

Gender and Migration in a Historical Perspective

Marlou Schrover
Professor of Migration History
History Department
Leiden University, the Netherlands
m.l.j.c.schrover@hum.leidenuniv.nl

The 'Lampedusa Dilemma':
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INTRODUCTION

The **EUI Forum on Migration, Citizenship and Demography** is a joint initiative by the four departments of the EUI, the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and the Max Weber Programme. It brings together critical analysis, informed debate and policy recommendations from the wider field of citizenship and democracy, demography, migration and asylum governance, and the management of cultural diversity.

Professor Anna Triandafyllidou is the Scientific Organiser of the Forum's Inaugural Event: The 2014 Conference on the Lampedusa Dilemma.

Policy experts and scholars from a variety of disciplines will share their views on migration governance, human rights, asylum-seeking and international protection, as well as irregular migration.

The Lampedusa disaster of October 2013 demonstrates the dramatic events taking place in the Mediterranean area which require urgent, forward-looking and well-thought out responses.

This paper addresses gender differences in migration from a historical perspective. Gender differences are important in societal and political debates on immigration and integration, and thus affect policies. There is not *one* gender theory. Rather there is a plethora of theories explaining how migration and integration differ according to gender. Gender is the constitutive element of social relationships, and particularly relationships of power, based on perceived differences between the sexes. Gender is concerned with the ascription of social characteristics such as 'womanly', 'manly', 'feminine' and 'masculine'. It is a normative concept, related to behaviour that is expected of men or women. Gender roles are internalized, and institutionalized in laws and regulations.

Gender intersects with other categories of analysis such as class and race/ethnicity, which are like gender elements of power and equality/inequality, and defining elements of identity (personal, social, legal), social location, opportunity, and experience. Potentially the list of inequalities is endless and can include, apart from gender, class and race/ethnicity, also age, (dis)ability, religion, and sexuality. Empirical research becomes impossible if the list is extended endlessly. Furthermore, counting oppressions and discussing 'double disadvantage' or 'triple jeopardy' does not yet explain equality/inequality, and identity.

'Multiple discrimination' is attractive to policy-makers because it presents inequalities as similar to one another, and the same approach as a solution to all. The strategies employed by advocates of for instance women's right, minority rights, and gay rights are similar (Schrover & Moloney 2013). Migrant women are presented as suffering a double dose of discrimination (gender and race) (double jeopardy) or as being under a quadruple whammy: discriminated according to ethnicity, gender, class, and religion (especially if they adhere to Islam).

The victimhood discourse has successfully been used in the past by organizations and advocates for acquiring rights for immigrant women. As a result all immigrant women came to be seen as vulnerable and in need of protection. The 'success' of the victimhood discourse is not only explained by the fact that it fitted key (Western) ideas on femininity. It was also used

to give a humanitarian face – albeit beneficial to immigrant women only - to an essentially restrictive immigration policy and austere integration policies (Schrover 2009).

In the large literature on gender and migration there is an emphasis on domestic servants, on victimhood, trafficking and prostitution. The increase in the number of publications on gender and migration has been linked to an increase in the number of women migrating. This increase is labelled a feminisation of migration. There is however not so much a feminisation of migration but rather a feminisation of the debate about migration (Schrover 2013).

Since the 1970s, organisations acting on behalf of migrants have used highly personalised cases to fight for immigrant rights via media campaigns. These campaigns featured women more than men (Schrover 2009). Furthermore, in an attempt to gain (legal) equality, differences between migrant men and women are stressed.

DIFFERENCES

There were differences in migration according to gender in the past as there are today. The concept ‘perceived profitability’ had been used to explain differences between men and women in migration patterns. According to the neo-classical, or push-pull, model and the family strategy model people move if a cost-benefit analysis points to gains. Since it is assumed that men have a higher earning capacity than women, it is advantageous to let them migrate. When women migrate as much as men, or more, this is explained as part of a family strategy related to remittances; women may earn less than men but if they send more money home it may be better for families if they migrate. The decision to migrate is however not necessarily a product of collective calculations: decisions are made *outside* of and *against* the wishes of a family.

Networks of women tend to be less formalised and less visible than those of men

Women migrated through older networks than men did. Migrant men and women have access to different networks, value resources differently, have different exchange opportunities, and develop different exchange relations. Networks of women tend to be less formalised and less visible than those of men. Migrant women move and live in familial contexts more often than men and they developed more kin-based networks. Men develop more non-kin networks. Although all this may be true, the networks of migrant men and women are not that different. Benhabib and Resnik (2009) point out that networks of migrant consist of dependent children, dependent elderly, and the men they are involved with. They fail to point out that this is largely true also for migrant men, whose primary networks are equally formed by children, parents and partners.

Migrant women develop more kin-based networks

Migrant men tend to join or establish organisations that are oriented towards the country of origin, whereas migrant women favour organisations that are aimed at the country of settlement. Migrant men experience downward social mobility, which they compensated for by joining organisations where their (former) status is recognised and bolstered. Those immigrant women who did not work prior to their migration, and who did enter the workforce after migration, experience a gain in status and feel less need to fall back on homeland oriented organisations.

FAMILY MIGRATION

Issues related to dependent residency

Research on gender and migration places a strong emphasis on family. Migration of women is mostly described from a family perspective (Kraler et al 2011), while men's migration is described from a labour perspective. Family migration was frequently suspected of being a cover for labour migration, especially when the migrating partner is a non-Western man (Grillo 2010). Migrating men are suspected of having economic motives for marriage, rather than migrating for love. That is especially the case when they come from poor countries, are low skilled, and marry non-migrant women. Authorities look at age difference between partners, ability to communicate and how well the partners know each other. Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany screen potential marriages with non-EU spouses in attempt to discover fictitious marriages, using criteria that are disputed in court. Denmark, Germany, Austria, France, the Netherlands, and the UK have introduced age bars (with minimum ages of 18 to 24), housing and income requirements, tests to be taken before migration, and dependent resident status. The last means partners cannot divorce within a waiting period (of one to four years). If they do, the dependent partner must return to the country of origin. The issue of dependent resident status led to large debates and campaigns, which focused on women, although also men could get a dependent resident status (although few did in practice). In the campaigns it was emphasised that women were maltreated and this enforced the negative image of marriage migration (Schrover 2010). In response to these campaigns Germany, the UK and Norway, for instance, introduced so-called hardship rules, or domestic violence and abuse clauses: migrant women should not be forced to bear inhumane treatment within their marriage in order to avoid losing their legal status. If they are in abusive relationship, they should not be required to wait until the end of the waiting period.

In many countries women (but not men) automatically changed their nationality when they married a partner with a different nationality. When a non-migrant woman married a migrant man she acquired his nationality and thus became a foreigner in her country of birth and abode (Boris 2005). When countries changed rules regarding derivative citizenship discussions moved to dependent residency: in the first case women derived citizenship from their husbands, in the second case women derived the right to remain in a country through their husbands (although in theory husbands could also derive the right to remain through their wives). Discussions on dependent residency arose when possibilities for labour migration were reduced.

Challenges related to marriage migration and mixed marriages

In the literature, and in political debates, the focus is on women who migrate for marriage, although also men do. 'Import brides' feature prominently, and 'import grooms' not. Bringing a wife from the country of origin was and still is regarded as choice that indicated a low level of assimilation. Marriage migration in combination with endogamy is presented both as the cause and as the outcome of failed integration. In the literature on marriage migration the emphasis lies on more exotic countries of origin. Marriage migration from neighbouring countries is, however, in all countries more important, numerically. Women are involved in a mixed marriage, they marry different 'others' than their male counterparts.

The subject of mixed marriages is to some measure related to what is called sex tourism, if it involves men, and romance tourism, if it involves women. Western men and women travel to so-called exotic destinations for sex. Men mostly go to Asian countries, while women go to Kenya, Gambia, and Caribbean islands. In the literature more attention is paid to men than to women. Women are believed to aim for a long-term relationship more than men. The women, who are the partners of Western men, are more frequently referred to as prostitutes, while the local men, who are involved with Western women, are referred to as 'beach boy', 'beach bum', 'gigolo', 'sanky panky', or 'hustler' (Kempadoo 2001). Western men want to save Asian, vulnerable women or girls, while Western women live out a fantasy about 'educating and helping the noble savage', act on ideas about virility of black men, or want to have 'sunshine babies'. The hypersexual 'black male stud' and the 'pliable and obedient' Asian women both represent 'the exotic' to the tourists. Sex tourism or romance holidays are the reason that some types of mixed marriages are distrusted and labelled as bogus marriages.

Domestic servants and the care drain

Stories about domestic servants dominate the literature on gender and migration. This literature is characterised by discussions about restricted rights, poor labour conditions, abuse, and exploitation. There is hardly any attention for the opportunities that this work offers to migrant women. The situation of women is seldom compared to that of migrant men, who also do work that is dirty, dangerous and degrading.

Domestic service over centuries has been an important sector of employment for immigrant and non-immigrant women alike. Many immigrant women worked as domestics. From that point of view domestic work could be labelled as a 'classic immigrant women's niche'. Domestic work was important to migrant women, but migrant women were not in all times and places important to the sector (Moya 2007).

In the literature the concept 'care drain' was introduced: women migrate and care for the children or elders of others in foreign countries, leaving behind dependents in the care of others (Madziva, & Zontini 2012; Lutz & Palenga-Möllenberg 2012). Part of this literature about 'missing mothers' has strong moral undertones: 'we' are depriving children elsewhere of care. This claim is made without proving if those who migrate were indeed caregivers before migration. Furthermore, debates about 'transnational mothering' are not matched by debates about men who leave their children behind, or transnational fathering (Kraler et al 2011). The literature is not about opportunity, but mostly about risk and deprivation.

TRAFFICKING

It can safely be said that the subject of human trafficking is *over-studied*. The literature shows great continuity since the 1850s, with its emphasis on youth, innocence, whiteness, corruption and foreignness (Doezema 2005). Trafficking is used as a synonym for prostitution, which, in turn, is equated with abuse. The migration of women is described in terms of hardship and suffering, often dramatised with heartbreaking personal stories. Claims about the number of trafficked women, are based on poor and inadequate research, all migration of women is regarded as trafficking, and heart breaking stories are used to mobilise support for control and restrictions on

the mobility of women. The sex-trafficking discourse, involving innocent victims, violated borders and criminality, is part of problematising migration and is used to justify restrictive migration policies.

Defining and counting

A large part of the literature deals with attempts to define and count. Which percentage of women who are trafficked work in prostitution? A recurring phrase in reports is 'an unknown but substantial number' (see for instance almost every entry per county in the *US trafficking in persons report 2005*). Trafficking is continuously redefined, making all attempts to count futile. Trafficking is linked to slavery, and human organ harvesting, forced marriages, child abduction, prostitution and female genital cutting. In the 1920s and 1930s trafficking in humans was linked to trafficking in arms and drugs. From the 1990s onwards it was increasingly linked to illegal migration, and later to terrorism.

Personification is and has been for over a century now a favoured strategy of claim makers, and scholars tend to reproduce this strategy: the personal story of a woman or girl is put centre stage. Around 1900, the figurehead victim of white slavery scare was called Maria, currently the stereotypical victim of trafficking is called Natasha, and trafficking is called the Natasha trade (Hughes 2001). Stories about trafficked victims are include personal and heart-breaking details about the lives of the women, who are mostly referred to as girls, even when they are well beyond the age of girlhood. Personification is very effective for drawing attention to a problem, but has the disadvantage that it results in attempts to save the victim, rather than to solve problems.

MULTICULTURALISM AND THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN IN ISLAM

Beginning in the 1960s, in several countries, including UK, Sweden, Germany, Australia, the Netherlands, the US and Canada multiculturalism emerged as an ideology and a policy for managing the cultural diversity that resulted from migration. The multiculturalist policies, pursued many North-Western European countries since the 1970s, 'allowed' immigrants to be different from the rest of the population, and encouraged them to hold on to their language and culture (Schrover 2010). This policy created, stressed and maintained differences between immigrant men and women because it reproduced stereotypical ideas about the roles of men and women in countries of origin. All migrant women were seen as wives and mothers. When the idea of temporariness was dropped, discourse shifted to religion and especially the assumed oppression of women in Islam.

Integration challenges, the veil and stereotypes

This problematisation built on ideas about protectionism and Orientalism, which were formulated in the nineteenth century within a colonial context. European women served as the standard against which women from elsewhere were measured. Muslim women are perceived as exploited victims, handicapped by their cultures of origin (Korteweg & Yurdakul 2008). Issues such as the wearing of headscarves have taken central stage in current integration debates. This discourse – to which some Western feminists and right wing politicians contribute - uses well-worn stereotypes about non-Western women as religious, family-oriented, traditional, and backward.

MOVING THE FIELD FORWARD

It would be possible to move the field forward if there was less personalisation, less often a case approach, more comparisons between migrant men and women, less emphasis on victimhood, less attention to risk and more to opportunity. Migrant women's subordination and victimisation is more often assumed than proven. Migration of women is presented as new, when it is not. Authors still focus too much on the private sphere and on the family. Most importantly, many studies are still activist and normative. Stories contain strong moral undertones and explicit critiques: the descriptions of violence, trafficking, prostitution, and domestic work are frequently also a complaint or a protest.

Not all differences make a difference

Neither the pace, nor the trajectory of integration is the same for immigrant men and women. Furthermore, differences according to gender intersect with the differences according to class, ethnicity/race, religion, age, sexuality, (dis)ability, etceteras. Attempts to grasp and describe all differences lead the reader into a morass, especially when the fluidity of categories, situationality, and temporality are brought into the equation. However, not all differences make a difference. Some differences are problematized and thus affect policies. They are reason to call for (policy) change, intervention, or protection. When it comes to integration policies authorities are attracted to the quadruple whammy: women who discriminated according to ethnicity, gender, class, or religion (especially if they adhere to Islam). 'Multiple discrimination' is attractive to policy-makers because it presents inequalities as similar, and the same approach as a solution to all problems. Advocates of women's right, minority rights, and gay rights buy into this idea and employ similar discourses and strategies in all cases. Overall, the victimized immigrant woman provides the strongest counter identity – 'she' is everything 'we' are not – thus enshrining the idea of a cohesive society, while protectionist claims can muster societal support, thus enforcing the idea of a caring society.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the EUI's Forum, its constituent parties or scientific directors and organisers.

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The **EUI Forum on Migration Citizenship and Demography** is a 2-year programme (2014-2016) that brings together professors, senior fellows, post-doctoral researchers and PhD students from the four EUI departments, the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies and the Max Weber Programme, over a set of themes of common expertise and interest.

Building on a wealth of academic publications, policy papers, conferences and workshops, produced by EUI scholars in the wider field of citizenship and democracy, demography and migration management, cultural diversity and ways to address it, the Forum offers critical analysis, informed debate and policy recommendations.

Topics to be addressed by the Forum activities in the form of Oxford debates, policy workshops and academic conferences include:

- The management of cultural and religious diversity in Europe at times of intensified globalisation trends and increased migration flows
- Balancing demographic and labour market challenges. How to build an effective and efficient migration and migrant integration policy in Europe?
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