position (Parrenas, 2000) in the course of migration, consisting of a lower status job but earning more money in the destination country than in their homeland. Here transnational contexts (Nowicka, 2013, 2014) and family class background play a major role in the extent to which their institutionalised cultural capital or educational qualifications are transposed. As Oso (2020) highlights for Spanish migrants to Paris, even those with degrees find it more difficult to get a job commensurate with their qualifications if they come from a family of modest means who could not assist them or did not have social networks or social capital.

Migration researchers (Cederberg, 2017; Erel, 2010; Kelly, 2012; Nowicka, 2013, 2014; Oliver & O’Reilly, 2010; Ryan et al., 2015; Samaluk, 2016) have increasingly turned to a Bourdieusian analysis (Bourdieu, 1986) to gain a better understanding of the modalities of the international transfer of cultural and other capitals between different societies. As we have seen, linguistic capital (ability to communicate as well as accents) is essential in accessing skilled sector jobs and moving out of elementary employment that may not require much language proficiency. For many migrants, this entraps them in menial work whilst others are able to improve their linguistic capital and move after a time into higher level employment as with Polish migrants in the UK (Ryan et al., 2016). An analysis of how Central and Eastern Europeans found their jobs in Western Europe indicates that a much higher proportion than natives used social networks and there was a correlation with overqualification. Hence their social capital is likely to have facilitated obtaining a job but at the cost of being in a job below their educational levels. The link with linguistic proficiency is less clear as in fact those in hospitality where many find themselves despite having a reasonable linguistic level (Leschke & Weiss, 2020). Attitudes to the disparity in status may differ according to their migratory projects and the extent to which this is aligned with social mobility and status in the country of origin.

3.6 Conclusion

As we have outlined in this chapter, a gendered division of labour encompasses a broad range of both less skilled and skilled sectors. Migrant women are concentrated in feminised sectors of social reproduction ranging from domestic work, care and nursing. Migrant men too are more likely to be found in feminized sectors and, as

with women, often deskilled. However, over-qualification and devaluation of migrant cultural capitals resulting in positions of contradictory class mobility need to be situated within a transnational lens, take account of the migratory projects pursued and the intersectionality of class, gender, race and nationality. For some deskilling is a temporary situation either in relation to social mobility within the country of destination or their social status in the country of origin; for others it represents a long-term entrapment. Loss of employment may also lead to onward migration for some through free movement in the European Union (Ortensi & Barbiano di Belgiojoso, 2018) and to complex mobility pathways (Parreñas, 2020).

And at the time of completing the book, the major upheaval has been the global pandemic with countries locking down and closing borders to migration, thus disrupting migratory flows, especially of those circulating regularly, as with some care workers between Poland and Germany or Romania and Austria and seasonal agricultural workers. At the same time, the public came to realise the value of workers categorised as low skilled and of little worth but now deemed as essential and key workers (Fasani & Mazza, 2020; Rasnaca, 2020). On average in the EU, migrants (EU and non-EU) represented 13% of key workers but in some sectors considerably more, especially among non-EU migrants as in Cyprus, Germany, Italy and Sweden. In particular two groups stand out: agricultural workers who guarantee the food chain operates smoothly and ensure food security and care workers, enabling our physical and mental well-being. The evidence shows how much we rely on migrant workers to provide labour in the key occupations, including the supposedly low skilled ones.

During the pandemic itself a number of countries regularised the undocumented in key employment sectors and most significantly there have been calls to acknowledge the need to reconsider immigration policies prioritising the highly skilled and devaluing the less skilled (Fasani & Mazza, 2020). It is not clear whether the essential work that migrant women and men undertake will continue to be appreciated, although it does seem clear that the work they perform will persist despite higher levels of unemployment.

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