Chapter 7

Conclusion

At the end of a short journey, we can attest to the flourishing production of knowledge on gender and migration that has built up over the past 30 years in particular. Though we have on the whole referred to works in English, there is an extensive literature in other major languages, such as French, German, Italian and Spanish which have emerged from different social science traditions, in recognition of the significance of gendered migrations and feminist movements. English has come to dominate writing in this field (Kofman, 2020), ironically in large part through the European funding of comparative research as well as transatlantic exchanges (Levy et al., 2020). The past 20 years have been a rapid period of intellectual exchange in this field through networks and disciplinary associations, such as the International and European Sociological Associations or IMISCOE which supported a cluster on Gender, Generation and Age (2004–2009). The IMISCOE Migration Research Hub (<https://www.migrationresearch.com/>) demonstrates the extensive production on gender issues and their connections with other theories and fields of migration. The economic and social transformations brought about by globalisation and transnationalism, and how its unequal outcomes and identities need to be understood through an intersectional lens (Amelina & Lutz, 2019), have heavily shaped studies of gender and migration (see Chap. 2). Indeed intersectionality has been suggested by some as the major contribution of contemporary feminism to the social sciences, and, has certainly been a theoretical insight that has travelled widely and rapidly from the Anglo world to Europe (Davis, 2020; Lutz, 2014) since it was defined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989). We should, however, also remember that it had antecedents in the writing of anti-racist feminists on racist ideology and sex by the French sociologist Claude Guillaumin (1995), on the trinity of gender, race and class in the UK (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992; Parmar, 1982) and by scholars in Australia (Bottomley et al., 1991) and Canada (Stasiulis & Yuval-Davis, 1995).

What the application of an intersectional approach has brought to the fore are the complex and intersecting inequalities in the experiences and outcomes of migration, reinforced by restrictive borderings and categorisations generated by immigration

policies regulating labour, family and asylum flows. The three main categories of intersectional analysis have been gender, race and class. The latter is often poorly captured, though there has been growing attention to how migration shapes class positions transnationally, for example in the concept of contradictory class mobility (Parreñas, 2001) and class differences among migrants of the same nationality (Horst et al., 2016). New social divisions have also been incorporated into intersectional approaches. Amongst the most significant are men and masculinities, sexualities, age (youth and older migrants) and, to a lesser extent, disability (Fiske & Giotis, 2021). As we saw in Chap. 2 in our discussion of the shift from women to gender, the latter often continues to be reduced to women. The tendency to focus on women and a call for a more gendered approach has been prominent in the critical discussion of the application of the concept of vulnerability in migration governance and humanitarian management (see Chap. 5). These divisions intersect with immigration and integration measures and policies (see Chap. 6). Though supposedly gender neutral, immigration policies have profound gender implications through their conceptualisation of the deserving and the undeserving in relation to entry, right to residence and citizenship (Boucher, 2016; Kofman & Raghuram, 2015; Stasiulis, 2020).

As Stasiulis et al. (2020) underscore, the analytical gains when deploying an intersectional lens have to do with making apparent the oppression, violence, discrimination and dehumanisation of specific migrant groups. This focus draws attention to the interconnected dynamics of power structures and agonisingly reveals that the relationship between migration and social injustice continues to be historically and contemporaneously a phenomenon of social erasure within states, policies, laws and social consciousness. Linking back to Chap. 6, these are intertwining resource, not just for scholars who seek to understand them, but also for activists who wish to transform and eradicate inequities.

We have highlighted the development of intersectionality among migration scholars and would argue that adopting an historical perspective, including the role of colonialism and how categories of gender, sexuality and race were constructed during colonial modernity (Mayblin & Turner, 2021; Chap. 7), is important in acquiring a better understanding of how particular topics and approaches have emerged and evolved. Throughout the book we have sought to draw out the changing theorisations and approaches to gender and migration as a whole (Chaps. 1 and 2) and in relation to specific forms of migration (Chaps. 3, 4, and 5) and participation (Chap. 6). The feminisation of migration provides a good example of the need to place trends in the *longue durée* and questions the idea that the process has consisted of a linear progression. Equally important is the geographical dimension highlighting considerable variations between localities, regions and states. One often hears that domestic and care work is being performed largely by migrants, but a more detailed picture becomes apparent in the analysis of major metropolitan and other areas. It is in metropolitan centres that migrant labour in these sectors is the highest (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015) whereas in rural areas and regions without a strong history of immigration, the work is still undertaken by working class women (Howard and Kofman, 2020). As Glick Schiller and Çaglar

(2009) point out, we must be careful about extracting from particular localities, especially in major cities where most migration research takes place, to the national level.

Arriving at the destination of our collaborative writing journey and completion of this book has culminated with three key critical moments: ‘COVID-19’, an unprecedented new pandemic with its devastating impact on the loss of lives, shattering of economies, gendered inequalities in social reproduction and transformation of lifestyles and mobilities; the surrealistic, in our view, outcome of the ‘Brexit’ referendum in the UK and its aftermath; and, the intellectual and political consequences of the ‘Black Lives Matter’ protests in the United States and globally.

In terms of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, Alan Gamlen (2020) contemplated the fate of migration and mobility after it ends and posed ten key questions about future transformations. These range from the future of labour migration, migrant decision-making, anti-immigrant sentiments and autocratic regimes, migration restrictions, international student migration etc. Above all Gamlen asked whether we are witnessing the end of the age of migration (Castles et al., 2014), at least temporarily. We have seen unprecedented closures of borders, even within countries and a radical reduction of mobility, including tourism, and migration. Some have suggested, in line with current trends in major immigration countries, of privileging the skilled and restricting the lesser skilled to strictly temporary periods of residence which could approximate to a Singapore model and, what Stasiulis (2020) notes for Canada, as the disposability of the less skilled. As we saw in Chap. 3, the distinction between the skilled and the less skilled, has clear implications for labour markets and migrant rights.

Migrant domestic care workers, who often already have less labour rights and social protection, have frequently been called upon to provide the essential work to sustain households and societies (Rao et al., 2021). A report (Leiblfinger et al., 2020) on the impact of the pandemic on live-in care workers in Germany, Austria and Switzerland highlights the fact that the pandemic had extensively reduced circular migration of live-in care workers between their home countries in Central and Eastern Europe and their live-in care worker residences. The report offered insights into the impact of travel restrictions during the pandemic and transnational live-in care. While differences are identified between countries, the authors draw on similarities of the impact of such measures in reducing the interests of migrant care workers in comparison to care receivers. We can infer that the pandemic will not probably lead to positive changes to the working conditions of migrant carers or immigration policies after the initial championing of essential and key workers. At the same time, the pandemic has also exposed Western Europe’s reliance on seasonal Eastern European migrants for other parts of the economy, with future border closures certainly impacting on economic stability (Kondan, 2020). At the time of submitting the final manuscript in October 2021, European states have begun to emerge from the second lockdown and benefitted from widespread vaccination but 80% of vaccines have gone to upper and upper middle income countries, with poorer countries in Africa in particular lacking access to vaccines and having less ability to sustain lockdowns (<https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations>). It is also not

clear what will emerge in relation to gender inequalities relating to gender violence, unemployment, changes in the labour market and the additional burden of social reproduction in the home.

The future of diaspora engagement will also be an important avenue shaping the future of nation-states and their transnational networks as they have again been disrupted by the pandemic and travel restrictions (ibid). Nevertheless, diasporas have proven that they can serve as ‘legitimate’ actors during current periods of crises leading to more efficient policy implementation at both local and transnational level (Dag, 2020).

Travel restrictions and post-pandemic changes in organising social and research life will most likely see an increase in the shift to ‘digital’ research in migration studies. This will have methodological, analytical and ethical implications but also opportunities in perhaps reaching more groups and gendering more of our migration research, while being more in tune with intersectional implications of this work. This direction might unveil more ‘digital passages’ (Koen, 2015) in capturing migration processes which involve digital identity construction, transnational caring arrangements which involve online provision of migrant care (Janta & Christou, 2019) and the negotiation of gendered diaspora and generational cultural expectations.

Our second major event impacting on European mobility migration patterns is that of **Brexit** which was voted in favour of by a narrow majority of 51.9% in a referendum held on 23 June 2016. After the end of the transition period in January 2021, a new immigration policy has come into force to reflect the UK’s withdrawal from the EU and its free movement policies. The vote reflected an imperial nostalgia and global reach, in which Britannia ruled the waves (Agnew, 2020) and an Englishness ‘reasserted through a racializing, insular nationalism’ (Virdee & McGeever, 2018: 1804). The referendum has already had the effect of reducing EU immigration and encouraging those already settled to leave. A sharp distinction between the skilled and the less skilled based on income levels has been imposed as well as an accrued control of migrants in which future EU and non-EU migrants are both subjected to the hostile environment of everyday bordering practices (housing, health, education, deportation). As we saw in Chap. 3, high income favours men in terms of eligibility for immigration. According to the UK Institute for Public Policy Research (Morris, 2020) under current immigration proposals, 36% of men would be eligible for a skilled visa but only 26% of women. 59% of construction workers and 66% of the people currently working in the health and social care sector would not be eligible.

Thus care labour is likely to be particularly hard hit. For immigration policy the value of one’s labour is equated with the price of it, and given that care remains discounted and under-valued, it not only fails the entry level income criteria but also has not been given any special consideration as a shortage occupation. It is not clear whether those in need of care will be left with poorer quality care or, as commonly happens, families, and in this instance, largely women, will be left to care for members of their family. As has been evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, women, especially those with children (Fisher & Ryan, 2021), have assumed, to an even greater extent than previously, caring responsibilities. At the same time,

restrictions imposed by COVID-19 have, for the time, being delayed by the gendered impact of new immigration policies for the entry of workers. However, new post Brexit regulations will also have implications for the right to family life as future EU migrants will have to comply with extremely high minimum income levels (see Chap. 4) to bring in spouses and children as they cease to benefit from the more generous European freedom of movement. They will once again return to the status of mobile workers rather than fellow citizens (D'Angelo & Kofman, 2018). It is likely to have a negative impact on student flows and on youth mobility as the UK has imposed expensive international student fees on EU students and withdrawn from the EU Erasmus+ scheme.

The third event of **Black Lives Matter** is yet another reminder that any migrant crisis is a racial crisis (De Genova, 2018; Kirtsoglou & Tsimouris, 2018). As Bridget Anderson (2020) argues, migration studies in the past 30 years has drifted apart from race and ethnic studies in the UK, although there are scholars who have tried to bring them together. While immigration policies are no longer as blatantly racist as they were in the past, especially in settler societies, it operates in part through the more restrictive economic criteria favouring the skilled through a dynamic geopolitical landscape of centre and periphery. China and India, are now two of the major sources of skilled migrants. Even so, these nationalities, may also face the visible and invisible walls of white privilege in accessing professional employment and discrimination in the workplace in the country of destination (Carangio et al., 2021). Racism is most forceful in the application of immigration regulations, for example in detention and deportation where Black Lives can be discarded and are equated with being a migrant whose belonging is questioned (Anderson, 2020). Many have suggested we need a better historical education about immigration to bring out the effects of slavery and colonialism (Mayblin & Turner, 2021; Yeo, 2020). We also need to recognise the role of Islamophobia in immigration and integration policies and its gendered representations of migrants and refugees (see Chap. 6). The very mobility of these populations as well as Roma, Gypsies and Travellers, who have experienced some of the most systematic racism in Europe, also have to be included in our migration scholarship of the past, present and future in our curricula and research.

These recent and momentous developments will undoubtedly have an important impact on both the nature of migration and mobility globally, and, will need to be engaged with critically from gendered and intersectional perspectives. They will be part of the continuing and lively debates that we have shown characterise writings on gender and migration and efforts to take forward social justice initiatives based on insightful critiques.

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