6

Gendered Migration

A Gender Perspective on International Migration and Migration Politics

Saskia Bonjour (ORCID: 0000-0001-6218-443X) and

Laura Cleton (ORCID: 0000-0002-7746-3527)

[Insert Chapter 6 Cover Photo]

Abstract

This chapter discusses the importance of a gender perspective on international migration. It shows that gender impacts migration decision making, individual experiences of migration, and immigration policies. The chapter starts by outlining the gendered composition of migration flows and stocks, noting that the share of male and female migrants is almost equal across a wide range of migratory categories. The following section discusses scholarship on gender and migration for five modes of international migration: labor migration, family migration, refugee migration, "irregular" migration and return migration. For each of these categories, the chapter shows that migration decision making is gendered, and that migration changes the meanings and practices of femininity and masculinity. It also shows that political representations of migrant femininity and migrant masculinity are important to understand directions in immigration policy making. The chapter ends with promising new avenues for research on gender and migration and a call for a more nuanced understanding of men and women's 'vulnerability' in immigration policy making.

Introduction

What does migration look like from a gender perspective? This chapter begins with an empirical section that discusses the share of men and women in migration across the globe. The following sections outline the main insights from scholarship on gender and migration, zooming in on specific migration categories including labor migration, family migration,

refugee migration, "irregular" migration, and return migration. The chapter concludes with a discussion of new research avenues and policy and ethical issues.

Empirical Overview

For a long time, migration theories were based on the implicit assumption that migrants are men, but there is no empirical basis for this assumption. In 2019, women made up almost half of the global international migrant stock (47.9 percent) (IOM 2019b). It is popular in both policy and scholarly circles to refer to the "feminization of migration" (IOM 2017, 185), implying that female migrants are a new phenomenon. However, this is empirically incorrect: for the past hundred years, the share of women among international migrants across the globe has been just below 50 percent. Even before that time, between 1840 and 1920, women made up between 20 percent and 40 percent of global migration flows, and more than 45 percent of immigrants to the United States (Donato and Gabaccia 2015). Women have always migrated, but the nature of female migration appears to be changing, as increasing numbers of women migrate not as family migrants reuniting with their husband or father, but on their own or as a head of household, to work, or to study abroad (IOM 2019b).

The share of women in the international migrant stock varies significantly in different parts of the world. It is lowest in Asia (41.5 percent) and in Africa (47 percent), partially as a result of increased demand for male migrant labor, for instance, in oil-producing countries in the Middle East. The share of female migrants is highest in Europe (51.4 percent) and North America (51.8 percent), largely due to the high share of elderly migrants living on both continents, and the relatively long life expectancy of female migrants. Europe is an especially attractive destination for migrant women; 39.7 percent of all female migrants reside in Europe, against only 26.3 percent of all male migrants. In Latin America, Oceania, and the Caribbean, women made up 49.9 percent of international migrants in 2019 (ibid.).

Measured in migration flows rather than migrant stocks, the share of women has been just below 50 percent across the globe since the 1960s, with the exception of the period 2000–2010 when male migration flows increased more rapidly than female migration flows. Overall, the migration patterns of men and women are similar. Gender differences occur in particular periods and regions, with men dominating migration in and out of Northern,

Southern, and Western Africa, as well as into Western Asia, while women have dominated moves into Southeast Asia (Abel 2016).

Even more than migrants generally, *labor* migrants are assumed to be male. Dominant norms and beliefs about masculinity and femininity easily lead us to assume that men migrate for money, while women migrate for love (Bonjour and De Hart 2013). However, across the globe, most people migrate for work, and this is true for both men and women. Men do form the majority among migrant workers across the world (55.7 percent), but the share of female migrant workers is very substantive (44.3 percent) (IOM 2017, 28). In the OECD, 49.1 percent of migrant women are registered as employed or seeking employment, against 69.2 percent of migrant men (see Figure 6.1). The relatively high number of migrant women registered as "inactive" reflects the fact that women do most of the unpaid work within homes and families.

[Figure 6.1 About Here]

While labor migrants are generally assumed to be male, *domestic* migrant workers are commonly assumed to be female. In 2013, there were an estimated 11.5 million migrant domestic workers worldwide, representing 7 percent of all migrant workers. While the majority of these were women (73.4 percent), the number of male migrant domestic workers was not negligible at 3.07 million (26.6 percent) (ibid., 29).

Women make up almost half of *refugees* worldwide. Between 2003 and 2006, the share of female refugees was between 47 percent and 49 percent (ibid., 32). The percentage of women among refugees varies per continent. It is highest in Africa (52 percent) and lowest in Europe (44 percent). Variation is even more important at the country level, with Serbia, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina reporting the highest share of women among their refugee populations (58 percent), and Ecuador reporting the lowest percentage (24 percent).

Following the belief that men migrate for money and women migrate for love, *family* migrants are generally assumed to be female. While it is true that the majority of family migrants are women, men make up a very substantial minority of family migrants reuniting with their partner, parent, or other relative. In 2015, men accounted for 47 percent of family-

sponsored migrants in the US and 40 percent of those admitted as relatives of citizens. The share of male family migrants was 40 percent in European OECD countries, 43 percent in Canada, and 33 percent in Australia (Chaloff and Poeschel 2017, 124). Family migration represents a very significant, and often underestimated, migration channel. It is the largest migration category by far in the OECD, representing 40 percent of immigration to OECD countries between 2007 and 2015, while the combined share of labor and asylum immigration was never above 30 percent. The remaining 30 percent consist of free movement flows, which are significant mostly in the European context. Among free movers in Europe, 30 percent indicate that they move for family reasons. The share of family migrants is particularly high in the United States, where family migration made up over 70 percent of all immigration flows in 2015, as well as in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, where it accounted for around 60 percent (ibid., 110–112).

Theoretical Evolution

This section starts with an outline of the historical evolution of the study of gender and migration, followed by a discussion of scholarly perspectives on gender and family migration, labor migration, refugee migration, "irregular" migration, and finally, return migration.

From Women in Migration, to Gendered Migrations and Intersectionality

The first step in the study of gender and migration was to recognize that not all migrants are men, which led scholars to explore why and how women migrate. The next step was to apply gender as a category of analysis, asking how conceptions of femininity and masculinity shape the motivations, conditions, and consequences of (international) mobility. These developments within migration studies reflect the broader scholarly context, from the introduction of women's studies in the 1970s and 1980s, to the transformation of women's studies into gender studies from the 1990s onwards.

Originally, migration studies sought to understand why and how people migrate primarily through economic theories. Until the 1970s, neo-classical theories explained individual mobility decisions as a result of balancing push and pull factors, aimed at maximum individual benefit. At roughly the same time, new Marxist political economy and dependency theories understood international migrants as a cheap labor force, resulting from unequal

global distribution of economic and political power. Even though these theories claim to be "gender neutral," they adopt a model of gender relations that assumes that men are "primary migrants" who move for work, while women are "secondary migrants" who merely follow their male relatives (Kofman et al. 2000). From the late 1970s onwards, feminist migration scholars strove to counter these assumptions of female dependency and passivity, by documenting the predominance of women in migration flows. Known as the "add women and stir" approach, this was the first step toward the study of gender and migration.

Doors to a more complex understanding of gender opened in the 1980s, fed by the work of feminist theorists such as Judith Butler and Joan Scott. Rather than studying "women," these theorists proposed to study "gender," i.e. masculinity and femininity as socially construed categories of meaning and value, which shape identities, practices, and power relations. One major contribution by feminist migration scholars in the 1980s was a focus on household strategies as units of analysis. They pointed out that migration decisions are taken not by isolated individuals, but by families. In households, gendered roles and relations—between husband and wife, father and daughter, aunt and nephew—shape who gets to move, when, and how (Nawyn 2010). This paved the way for more critical thinking on the impact of gendered power relations in migration.

From the 1990s onwards, scholars strove for a more structural incorporation of a gendered analysis to migration theory. Hondagneu-Sotelo was among the first to note that

> the task, then, is not simply to … ask the same questions to immigrant women that are asked to men, but to begin with an examination of how gendered relations—which are exercised in relational and dynamic ways—facilitate or constrain both women's *and* men's immigration and settlement.
>
> (1994, 3, emphasis in original)

Such gendered power relations were increasingly understood to operate in transnational social fields (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004), including transnational family relations among family members living in different parts of the globe. This new focus, which coincided with the "transnational turn" in migration studies at large (ibid.), reinforced the increasing recognition of migration as a gendered process (Boyd and Grieco 2003). See Box 6.1.

[Box 6.1 About Here]

Since then, studies have focused on how gender affects the composition and direction of migration flows, on the gendered experiences of migration, and on how migration transforms gender relations (Carling 2005). Intersectional frameworks are increasingly influential, highlighting the importance of studying gender in relation to race, ethnicity, religion, class, age, sexuality, and health, given a particular social context (Nawyn 2010).

One theoretical field where intersectional feminist approaches have been particularly fruitful and influential is in the study of national identity and the politics of belonging. Scholars have shown that national, racial, and cultural identities and boundaries are defined in deeply gendered ways, since gender is represented as "the 'essence' of cultures" (Yuval-Davis 2008 [1997], 43–45, 67). Stoler (2001, 829) has argued that these politics of belonging are not just about gender norms but also about the wider field of intimacy: "sex, sentiment, domestic arrangement, and child rearing." From colonial times to the present day, defining how "We" are different and superior to "the Other" involves reference to proper roles of men and women, proper dress, proper parenting, and proper loving (Bonjour and De Hart 2013). As a result, many European countries focus on gender norms when assessing the assimilability of potential migrants or citizens, questioning parents, for instance, on their willingness to allow their daughters to participate in mixed swimming classes. Testing migrants' adherence to values of gender equality and sexual freedom reflects the assumption that such values are characteristic to the West and foreign to non-Western (Muslim) migrants.

Labor Migration

Mirroring the scholarly developments in other subfields of migration studies, the first step toward a gendered analysis of labor migration was the recognition that not all labor migrants are men. Thus, referring to Michael Piore's famous 1979 book on migrant labor entitled *Birds of Passage,* Mirjana Morokvásic entitled her seminal 1984 article, "Birds of Passage Are Also Women." She argued that migrant women's labor market position tends to be doubly precarious, as a result of their status as migrants *and* their status as women. Migrant women tend to be restricted to low-paid work in insecure conditions, for instance, in textile industries or in the care sector. Often this work is done within the home—either within a family business, or in employers' homes, in the case of domestic work—and thus rendered invisible to the state and the public eye. More recently, scholars have argued that women's unpaid care

work within the family may also contribute to the families' economic productivity, for instance, when grandmothers' care for children allows mothers to engage in paid work (Bonizzoni 2018), or when women's social networking in schools and community provides social capital that is precious to job searches or the family business (Creese, Dyck, and McLaren 2011).

From the 1990s onwards, scholarship evolved from "adding women" to a gendered analysis of labor migration, resulting in at least three clusters of insights. The first major contribution of feminist labor migration scholars, discussed above, was to analyze economic migration as a household strategy, and thus point to the effects of labor migration on the family as a whole.

A second field of research has been scholarship on migrant women performing domestic and care work, ranging from cleaning and cooking to raising children and caring for sick and elderly people. Applying a feminist political economy approach, these scholars have mobilized the concept of "reproductive labor" to emphasize that care—be it paid or unpaid—is work. The increase in migrant domestic labor has been theorized as a solution for white middle-class women in the Global North, enabling them to enter the labor market without having to negotiate with their husbands to share the unpaid work at home more equally (Anderson 2000). Migrant domestic labor has been analyzed as an "international division of reproductive labor" (Parreñas 2000) that reflects geopolitical, economic, and gendered power relations. This division of labor results in "global care chains" (Hochschild 2000), where women migrate to do care work, leaving their own children in the care of an elder sibling or grandparent. These scholars have critiqued the poor working conditions and risk of exploitation and abuse to which migrant domestic workers are exposed, as well as the emotional and material difficulties that domestic workers and their families may experience if migrant parents have to leave their own children behind to care for the children of others.

A third prominent body of work addressed the question of how gendered labor market structures affect the experiences and opportunities of labor migrants (Brettel 2016). Some labor market niches are strongly gendered, for instance, which results in women forming the majority of migrants engaged in domestic work and the sex industry, whereas labor migrants in construction are almost exclusively male (Charsley and Wray 2015) (Figure 6.2). Feminized labor market niches are more likely to be characterized by informality and lack of state regulation and oversight, partly because state institutions fail to recognize "women's

work," such as domestic work, as "real work," and partly because state institutions are reticent to intervene in the domestic sphere, where feminized work is often done. Men may experience downward social mobility after migrating and find themselves doing "women's work" in feminized labor market niches such as cleaning, which challenges their status as men and breadwinners (Sinatti 2014; Charsley and Wray 2015). When obstructed by labor market discrimination from entering employment, migrant workers may choose to start their own business. Substantive scholarship has explored such "ethnic entrepreneurship," with gender scholars pointing, for instance, to the risk that such family businesses in closed communities will result in the exploitation of the labor of women and children, outside of view of the state or the public (Donato et al. 2006, 12).

[INSERT FIGURE 6.2 HERE]

Family Migration

Well into the 1980s, migration scholars all but ignored family migration. Similar to the way they ignored migrant women because they saw them as "secondary migrants" who merely follow "primary migrants," migration scholars have all too often considered family migration a negligible side effect of "autonomous" migration flows, such as labor or refugee migration (Kofman 2004). Gender scholars have played a significant role in calling attention to the fact that family migration is one of the most substantive migration channels across the globe, with its own dynamics that call for scholarly analysis.

One question that attracted a great deal of scholarly attention from the 1990s onwards has been how and why people marry across borders. In Europe, these studies focused on people of migrant origin who married partners from their own or their (grand)parents' country of origin. While young men of migrant origin—and their parents—often seek a more "traditional" wife in the "home country," young women of migrant origin expect a foreign partner to be more progressive and emancipated than their co-ethnic peers (Charsley 2012). In Asian countries, like Taiwan or Japan, increasing access to education and financial independence among women make it more difficult for working-class men especially to find a marriage partner, leading them to seek a partner abroad in countries like Vietnam (Piper and Lee 2016). Constable (2003) explored the motivations for Asian "mail order brides" to marry a U.S. citizen. She explains that Chinese divorced women, for instance, may experience difficulties

finding a new partner in China and be happy to marry a blue-collar worker in the US who can provide for them, even if the women themselves have higher qualifications.

This points to a second question, namely how family migration affects gender roles and relations. Marriage migration affects the power balance within couples in a way that may cause tensions, as the migrant spouse usually has far fewer legal, social, and professional resources than the sponsoring spouse, who is either a citizen or a resident migrant (De Hart 2003; Liversage 2012). If the resident sponsor is male, and the migrant spouse is female, traditional gender roles and dependencies are reinforced. While some female marriage migrants find it "self-evident" to care for the children and the household, others who prefer more egalitarian gender roles often feel intensely frustrated and belittled. Male sponsoring spouses may also resent being pushed into the "breadwinner" role, when they are used to sharing work and care with their partner (Strasser et al. 2009). If the resident sponsor is female, and the incoming migrant spouse is male, then traditional gender roles and dependencies are often reversed. Especially in the first period after migration, the woman often provides for the family. Many migrant men suffer from being unable to perform their traditional role as "breadwinner" (ibid.). Another important insight of this scholarship has been that families often do not migrate as a whole, as some family members stay behind for longer or shorter periods of time. Recognizing the prevalence of such transnational family lives has led to calls for migration scholarship to include those that stay behind: how does migration of some family members affect the lives of family members who remain in the country of origin? (Truong et al. 2014; Brettel 2016).

Scholarship on family migration politics emerged only in the mid-2000s, largely spurred by the increasing politicization of family migration in many European countries at that time. This scholarship showed that national identities in Europe today are construed in opposition to the perceived culture and identity of migrants, epitomized by the "migrant"—especially "Muslim"—family. Whereas the "Western" family is imagined as modern, emancipated, and egalitarian, the migrant family is associated with tradition, patriarchy, oppression, and even violence (Grillo 2008). This political representation of the "migrant family" as problematic is highly gendered. Migrant women are represented as victims of patriarchal oppression and violence (Bonjour and de Hart 2013), whereas migrant men are represented as violent oppressors of their wives and children (Charsley and Wray 2015). Such representations have served to justify restrictive reform of family reunification policies; if migrant men are violent,

so the reasoning goes, then migrant women are better off remaining separate from them (Van Walsum 2008). Inspired by feminist insight that "the personal is political," scholars of family migration politics have resisted the conception of family as apolitical, emphasizing that what counts as family and who gets to have family are crucially contested questions at the very heart of migration politics (Bonjour and Cleton forthcoming).

Refugee Migration

Refugee mobility and politics received a great deal of attention from feminist scholars, which shifted from documenting the experiences of female refugees seeking protection to an evaluation of the multiple ways in which responses to forced migration impact gender roles, identities, and relations. Forced migration academics and practitioners often identify refugee women as non-agentic victims, either as *madonna-like* figures or as dependent "womenandchildren" (Enloe 1989; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2019). These accounts reduce women's experiences to vulnerability to sexual violence. Feminist scholars aim to counter such images, by exploring how and why women are victimized and persecuted.

Since the 1980s, feminist critiques of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (see Chapter 4 in this volume) have argued that the Convention implicitly assumes that refugees are heterosexual and men, thereby failing to recognize the specific claims of women and LGBTQI-refugees (Pittaway and Bartolomei 1991). They state that this is rooted in a persistent public-private division: many gender-specific threats women face take place in the private or familial sphere (e.g. female genital mutilation) and are therefore not considered "political," and are thus beyond the scope of the Convention (Crawley 1999). Similarly, migration officials often fail to recognize women's political activism, interpreting women's protest against the disappearance of relatives, for instance, as "personal" rather than "political" (Spijkerboer 2000). The UNHCR now recognizes this shortcoming and has published *Gender Related Persecution Guidelines* that explicate the recognition of gender-specific persecution under the Geneva Convention. However, researchers are critical about the impact and slow transposition of these guidelines. They criticize UNHCR's treating of women as a "special social group" who flee "different" forms of persecution and require "special" protection. This approach still perceives male refugees as "normal" and female refugees as "deviant." Similar critiques have been expressed regarding asylum policies for children, lesbian, gay, transsexual, and intersex refugees (Freedman 2015; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2019).

Before qualifying for Convention status, however, refugees need to cross international borders and file for protection. Various authors have looked into refugee trajectories and highlighted how pathways to seeking asylum are uneven across genders. Gerard (2014), for example, highlights how factors unrelated to the risk of persecution explain the underrepresentation of women seeking asylum, such as limited social or financial capital and caregiving roles.

Research on refugee trajectories often focus on the situation of refugees in camps worldwide, although a minority of refugees eventually reside in such spaces (Harrell-Bond 2002, quoted in Gerard 2014). While these camps are supposed to be places of sanctuary, several scholars show that female refugees are subject to physical and sexual violence. A 2001 UNHCR report, for example, details how some refugee women and girls in Guinea were forced into a subordinate position vis-à-vis men, as only the latter were given their own, individual food ration cards in the camps (quoted in Freedman 2010). Displacement also has implications for femininities and masculinities, as traditional gendered roles might shift. Grabska (2011) shows that in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, the UN's management of the camp challenges the position of married men and elders as heads of household. As the UN took over this role in the camp context, men consequently experienced disempowerment and loss of "manhood."

Finally, masculinity and femininity also play a role in popular discourse on refugeehood: the picture of the deserving, genuine refugee is implicitly feminized. Feminist geographers highlight that the feminized notion of passive "waiting" in refugee camps in the Global South is denoted with deservingness, which stands in sharp contrast to a masculine danger of seeking asylum by crossing the borders into the Global North (Hyndman and Giles 2011). As "womenandchildren" (Enloe 1989) are thus represented as the most vulnerable and trustworthy asylum seekers, (young) men are constructed as more threatening (Griffiths 2015). Turner (2017), for example, shows how Canadian resettlement programs for Syrian refugees explicitly deny access to single men, unless they identify as non-heterosexual. In recent European debates, representations of refugee men as sexually violent played a major role, as reflected by the popularity of the term "rapefugee" among anti-immigrant politicians and activists. De Hart (2017) traces these representations back to the trope of the supposedly sexually aggressive black or brown man predating on white women, which was an integral part of the racist ideologies of European colonialism. Gender therefore acts as a critical

dimension of the creation of "bogus asylum seekers," where refugee men are demonized and criminalized.

"Irregular" Migration

There is no universally accepted definition of "irregular" migration.[1] The IOM (2019b) defines it as "all movement that take place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit, and receiving country." It both denotes a mode of travel that takes place without official state permission and visa arrangements, as well as a migrant's status at a given point in time, for example, through overstaying residence permits. In the past decades, states in the Global North have constructed a system of transportation infrastructure, international services, and legal rules that enables some people to move across the globe with high speed, low risk, and at low cost, such as tourists and highly skilled workers. At the same time, for people who do not have access to this system, such laws and politics of *non-entrée* mean exclusion from mobility, pushing them into traveling "irregularly" (Spijkerboer 2018). Due to the safety risks involved with "irregular" travel, this form of mobility was long conceived as a purely male endeavor. In circumstances of conflict or extreme poverty, men have often sought protection in preferred destination countries alone, while leaving women behind to reunify once the male spouse had reached safety (Bhabha 2004). But in recent years, marked by widespread conflict and violence and intensified politics of *non-entrée* for those not permitted to migrate in a "legal" way, scholars are paying increasing attention to females on the move "irregularly" (Freedman 2016).

First, decision-making on "irregular" migration is enmeshed with gendered considerations. Whereas in situations of extreme poverty or widespread conflict in the absence of legal travel routes, one is tempted to say that migrating "irregularly" is the only choice people have, migration theorists have long highlighted that any form of mobility involves both constraints and opportunities in decision-making (Carling 2002). Even in situations of extreme hardship, migrants choose between staying or migrating—and that choice is gendered. For women, caregiving roles and limited access to resources deter "irregular" travel (Freedman 2016). The stigma associated with "irregular" migration can also differ across genders. In the Mexico-US context, for example, a female migrant stated, "If a man goes without formal authorization, he is a 'good man.' But if a woman is an undocumented migrant, especially a young woman, '*qué vergüenza*!' [what shame!]" (Boehm 2012).

"Irregular" travel and the crossing of "gendered borderlands" (ibid.) inevitably lead to different experiences and trajectories. Research with female migrants shows that they experience their journey as a time of direct and structural violence, as they are exposed to sexual abuse, exploitation, and extortion (Gerard 2014). Some reports even speak of the need for women to engage in "survival sex" (Bhabha 2004) to cross borders or receive the assistance of human smugglers. In both the US and Australian contexts, research shows that women and children are more likely to be left behind by smugglers if they cannot keep up, and that they have a greater chance of dying while crossing the border (Pickering and Cochrane 2012). Other accounts challenge the discourse of women being more vulnerable to malevolent smugglers and traffickers than men. They highlight that in certain cases, women make conscious choices to consent to certain forms of exploitation as a means to fulfill their migratory objectives (Van Liempt 2011).

Finally, scholars have explored gendered state representations of "irregular" migrants in immigration policies: while the figure of the refugee is highly feminized, the figure of the "irregular" migrant is masculine. In the European imaginary, for example, "irregular" migrants are seen as masculine, dangerous, and out of place, which implicitly calls upon action to limit their agency (Griffiths 2015). In the US, this has led to a "gendered racial removing program," where male joblessness, the War on Terror, racial profiling, and explicit targeting of Latino and black men have produced an overwhelming majority of male deportees (Golash-Boza and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). In Italy, Bonizzoni (2017) documents how access to legalization for "irregular" migrants is based on gendered deservingness frames: female domestic workers are favored over male construction laborers in nationwide, employment-based regularization programs.

Return Migration

Finally, return migration from a country of residence to one's country of citizenship, is a gendered process. Whereas for a long time, migration has been largely understood as a once-and-for-all, one-way movement from the Global South to the Global North, from rural to urban settlement, the 1980s signaled a more nuanced understanding of international mobility. Researchers pointed out that "settled" migrants at some point in their lives returned or remigrated to their country of citizenship or to third countries. Since then, various authors

have developed typologies of return migrants, their reasons for return, adaptation or reintegration of returnees, and the impact of return on their home societies (Cassarino 2004). In more recent years, feminist scholars have interrogated remigration through a gendered lens, particularly highlighting return decision-making and its impact on femininity and masculinity after remigration.

Studies interrogating return migration decision-making first of all find that women are often more reluctant to return than men. In a comprehensive study on intra-household migration decision-making, De Haas and Fokkema (2010) found that especially female migrants do not want to give up their newly won freedoms through migration. Their study shows that decisions on return migration are not made in isolation, but negotiated within intra-family politics, where generational and gendered power relations within the family are decisive for migratory outcomes. Reluctance to return on the part of women also seems to stem from care obligations, for instance, for children or grandchildren born in the country of settlement, to a greater degree than for male migrants (Böcker and Gehring 2015). Strong motivations for return, such as social isolation and longing for "home," prevail among both men and women.

The consequences and experiences of return also reshape notions of femininity, masculinity, and family relations. Here, it is crucial to distinguish between migrants returning voluntarily, e.g. after a successful migration project abroad or for retirement purposes, and deportation, as a consequence of a rejection on an asylum application or withdrawal of a residence permit. In the latter case, male deportees often experience forced removal as a personal failure: they feel emasculated due to the loss of income and their "failure" to provide for their families (Drotbohm 2015). Female deportees report difficulties negotiating relationships and social expectations upon their return. Nigerian female deportees in Ratia and Noterman's (2012) study, for example, mention feeling guilty about returning "empty-handed." Their family members also put pressure on them to contribute to the household financially after return, as family savings were often used to facilitate the initial travel abroad.

Moreover, deportation leads to uneven, gendered social consequences. For example, men in Cape Verde can draw positively on their criminal reputation, as their alleged experiences in the criminal sphere, urban fashion, and gestures can confirm their masculinity, produce envy, and make them attractive for romantic relationships (Drotbohm 2015). Female deportees, however, are often judged more harshly. Nigerian returnees, for example, experience stigma

as they are assumed to have engaged in sex work in Europe if their geographical mobility does not lead to social mobility for themselves and their family. In the case of a voluntary return, returnees experience success in gendered ways: for men, success is defined as individual social and economic achievements, while women benefit from being seen as "the good relative," who "sacrifices" herself for wage employment abroad to fulfill her obligations toward her family (Olwig 2012). Voluntary return might lead to regaining a sense of masculinity that was lost abroad, due to new employment opportunities or by taking up the role of (financial) caretaker for the community upon return (Hansen 2008).

Continuing Issues

New Avenues for Research

Research on gender and migration has flourished for three decades now, with substantive impact on both migration scholarship and migration policies. In spite of the analytical shift from "women and migration" to "gender and migration," much of the existing scholarship still focuses on women. Therefore, one avenue of exciting new research focuses on masculinity and gender (e.g. Charsley and Wray 2015). For instance, the ways in which migrant men's family roles and relationships, as well as their social class, shape male migration provide fruitful ground for further research. The assumption that all migrants are heterosexual and cisgender is very strong in most scholarship on gender and migration—as in this chapter, where we have discussed "male migrants" and "female migrants" as if all migrants fit in these two categories. A second important innovative body of scholarship looks at how LGBTQ and transgender migrants experience international mobility (Luibhéid 2008). As noted above, political scientists in migration studies have been relatively slow to incorporate gender perspectives. Therefore, much work remains to be done to unravel the gendered politics of migration, exploring, for instance, how public and political discourses on "unwanted migrants" relate to historically-rooted, racialized representations of non-white men as threatening or inferior (De Hart 2017). Finally, climate change raises important questions regarding the different ways in which women and men may deploy migration as an adaptation strategy.

Policy and Ethical Issues

Of all issues raised in this chapter, we want to highlight two in particular that we feel can potentially benefit policymaking on international migration. We call for more attention to the agency of migrant women and to male vulnerabilities across the migratory modes described in this chapter. Government discourses equate women with passivity and inherent vulnerability, while men are seen as agentic actors whose agency needs to be securitized (Brettel 2016). While many authors have invalidated this binary thinking by producing empirical studies that debunk these myths, migration policies largely still follow this dominant rhetoric.

First, policies today still do not fully recognize the agency of women in the migratory process. For example, Dutch policies on "fraudulent" or "forced" transnational marriages consistently portray migrant women as naïve victims of their (Muslim) culture and family. The supposed need to "protect" migrant women from being forced into marriage serves to justify the introduction of restrictive migration policies (Bonjour and De Hart 2013). In refugee politics, feminist theorists have shown the ways in which political relations of domination also exist in the feminized "private" sphere of the family and household, but these persecutions have been, and are still today, rendered irrelevant or invisible (Freedman 2015). Recognizing that (political) agency can take many forms and is dependent on, among other things, gendered power relations, will help to develop better policies to serve the needs of immigrant women and men.

Second, men face specific vulnerabilities throughout international migration journeys, but this is rarely acknowledged by policy. A poignant example is the feminized discourse on victims of human trafficking, in which (again, "naïve") female migrants are portrayed as victims of criminal male traffickers (Andrijasevic 2007). Apart from denying migrant women their agency in deciding upon mobility trajectories, this discourse also obscures the vulnerability of male migrants who are abused by traffickers and exploited in various types of labor markets beyond the global sex industry alone. Another example is the situation of displacement, where men often cannot fulfill traditional gendered roles of "breadwinner" and are hence vulnerable to insecurity and marginalization. While we hold that it is important to highlight that migrant men can also find themselves in vulnerable situations, the "vulnerability label" can be stigmatizing and serve to legitimate state control over male (and female) migrant populations. Policymakers should therefore look beyond "vulnerability" and instead engage in active dialogue with migrant populations themselves to discuss their needs (Turner 2019).

Summary

This chapter discussed migration as a gendered phenomenon and provided insight into how gendered identities and power structures shape migration decision-making, migratory experiences, and the ways policy constructs and acts upon international migrants. After discussing the gendered composition of migration stocks and flows worldwide, the chapter outlined the scholarly development from highlighting the presence of "women" in migration, to gendered and intersectional analyses. The latter go beyond studying women only and highlight how masculinity and femininity, in relation to other social structures such as race, age, and sexual orientation, impact, and are impacted by, migration. Subsequently, it outlined the scholarly gender perspectives on five dominant modes of exercising international mobility, namely labor, family, forced, "irregular," and return migration. For each of these categories, the chapter shows that migration decision-making is gendered, and that migration has consequences for transnational practices and meanings of femininity and masculinity. It also shows how particular gendered imaginaries of migrants impact policymaking. The chapter ends with promising avenues for further research, highlighting the importance of intersectional frameworks and research into newly emerging issues such as climate change. It concludes with a call for policymakers to gain a more nuanced understanding of femininity and masculinity in relation to migrants' perceived vulnerability, and engage in dialogue with international migrants to discuss their needs.

Discussion Questions

1. Did reading this chapter challenge any assumptions that you had about migration? In what ways?

2. A core contribution of feminist scholars to migration studies is the insight that migration decisions are often a household strategy, rather than an individual decision. Provide two examples of how individual migration is shaped by and/or impacts family relations. The examples should stem from different migratory categories (i.e. labor, family, refugee, "irregular", and return migration).

3. What does it mean to move from an "add women and stir-approach" to a gendered approach to the study of migration? Explain your answer by using an example from the chapter.

4. Find a recent news report about international migration, and discuss how the representation of migration in this report is gendered, either in the text or in the accompanying pictures.

5. What are the practical and symbolic consequences of labeling migrants as "vulnerable" in policy or public debate? Support your argument with a concrete example.

Recommended Reading

Anderson, Bridget. 2000. *Doing the Dirty Work? The Global Politics of Domestic Labor.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Brettel, Caroline B. 2016. *Gender and Migration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Charsley, Katharine, and Helena Wray, eds. 2015. "Special Issue: The Invisible (Migrant) Man." *Men and Masculinities* 18 (4): 403–508.

Freedman, Jane. 2015. *Gendering the International Asylum and Refugee Debate*, 2nd edn. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Piper, Nicola, ed. 2008. *New Perspectives on Gender and Migration: Livelihood, Rights and Entitlements.* London: Routledge.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2008 [1997]. *Gender & Nation*. London: Sage.

Note

1 Critical migration scholars increasingly move away from using "illegal" or "irregular" in describing these migrations, as they are riddled with assumptions. For instance, "irregular" means a lack of established travel arrangements and implies that these migrants are somehow "not regular" and deviant. Bauder (2014) argues that "Illegalized" migration is a more suitable term for acknowledging the institutional and political processes that render these people illegal.

References

Abel, Guy J. 2016. "Estimates of Global Bilateral Migration Flows by Gender between 1960 and 2015." Vienna Institute of Demography Working Papers, No. 2/2016.

Anderson, Bridget. 2000. *Doing the Dirty Work?: The Global Politics of Domestic Labor*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Andrijasevic, Rutvica. 2007. "Beautiful Dead Bodies: Gender, Migration and Representation in Anti-Trafficking Campaigns." *Feminist Review* 86 (1): 24–44.

Bauder, Harold. 2014. "Why We Should Use the Term 'Illegalized' Refugee or Immigrant: A Commentary." *International Journal of Refugee Law* 26 (3): 327–332.

Bhabha, Jacqueline. 2004. "Demography and Rights: Women, Children and Access to Asylum." *International Journal of Refugee Law* 16 (2): 227–243.

Böcker, Anita, and Anoushka Gehring. 2015. "Returning 'Home' after Retirement? The Role of Gender in Return Migration Decisions of Spanish and Turkish Migrants." *Review of Social Studies* 2 (1): 77–97.

Boehm, Deborah A. 2012. *Intimate Migrations. Gender, Family and Illegality Among Transnational Mexicans.* New York: New York University Press.

Bonizzoni, Paola. 2017. "The Shifting Boundaries of (Un)Documentedness: A Gendered Understanding of Migrants' Employment-Based Legalization Pathways in Italy." *Ethic and Racial Studies* 40 (10): 1643-1662.

Bonizzoni, Paola. 2018. "Policing the Intimate Borders of the Nation: A Review of Recent Trends in Family-Related Forms of Immigration Control." In *Gendering Nationalism. Intersections of Nation, Gender, and Sexuality*, edited by Jon Mulholland, Nicola Montagna, and Erin Sanders-McDonagh, 223–239. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bonjour, Saskia, and Laura Cleton. Forthcoming. "The Politics of Family Migration: Co-Constructions of Family and Belonging." In *Handbook on the Politics and Governance of Migration,* edited by Emma Carmel, Katharina Lenner, and Regine Paul. London: Edward Elgar.

Bonjour, Saskia, and Betty de Hart. 2013. "A Proper Wife, a Proper Marriage: Constructions of 'Us' and 'Them' in Dutch Family Migration Policy." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 20 (1): 61–76.

Boyd, Monica, and Elizabeth Grieco. 2003. *Women and Migration: Incorporating Gender into International Migration Theory*. Migration Information Source. Available at: www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=106.

Brettel, Caroline B. 2016. *Gender and Migration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Carling, Jørgen. 2002. "Migration in the Age of Involuntary Immobility: Theoretical Reflections and Cape Verdean Experiences." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28 (1): 5–42.

Carling, Jørgen. 2005. "Gender Dimensions of International Migration." Global Migration Perspectives Working Papers 35: 1–26.

Cassarino, Jean-Pierre. 2004. "Theorising Return Migration: The Conceptual Approach to Return Migrants Revisited." *International Journal on Multicultural Studies* 6 (2): 253–279.

Chaloff, Jonathan, and Friedrich Poeschel 2017. "A Portrait of Family Migration in OECD Countries." In *International Migration Outlook* 2017, edited by J. Dumont, 107–166. Paris: OECD.

Charsley, Katharine. 2012. "Transnational Marriage." In *Transnational Marriage: New Perspectives from Europe and Beyond*, edited by Katharine Charsley, 3–22. London: Routledge.

Charsley, Katharine, and Helena Wray. 2015. "Introduction: The Invisible (Migrant) Man." *Men and Masculinities* 18 (5): 403–423.

Constable, Nicole. 2003. *Romance on a Global Stage. Pen Pals, Virtual Ethnography, and "Mail Order" Marriages*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Crawley, Heaven. 1999. "Women and Refugee Status: Beyond the Public/Private Dichotomy in UK Asylum Policy." In *Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice*, edited by Doreen Indra. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Creese, Gillian, Isabel Dyck, and Arlene T. McLaren. 2011. "The Problem of 'Human Capital': Gender, Place and Immigrant Household Strategies of Reskilling in Vancouver." In *Gender, Generations and the Family in International Migration*, edited by Albert Kraler, Eleonore Kofman, Martin Kohli, and Camille Schmoll, 141–162. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

De Haas, Hein, and Tineke Fokkema. 2010. "Intra-Household Conflicts in Migration Decisionmaking: Return and Pendulum Migration in Morocco." *Population and Development Review* 36 (3): 531–561.

De Hart, Betty. 2003. *Onbezonnen vrouwen. Gemengde relaties in het nationaliteitsrecht en het vreemdelingenrecht*. Amsterdam: Aksant.

De Hart, Betty. 2017. "Sexuality, Race and Masculinity in Europe's Refugee Crisis." In *Migration on the Move: Essays on the Dynamics of Migration*, edited by Carolus Grütters, Sandra Mantu, and Paul Minderhoud, 27–53. Leiden: Brill.

Donato, Katharine M., and Donna Gabaccia. 2015. *Gender and International Migration.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Donato, Katharine M., Donna Gabaccia, Jennifer Holdaway, Martin Manalansan, and Patricia R. Pessar. 2006. "A Glass Half Full? Gender in Migration Studies." *International Migration Review* 40 (1): 3–26.

Drotbohm, Heike. 2015. "The Reversal of Migratory Family Lives: A Cape Verdean Perspective on Gender and Sociality Pre- and Post-Deportation." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41 (4): 653–670.

Enloe, Cynthia. 1989. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics.* London: Pandora.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena. 2019. "Gender and Forced Migration." In *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, edited by Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona, 395–408. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Freedman, Jane. 2010. "Mainstreaming Gender in Refugee Protection." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23 (4): 589–607.

Freedman, Jane. 2015. *Gendering the International Asylum and Refugee Debate.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Freedman, Jane. 2016. "Engendering Security at the Borders of Europe: Women Migrants and the Mediterranean 'Crisis'." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29 (4): 568–582.

Gerard, Alison. 2014. *The Securitization of Migration and Refugee Women.* London: Routledge.

Golash-Boza, Tanya, and Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo. 2013. "Latino Immigrant Men and the Deportation Crisis: A Gendered Racial Removal Program." *Latino Studies* 11 (3): 271–292.

Grabska, Katarzyna. 2011. "Constructing 'Modern Gendered Civilised' Women and Men: Gender-Mainstreaming in Refugee Camps." *Gender & Development* 19 (1): 81–93.

Griffiths, Melanie. 2015. "'Here, a Man is Nothing!' Gender and Policy in an Asylum Context." *Men and Masculinities* 18 (4): 468–488.

Grillo, Ralph. 2008. "The Family in Dispute: Insiders and Outsiders." In *The Family in Question: Immigrant and Ethnic Minorities in Multicultural Europe,* edited by Ralph Grillo, 15–35. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Hansen, Peter. 2008. "Circumcising Migration: Gendering Return Migration among Somalilanders." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34 (7): 1109–1125.

Hochschild, Arlie. 2000. "Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value." In *On the Edge: Living with Global Capitalism,* edited by Will Hutton and Anthony Giddens, 130–146. London: Jonathan Cape.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. 1994. *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hyndman, Jennifer, and Wenona Giles. 2011. "Waiting for What? The Feminization of Asylum in Protracted Situations." *Gender, Place & Culture* 18 (3): 361–379.

IOM (International Organization for Migration). 2017. *World Migration Report 2018*. Geneva: IOM.

IOM (International Organization for Migration). 2019a. *Glossary on Migration*. Geneva: IOM.

IOM (International Organization for Migration). 2019b. *Migration Data Portal. Gender and Migration.* Available at: https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/gender (accessed January 10, 2020).

Kofman, Eleonore. 2004. "Family-Related Migration: A Critical Review of European Studies." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30 (2): 243–262.

Kofman, Eleonore, Annie Phizacklea, Parvati Raghuram, and Rosemary Sales. 2000. *Gender and International Migration in Europe: Employment, Welfare and Politics.* London: Routledge.

Levitt, Peggy, and Nina Glick Schiller. 2004. "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society." *International Migration Review* 38 (3): 1002–1039.

Liversage, Anika. 2012. "Gender, Conflict and Subordination within the Household: Turkish Migrant Marriage and Divorce in Denmark." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 38 (7): 1119–1136.

Luibhéid, Eithne. 2008. "Sexuality, Migration, and the Shifting Line between Legal and Illegal Status." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 14 (2–3): 289–315.

Morokvásic, Mirjana. 1984. "Birds of Passage are Also Women..." *International Migration Review* 18 (4): 886–907.

Nawyn, Stephanie J. 2010. "Gender and Migration: Integrating Feminist Theory into Migration Studies." *Sociology Compass* 4 (9): 749–765.

OECD.stat. 2020. *Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries: Immigrants by Labor Force Status*. Available at: https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DIOC_SEX_AGE (accessed January 10, 2020).

Olwig, Karen F. 2012. "The 'Successful' Return: Caribbean Narratives of Migration, Family and Gender." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18 (1): 828–845.

Parreñas, Rhacel. 2000. "Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers and the International Division of Reproductive Labor." *Gender and Society* 14 (4): 560–580.

Pickering, Sharon, and Brandy Cochrane. 2012. "Irregular Border-Crossing Deaths and Gender: Where, How and Why Women Die Crossing Borders." *Theoretical Criminology* 17 (1): 27–48.

Piore, Michael (1979). *Birds of Passage. Migrant Labor and Industrial Societies.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Piper, Nicola, and Sohoon Lee. 2016. "Marriage Migration, Migrant Precarity, and Social Reproduction in Asia: An Overview." *Critical Asian Studies* 48 (4): 473–493.

Pittaway, Eileen, and Linda Bartolomei. 1991. "Refugees, Race, and Gender: The Multiple Discrimination against Refugee Women." *Refuge* 19 (6): 21–32.

Ratia, Emma, and Catrien Notermans. 2012. "'I Was Crying, I Did Not Come Back with Anything': Women's Experiences of Deportation from Europe to Nigeria." *African Diaspora* 5 (1): 143–164.

Sinatti, Giulia. 2014. "Masculinities and Intersectionality in Migration: Transnational Wolof Migrants Negotiating Manhood and Gendered Family Roles." In *Migration, Gender and Social Justice: Perspectives on Human Insecurity*, edited by Thanh-Dam Truong, Des Gasper, Jeff Handmaker, and Sylvia I. Bergh, 215–226. Den Haag: Springer Open.

Spijkerboer, Thomas. 2000. *Gender and Forced Migration.* London: Ashgate.

Spijkerboer, Thomas. 2018. "The Global Mobility Infrastructure: Reconceptualising the Externalisation of Migration Control." *European Journal of Migration and Law* 20: 452–469.

Stoler, Ann L. 2001. "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies." *The Journal of American History* 88 (3): 829–865.

Strasser, Elizabeth, Albert Kraler, Saskia Bonjour, and Veronika Bilger. 2009. "Doing Family: Responses to the Constructions of 'the Migrant Family' across Europe." *The History of the Family* 14: 165–176.

Truong, Thanh-Dam, Des Gasper, and Jeff Handmaker. 2014. "Migration, Gender, Social Justice, and Human Insecurity." In *Migration, Gender and Social Justice: Perspectives on Human Insecurity*, edited by Thanh-Dam Truong, Des Gasper, Jeff Handmaker, and Sylvia I. Bergh, 3–26. Den Haag: Springer Open.

Turner, Lewis. 2017. "Who Will Resettle Single Syrian Men?" *Forced Migration Review* 54: 29–31.

Turner, Lewis. 2019. "The Politics of Labeling Refugee Men as 'Vulnerable'." *Social Politics* doi: 10.1093/sp/jxz033.

Van Liempt, Ilse. 2011. "Different Geographies and Experiences of 'Assisted' Types of Migration: A Gendered Critique on the Distinction between Trafficking and Smuggling." *Gender, Place and Culture* 18 (2): 179–193.

Van Walsum, Sarah K. 2008. *The Family and the Nation: Dutch Family Migration Policies in the Context of Changing Family Norms*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishers.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2008 [1997]. *Gender & Nation*. London: Sage.