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## THROUGH THE LENSES OF FEMINIST THEORY: EXPLORING THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURES OF EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY FOR MIGRANT LEARNERS<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT** This paper explores the contributions offered by feminist theories (feminist constructionism, feminist anti-essentialist critiques, the concept of the feminisation of migration, and intersectional analysis) to analytical inquiries into the migration-education nexus. The paper starts with an extended introduction that situates education concerning migration phenomena as well as the broader contexts of nation building, colonial expansion, and uneven regional development. Its engagement with feminist theories is oriented towards generating a view on education that enables regimes of historical visibility and analytical orientations to complicate the understanding of western and global North countries as spaces of opportunity, fairness, and equal treatment where hard work and proper educational credentials guarantee upward socio-economic mobility to all 'good' migrants. The first part of the paper situates the analytics of feminist constructionism in relation to state interventions at the intersection of migration-education regimes by exploring the confluences between biological and cultural determinism in shaping life prospects of migrants through gendering and racialising the socio-economic roles and hierarchies of human value and potential of present-day globalised order. Starting with the concept of feminisation of migration and concluding with the analytics of intersectionality, the second part of the paper demonstrates how blind spots of research and policies left by research and policy in relation to gendering and racialising processes embedded in historical and contemporary systems of power lead to outcomes that fail to deliver visions for educational equality for migrant learners.

**Keywords:** migrant learners, migrant education, gender, racialisation, intersectionality, feminist constructionism, feminisation of migration, deskilling, educational policy, educational equality

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## AN EXTENDED INTRODUCTION OF THE MIGRATION-EDUCATION NEXUS

In spite of the vocabulary of crisis that currently dominates public discourse about international human mobility, migration is an old phenomenon, which in terms of migrant ratios has stabilised during the past four decades at roughly 3 percent of the global population, with an increase in absolute numbers from 173 million in 2000 to 258 million on 2017 (IOM 2018). Against this background, migrant education constitutes a heterogeneous field of praxis shaped by different theoretical models, local politics, cultural realities, geopolitical positionalities, resource availabilities and emotional orientations.

For more than two centuries, the paradigm of migrant assimilation has dominated the fields of migrant politics and policies. At the centre of the assimilation model sits the figure of the good immigrant – a normative representation of an individual, who upon their arrival in a new country, is able to seamlessly dis-identify with the culture of their origin country, to speak fluently or to swiftly learn a new local language, to attain in educational and professional life as much as other individuals with families that had lived in the country of arrival for many generations. Educational achievement and educational attainment are indicators often employed in the prediction of how well immigrants will do in their new countries. Theresa May's slogan 'we want to attract the brightest, and the best' or Donald Trump's 'merit-based immigration' changes make it clear that education plays a critical role in designating what constitutes desirable arrivals for western and global North globalised economies (Kao, Vaquera, and Goyette 2013, 2–3). However, when anti-immigration sentiments are mobilised for political gain, it is not the image of immigrants who bring ideas and skills that fuel development and innovation that is circulated. The image that dominates media and political discourses alike is that of all the other migrants – those deemed unable to inhabit the normative space of the good migrant. The figure of the undesirable migrant is constructed on premises of failed assimilation and potential risk for criminality, isolationism in culturally 'backward' communities, unfair competition with the unskilled, low paid native-born workers, and burdening the public services such as schools, hospitals and

social security (ibid., 4). The interest of nation-states to cultivate an educated body politic is largely justified by a macroeconomic logic: better educated individuals earn higher wages, contribute higher taxes, spend more on consumer goods, invest into local and national economies, which leads to the potential arrival of new industries, which attract educated workers who in their turn may initiate a new cycle of development of higher status professional jobs, urban revitalisation, tax revenue, and innovation (Kao, Vaquera, and Goyette 2013). At a personal level, when we contemplate the value of education, many of us see it as an enabling condition to our professional journeys and socio-economic aspirations – a form of capital that could be mobilised towards opportunities for upward mobility, and a determining dimension of our sense of identity.

Historically, the purpose of education has been conveyed by narratives that send compelling lines of continuity across millennia. The first textual evidence about educational spaces dates back to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC Ancient Greece, where the word *skholē* meant leisure, philosophy, and a lecture place (Thomas 2013, 30). More than two millennia later, our contemporary understandings of schools have not changed radically. Nowadays, we expect schools to be places where contemplative learning takes place alongside other forms of knowledge production, accumulation and training for productive social roles. In Ancient Greece, Plato argued that an effective educational system should identify interests and aptitudes of each individual in order to cultivate them to their full potential for the appropriate placement in the division of labour of the *polis*. For more than two millennia, whether interests and aptitudes were seen as predetermined as natural gifts or rather having no predetermined limits remained a hot topic for educational and state policy debates. Their different conclusions had markedly different effects at the level of learners' experiences, teachers' pedagogies, and education policy-makers, as the latter two groups act as proxies for the state's interests.

Today, the educational experiences and trajectories of migrants intersect in multiple ways with state's interventions towards the creation of regimes of subordination and privilege, stigmatised and idealised subjects, regimes of intelligibility and cultivated ignorance and resentment. Migrants embrace educational opportunities for the symbolic weight of educational at-

tainment and educational achievement as sources of cultural capital in their new social context, potentially mitigating vulnerabilities emerging from their immigration or refugee status. Education also comes into play in the structuring of the complex arrangements that drive migration when considered from the venture points of sending countries. Tesfaye Semela and Logan Cochrane show that higher educational qualifications tend to boost individuals' perceived competitiveness for employment abroad and in consequence may result in migration aspirations and opportunities for employment abroad (Semela and Cochrane 2019, 15). Conversely, when local educational opportunities are limited due to high costs or poor quality, they lead to low attainment and achievement, which in turn create a pool of workers who might pursue employment in the lower-skilled sectors of the local or international economies. Upon their arrival in their destination countries, many migrants envision education not only as a means towards securing new qualifications that could potentially improve their position on the labour market and improve their occupational, professional and social mobility but also as a path towards gaining recognition for their professional competencies and identities, securing a firmer ground towards socio-cultural integration, as well as towards personal self-improvement (Amthor 2013, 405). Without any doubts, engaging in education after arrival opens up worlds that enable migrants to access more than the new knowledge required by occupational or professional specialisation. Educational environments, degree curricula, pedagogical modalities, and peer-interactions converge into explorations, experiences, and experiential knowledge about social expectations, cultural norms, power hierarchies, and regulatory regimes that shape life realities and prospects at a destination. While processes of minoritarisation have caught the attention of many critical theorists of migration, it is still seldom that migrants' educational experiences, trajectories, and integration are examined through the lens of state's gendering, racialising, and heterosexualising interventions. Such an analytical lens is bound to shed light on how colonialism through its links to globalisation produces and reproduces patterns of exclusion and exploitation through categories of gender, racial and sexual differences and corresponding structures of inequalities. Ultimately, this paper explores the interventions of feminist theories towards generating a view on education that further enables regimes of historical

visibility and analytical orientations that complicate the understanding of western and global North countries as spaces of opportunity, fairness, and equal treatment where hard work and good educational credentials guarantee upward socioeconomic mobility to all good migrants (Kao, Vaquera, and Goyette 2013, 4). The first part of the paper situates the analytics of feminist constructionists concerning state interventions at the migration-education nexus (e.g. the framework of cultural deficit) by examining how biological and cultural determinisms shape life prospects of migrants by gendering and racialising social roles, hierarchies, and human potential. Starting with the concept of the feminisation of migration and concluding with the analytics of intersectionality, the second part of the paper demonstrates how the blind spots of research and policy that do not account for gendering and racialising processes embedded in historical and contemporary systems of power may, in fact, fail to deliver their vision for educational equality for migrant learners.

### **WHAT CAN FEMINIST CONSTRUCTIONISM AND ANTI-ESSENTIALIST CRITIQUES TELL US ABOUT ASSIMILATIONIST VISIONS AND CULTURAL DEFICIT PARADIGMS?**

The scope of feminist theorisation is delineated by arguments and research questions arriving from multiple geographical locations in order to put forth new evidence about the production of complex hierarchies of difference, the social processes that construct the categories of gender, race, and sexuality as natural facts intricately connected with vocabularies and processes of old and new colonisation, globalisation, militarisation, securitisation, as well as to practices of resistance and decolonisation (Disch and Hawkesworth 2016). The designation of sexual dimorphism as a fundamental feature of the human species took off in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, at a time of significant intellectual and political reorganisation. As the natural sciences displaced the authority of theology, proclamations of universal rights were posited as fundamental principles for a new democratic order. During the centuries that followed, reproductive physiology became the crux of biological foundationalist ideas that insisted on classifying hormones and chromosomes, behavioural traits and psychological characteristics, physical attributes, and developmental process-

es into dichotomous categories (Kesller and McKenna 1978). Psychologists Suzzane Kesller and Wendy McKenna explain that: “Biological, psychological, and social differences do not lead to our seeing two genders. Our seeing two genders leads to the ‘discovery’ of biological, psychological and social differences” (Kesller and McKenna 1978, 163). In her latest book, *Gender and Political Theory* (2019) a political scientist and philosopher of science, Mary Hawkesworth places gendering in relation to the complex processes of modern nation-building and European colonial expansion. First, Hawkesworth explicates that the fluidity of human embodiment and human behaviour has never fitted the definition of a natural kind. No ultimate essence of maleness and femaleness or masculinity and femininity has been so far identified as independent of the observer and the historical context of observation. The meanings attached to maleness and femaleness or masculinity and femininity in the course of scientific inquiry had been constituted within larger socio-economic projects to render populations administratively manageable, to create gendered structures of labour that served the interest of industrialising and colonising economies, and to consolidate structures that fortified women’s exclusion from public life and political participation. In the United States (US), Hawkesworth explains that in addition to gender, the notion of the state and the practice of democratic governance have also relied on exclusion mechanisms that consolidated the country as a white-race nation. To this end, supposedly gender and race-neutral prerequisites for voting rights – literacy tests, poll taxes or property requirements – had, in fact, produced gendered and racialised effects of excluding black women and men, along with immigrant populations from participation in political processes. Within the context of the newly proclaimed republics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, the proponents of liberty, equality and fraternity also passed legislation to bar women from participation in political clubs, political organisations and public office. The discursive structures that linked women to the so-called private sphere imposed not only a normative framework but also naturalised women’s subordination through biologist arguments about women’s reproductive roles in relation to their families, communities and the nation. Such arguments are still deployed today as effective rhetorical devices that mask masculinist privilege and reproduce women’s subordination and heteronormativity at an institutional level and every-day practice (Hawkesworth 2019).

Sexual dimorphism and the dichotomisation of gender also became the underlying arguments for the compulsory heterosexualisation of love and desire. Back to the US, between 1848 and 1915, sumptuary laws were put in place to police alleged gender fraud. These legal measures sanctioned deviations from dress codes that marked boundaries of gender, class and race. In the case of women, wearing men's clothing was construed as an act intentionally directed to gaining economic social and political advantage. Ultimately, these laws coercively consolidated notions about the kind of clothing that is appropriate for each sex and transformed clothing into a marker that signalled to the police who belongs in the public space. The social effects of the sumptuary laws continue to be present today in the policing of transgender and queer communities – an exclusion from public space which is deployed as a powerful strategy to regulate gender transgression (Sears in Hawkesworth 2019).

In the same vein with the production of sex, gender and sexuality, the categories of race and ethnicity are also historical constructs which have been naturalised. Their formation at the confluence of scientific knowledge and state's investments in population classification, management and administration has been obscured – a state of affairs which effectively mask the failure of the state to enact justice and equality (Hawkesworth 2016). The racial classifications that emerged with the 17<sup>th</sup>-century British involvement in the slave trade, plantation economies, and global trade with sugar, tea, chocolate, and tobacco consolidated by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century into theories that claimed to have identified and described human variations. With them, the concept of race became key to the explanations of human variation. The works of Scottish natural scientist, Robert Knox and the writings of French aristocrat, Arthur de Gobineau established it in the public imaginary in connection to following four assumptions: first, the humankind can be divided in a limited number of distinct and permanent races; second, particular physical markers such as skin colour, physiognomy, hair texture are characteristic to a specific race; third, each race also manifests discrete cultural, social and moral characteristics; and fourth, the existent races are hierarchically situated on a continuum of aptitude and beauty, ranking whites at the most accomplished and the blacks at the bottom of the hierarchy (Rattansi 2007, 31). A British sociologist Ali Rattansi explains that ideas of the racial

hierarchy were interlocked with concepts of racial abnormality and notions of social and sexual deviance. Gender, sexuality and political actions oriented towards challenging the status quo swap places with physical traits and geography when racialisation was discussed. Thus, Rattansi points out that

“[m]ilitant sections of the working class, the Irish, Jews, homosexuals, prostitutes, and the insane were regarded as racial deviants. Women who worked, and thus transgressed the Victorian boundary between private and public, were treated as examples of racial regression” (Rattansi 2007, 46).

Moreover,

“[m]etaphors of the family, paternalism and historical progress allowed women, the working class, and inferior races in the colonies alike to be portrayed as child-like and requiring the firm but benign hand of the white middle- and upper- class male. The empire was seen as a ‘family’, and both women and inferior races thus became part of a natural order ruled over benignly by white middle- and upper-class males at home and abroad” (ibid.).

The racial logic of colonialism was often contradictory, which led to uneven impacts on the colonised territories. The complexities of gendering, racialisation and status differentiation through settler colonialism and the impact that these processes have had on education are instructive in the case of India. British colonisers having had high regard for Indian intellectual abilities led to the implementation of a system of English language schools and universities. This measure set off the process of Anglicisation – a social phenomenon which later on weaved into the development of a nationalist movement that eventually led the downfall of British rule (ibid.). Concomitant conceptions of Indian society as static and authoritarian, Hindu populations as an inferior race, Indian architecture, arts, industry and textiles as outstandingly accomplished, Indian intellectuals as highly regarded, and Indian women as sexually alluring coexisted at the time of British colonial expansion. Against the backdrop of this complex representational tableaux British politician Thomas Babington Macaulay proposed to establish in India a system of education that would produce “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in

taste, opinions, in morals, and in intellect”, who could act as “interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern” (Macaulay in Rattansi 2007, 48). The establishment of English language schools and universities constituted the cornerstone of India’s Anglicisation – a process that went hand in hand with attempts by the British colonial authorities to racially classify the local population. The resultant racial typologies were based on aesthetic, evolutionary and martial prowess criteria which became intertwined with the British limited understanding of cast divisions and its interest to establish criteria for army recruitments (Rattansi 2007).

Hierarchies of human difference continue to sustain the complicity of the state and education with colonial systems of expansion, representation and knowledge production. As the language of formal equality becomes increasingly uncontested, contemporary frameworks of inclusion have been built upon notions of difference that have gone unchallenged in the mainstream since the age of the revolutions. Harking back to postcolonial and decolonial theorists, Hawkesworth calls attention to the production and naturalisation of citizenship within contexts of settler colonial societies through violent expulsion and extermination, the imposition of temporalities that positions modernity as the aim of all supposed traditional societies, and the classification of the world into primitive or backward peoples and civilised and civilising ones. Ultimately the naturalisation of race and gender renders invisible the fact that these categories were created in order to sustain divisions of labour, social stratification, modes of subjectification that justify what came to constitute a fair distribution of rights, benefits, opportunities, and resources.

Notions of race based on the biological referents of the 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have become complemented by modes of racialisation argued on the basis of ethnic and cultural differences. The latter has been conceptualised on a continuum that spans fixity to malleability. The entanglement of biologically determinist notions of race with the ideas of cultural and civilisational specificity is coterminous with the 18<sup>th</sup>-century onset of Western European nation-building processes. Since then, cultural and biological racialization have colluded into paradigms of deficit that nowadays, still saturate educational and social policies targeting impoverished populations and immigrant groups. Biologist or culturalist strands are weaved together

with ideas of malleability or essentialism to potentiate notions of cultural deficit in ways that render critical interventions difficult.

The concept of ethnicity itself is genealogically linked to state's assimilationist practices. Within the context of the US, the term ethnicity has been instrumental to the creation of a white nation by foregrounding whiteness, eliding racial differences among immigrant whites, and thus, via cultural homogeneity, setting the ground for the inclusion of immigrant whites into naturalised citizenship (Haney López 1997). The work of urban sociologist Robert E. Park, which shaped the paradigm of assimilation at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, set out a national system that allows for slippages between race and culture. Park's "race relation cycle" identifies a four-stage cycle of events undergone by the newly arrived at every destination point. Contact, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation mark in his view the experiences of all ethnic groups (Park in Desmond and Emirbayer 2010). Hawkesworth calls attention to the fact that the gradual arrival to integration and material stability of Irish, German, Italian and Jewish immigrants situates the notion of ethnicity as a seemingly neutral and inclusive category and the process of assimilation open to all arriving groups. To belong to the US body politic was presented to be achievable on voluntary and non-exclusionary grounds. And yet, Hawkesworth clarifies that

“this characterisation obscured the processes of racialisation that marked certain epee of colour (African Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans) as unassimilable. In conceptualising ethnicity in relation to growing assimilation of white ethnics, social science laid the foundations for an account of certain ‘cultures’ as ‘defective’ – or indeed pathological – because they allegedly produced individuals who failed to take advantage of opportunities for assimilation” (Hawkesworth 2019, 9–10).

Kyla Schuller's incursions into the archives of scientific, political and social thought of the nineteenth and early twenties century America illustrate the intertwined operations of knowledge production, state, and social reform institutions in the construction and legitimisation of a gendered-racialised hierarchy of human life at the migration-education nexus. Stemming from the work of English philosopher John Locke, who favoured the role of ed-

ucation and environmental influences in shaping mind and character, and from Lamarck's social evolutionary arguments, which placed the "potency of the environment" behind the emergence of physical and mental adaptations, the categorisation of white middle- and upper-classes as already civilised and then lower-class white, brown, or black as still uncivilised but potentially impressible with the qualities of civilisation if placed in the right circumstances became the crux of migrant children's education (Schuller 2018a, 161). Against the backdrop of multiethnic Lower East Side Manhattan, the Irish, German, and Italian children were viewed "as animalistic subjects of evolutionary time who could be made redeemable through the repetitive movements of labor and the habits of civilisation" (ibid., 142). The multicultural tenements were construed as corrupting influences for these immigrant children. Thus the social reformers of the time benevolently intervened to rescue them from their own culture and make best of their plastic capacity for adaptation by separating them from their families and re-emplacing them with Midwestern white rural families (ibid., 163). This strategy of population optimisation came as a continuation of a longer history of deploying orphans a political colonial strategy and demographic intervention to settle territory and whiten indigenous populations.

The production of a civilised population by the logic of biopolitics and necropolitics were also reliant on notions of sexual difference, which are argued by Schuller to have emerged as a function of race. The archive unveiled that "a wide variety of scientists, writers, and reformers articulated full sexual differentiation as the unique achievement of the civilised" and femininity became "a stabilising structure of whiteness" with reverberations in contemporary conservative thought that still assigns women the role of protector of the private sphere (Schuller 2018b). In this way, immigrant girls had restricted access to educational and environmental optimisation on the consideration of their capacity to change reached by the age of 12 "a nervous fixity and sexual maturity too soon, rendering null reformers' efforts to impress a new layer on them". Immigrant girls were assumed that by that age they would have already engaged in prostitution thus their minds, characters, behaviour and bodies had already been shaped by the impressions of a bad environment thus unable to become protectors of the private sphere, conduits of reproductive monogamy, and agents of stability for

the civilised races (Schuller 2018a). The biopolitical and necropolitical aims and consequences of these strategies moment are significant. Biopolitically, they enabled urban management interventions, labour supply solutions for capitalist enterprises and cheap labour for agriculture. Necropolitically, they led to the consolidation of discourses that subjectify different groups as socio-economic and cultural threats and for these reasons legitimise their social, civil, or biological death (Mbembe 2003). Schuller's study not only demonstrates the co-constituted production of ideas about gender, race and class but equally important, it renders visible the interconnectedness of scientific agendas, pedagogical interventions and capitalist political economies of colonialism.

The contemporary model of the cultural deficit has its roots ambiguously entangled with notions of cultural essentialism as well as with different strands of social and biological evolutionism, some of which emphasised the plasticity of bodies, others stressing their fixity, and yet others focussing on their gendered and racialised responses to the influences from environs and education. Rattansi underlines that increasingly within the context of the UK and Europe, notions of superiority and inferiority congeal around perceptions of cultural difference. For native-born citizens, the centrality of culture in their new definitions of human difference is often accompanied by effects of fear and preoccupations about immigrant groups changing the local national character and jeopardising their livelihood (Rattansi 2007, 46). Nevertheless, these tendencies unfolded simultaneously with an increased disavowal of racism by many citizens, the recognition for the need for educational measures that combat racism, the implementation of affirmative action programs to undo the effects of historical racial discrimination, and a mainstreaming of multiculturalism in everyday life and urban politics. Given the composite character of social attitudes, the latter changes have not been received without contestations. The feelings of loss that ensued as the old empires ended and the shift in the directionality of human mobility towards Europe led to labelling these measures as manifestations of reversed racism, thus eliding the history, power differentials, and discrimination effects that they seek to remedy (ibid., 2–3). Similar political devices are employed in France by the current leader of the National Front, Marine Le Pen. Here Rattansi identified the emergence of an analytical distinction between the inegalitarian mechanisms of old ra-

cialization that treated non-whites as inferior, and post-colonial mechanisms of racialization grounded in cultural differentialism. He explains that such analytical distinctions end up promoting “policies of excluding non-white minorities on the grounds that their cultures are incompatible with the French national culture or way of life” (ibid., 46).

At this juncture, it is important to call attention to the deterministic and essentialist currents that shape deployments of culture intended to obscure the minutely complicated ways in which identities are constructed and negotiated. Harking back to Uma Narayan’s 2000 article “The Package Picture of Cultures”, I remind us all that when the notion of culture is deployed in the form of a neatly contained ‘package’ by way of explaining variations in human behaviour across the globe, the heterogeneity of positionalities pertaining to social, political, economic and even cultural locations is lost to a false premise of cultural homogeneity which borrows from colonial representational registers which sustain notions such as ‘Western culture,’ ‘non-Western culture,’ ‘Eastern Europeans’ and ‘Muslim women or men’. Once again, accepting that the assignment of individuals to a particular culture is straightforward marks our complicity with state’s interests in population administration and management as this acceptance obscures the long intertwined genealogies of category formation and political interest. Narayan stresses that when women from the so-called third world cross borders through migration, upon their arrival in the countries of destination, their hardships are predominantly addressed through the use of cultural framing. This argumentation separates them from native women who encounter similar hardships, which in their case, are not attributed to the culture of the receiving country. Counterposing gender equality and multiculturalism as two separate social justice projects that are in conflict is concerning. As pointed out by Anne Phillips (Phillips 2007), addressing the inequalities experienced by women and ethnic minorities should, in fact, constitute an integral project that does not isolate gender equality from a culture in the form of an abstract notion. Retracing Narayan and Phillips argumentation, Trude Langvasbråten explains that

“equality is, in common with other norms concerning gender, deeply embedded in culture both in majorities and minorities. The existence of a deep value

conflict between gender and culture is therefore overstated, and when claims collide they should be addressed and balanced in the concrete situations in which they appear” (Langvasbråten 2008, 5).

By tracing the genealogy of the subjectification of Muslim young men, Clare Alexander discovered that contemporary discourses recycle tropes previously used to characterise young Black men and their communities in the 1970s:

“As with Black young men from the 1970s, Muslim young men were seen as ‘in crisis’ – caught between an anachronistic parental culture and holistic wider society, failing in mainstream masculine social roles as breadwinners, and turning to crime and violence to compensate for this. As the 1990s wore on, this spectre of three was compounded by the fear of rising religiosity and fundamentalist ideologies... With emergence of social unrest (riots), explanations fell into two camps: those focusing on structural issues of socio-economic marginalisation and neglect in a situation of post-industrial decline; and those stressing cultural dysfunction, crime, and law and order... These two strands were increasingly indistinguishable, with poverty and unemployment being increasingly explained through the lens of ‘culture’ and ‘choice’, and with the Muslim underclass standing at the crossroad of religious, cultural, and class failure – the cultural deficit model of inequality” (Alexander 2010, 275).

When immigrant groups are framed by media and policy as ‘problems,’ this framing relies on understandings of ethnic or national differences that insert gendering notions into the sociological frameworks of ‘cultures of poverty,’ ‘cultural deprivation’ or ‘social disorganisation.’ Historically, these concepts have been deployed as discursive tools to obscure the genealogies of migrant arrivals, their intertwinements with racialised political economies of enslavement, incorporation, impoverishment, and imprisonment and ultimately, the continuities between the colonial era and the structural conditions that embed their lives of some migrant groups contemporarily (Zambrana 2013, 136–137). Within the context of the US, Ruth Zambrana calls attention to the gendering of Latina women as “too maternal and submissive to men” or that of Asian women as “passive and content with their

roles” (ibid., 138). Such constructs are integral to gendered explanations that confound divergences from white and middle-class gender normativities as causes of ethnicised and racialised groups vulnerability, marginalisation or impoverishment. The work of such mythologies continues to infiltrate the processes and findings of research in the fields of migration and education that do take gender into consideration. If mothers, as biological and cultural reproducers of particular groups, are linked causally to the problems that their communities confront, their children, particularly boys, become the educational manifestations of these cultural inadequacies. It is essential to recognise that important challenges to the model of cultural deficit have been launched in migration-education research. Edward M Olivos’ (2006) research on Latinx students parents’ engagement astutely shifts the analytical focus from the cultural paradigm of perceived parental deficiencies to understanding limited parental involvement as “a consequence of social inequities which remain unaddressed in the institutional context of public education” such as immigration status, language proficiency, socioeconomic status, as well as race and ethnicity (Olivos and Mendoza 2010, 339, 352; Olivos 2006).

From the 1970s onwards, feminist scholars have been intent on including the realities of women’s lives within the scope of social, policy, and politics research. The analytical lenses of ‘sexism,’ ‘gender socialisation,’ ‘gender roles,’ and ‘gender barriers’ were employed to analyse women’s educational attainment and its relations to employment prospects, everyday work experiences, or employment trajectories (Zambrana 2013, 138). The feminist work that emerged in the 1970s marked not only the development of innovative epistemologies and methodologies but became part and parcel of political arguments that advanced policy agendas for more gender-equitable educational and work environments. Yet, when deployed towards the realities of racialised groups and immigrant communities, it is essential to point out that their explanatory power has proved limited. Such analytics have failed to recognise not only the historical conditions of racialised and ethnicised women, but equally important, many such explanations bypassed or even erased the transformative resistances, negotiations, and contestations that took place within and across racialised and ethnicised communities. More than two decades ago, Zambrana cogently argued against the expend-

iture of intellectual energy in the correction of stereotypes and “illogical conclusions”. Instead, she argued, feminist scholars should set “interdisciplinary foundations for reformulation of concepts such as socialisation, identity, culture, bicultural socialisation, and recognition of institutional dimensions” (ibid., 143). While the dynamics of gendered racialising/ethnicising and racialised/ethnicised gendering remain marginal within the many disciplinary spaces of psychological, social, political, and ecumenical studies, faulty explanations like the ones examined by Zambrana are still in use. Hence the continued relevance of her vision in regard to what feminist scholars of migration and education should orient their work: “Our task, however, is to assure that our research is not circumscribed within the parameters set up by the myth” (ibid.).

In 2006 Carola Suarez-Orozco and Desiree Baolian Qin published a survey of the psychological literature that explored at the time the gendered dimensions of immigrant youth’s educational experiences in the US. They called attention to the fact that immigrant boys lagged behind immigrant girls in academic outcomes and schooling attainment across ethnic groups. A similar gender gap was documented in Canada, and studies conducted in France and the UK in the late 1990s identified similar gendered patterns of educational outcomes among children of North African origins (Raissiguier, Hassini and Haw in Suarez-Orozco and Baolian Qin 2006). It is important to note that exceptions and variations occur in relation to particular groups of immigrant students and specific subject areas as well as across countries. Whereas similar gendered patterns are observed in the case of native students, the authors pointed out that the gender gap in educational outcomes, attainment and aspirations is more pronounced in the case of immigrant students. Two types of arguments were used to explain the existence of this pattern: on one side students’ attitudes, behaviours and peer relationships, and on the other side, teachers’ lack of support and appropriate pedagogical approaches. While boys and girls develop different types of social relationships, it is argued that immigrant girls develop friendships around schoolwork and academic interests in contrast to boys whose friendships tend to be less about school work. In relation to teachers, the evidence shows that teachers tend to be less understanding and supportive of young immigrant boys who are perceived to be causing discipline issues. Many of

such behaviours conform to performance scripts of hegemonic masculinity endorsed by the students' age group and are sanctioned positively through peer pressure dynamics (Gillock and Midgley, Ginorio and Huston, López in Suarez-Orozco and Baolian Qin 2006). In response to what some immigrant boys perceive as a lack of support from teachers and schools, and more generally as a threat to their sense of identity, they embrace an oppositional stance towards the educational system. The term that was coined to encapsulate this phenomenon is 'protest masculinity.' It is argued that performances of 'protest masculinity' raise the risks of low attainment, unemployment and recruitment into structures of delinquency, thus augmenting the effects of structural obstacles and inadequate pedagogies encountered by immigrant boys (Gibson in Suarez-Orozco and Baolian Qin 2006, 184). As a final consideration of "whether, and if so, how, when, and why it makes a difference been an immigrant or being from a particular count or being female rather than male", Suarez-Orozco and Baolian Qin (2006, 185) conclude such determinations could be made only as simultaneous consideration of the impacts of different articulations of socio-economic realities experienced by migrant students before migration, during their transition history through various receiving national contexts, and certainly after settlement. Given the emergence of the concept of protest masculinity at the migration-education nexus, it is important to point out that its analytics breaks away from cultural essentialist explanations by focusing on present-day peer, pedagogical and institutional interactions. Depending on the conclusion and recommendations tied to its analytics, immigrant boys' protest masculinity can nevertheless reconnect with a host of genealogies that naturalise normative gender notions that on one side link the political to the masculine, and on the other side, delegitimise political behaviour of marginalised groups by labelling protest as social disturbance or cause of their marginalised condition. In addition, it contributes to the masculinisation of the ongoing moral panic around immigration that congeals around ideas that immigrant men may damage the progressive socio-cultural structures of their receiving nations.

Thus, can culture and social change be employed side by side in analytics that bypasses essentialisms and renders visible the processes, negotiations, agencies, and barriers that shape the educational outcomes for migrant learn-

ers, particularly in relation to gendered, racialised, classed and heteronormative positions? To return to the concept of protest masculinity, the more recent work of Scott Poynting, Greg Novle and Paul Tabar (1999) documents the deployment of ‘protest masculinity’ against injuries of racism based on rationales of ideological ‘inversions’ and ‘ideational resolutions.’ Stemming out of ethnographic work conducted with teenage male secondary school students of Arabic-speaking background in a working-class suburb of Sydney, their narrative analysis shows that in arriving at these discursive solutions, students drew from their social interactions with peers of different backgrounds, their parents, extended families and communities, and teachers. In documenting the intricate ways in which their research participants dynamically incorporate social relations marked by ethnicity, experiences of racism, and their sense of gender identity into the scripts and performances of protest masculinity, the authors go past its mere identification as another source of low attainment. Poynting, Novle and Tabar urge teachers, administrators, policy-makers, politicians, and the media to reframe the public, press, political and professional concerns about the education of immigrant boys education away from tropes of moral panic, ethnic gangs and other stereotypical registers to modes that interrogate and illuminate how “ethnocentrism in and around schools” opens way to gendered racism and consequently exclusion and failed human potential (Poynting, Novle and Tabar 1999, 59).

To conclude the first part of my explorations, feminist constructionist theories render visible the interlocking formations of gender, sex, sexuality, race and ethnicity as political constructs situated historically and culturally and not mere descriptors of natural given qualities. These categories are in urgent need of denaturalisation as they create and sustain hierarchised divisions, modes of domination, and material conditions for labour extraction and militarisation within and across national borders, which continually yet ambivalently reinscribe the intellectual contours of old colonialisms into the new structures of global neoliberalism (Hawkesworth and Disch 2016, 4). Ultimately, such analytical orientations can prompt researchers of the migration/education nexus to look not only into how structures of gendering, racialisation and heterosexualisation shape the trajectories and experiences of migrants but also the ways public institutions frame the terms of the possibility for migrant life.

## **FROM THE FEMINISATION OF MIGRATION TO INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS: A CRITICAL VIEW TO RECEPTION PROGRAMS, VOCATIONAL TRACKING, AND GENDERED-DESKILLING**

Notions of knowledge or smart economies are now tropes integrated into discourses of national identity alongside ideas of neoliberal subjectivity, development, and valuation. Together with them, contemporary biopolitics and necropolitics gain new functions at the intersections of migration, education and utility. Eleanor L. Brown (2013) documented that from the perspective of education and employment, nation-states respond to the specific presence of refugees and asylum-seekers with interventions that range from proactive intervention towards cultural inclusion, equitable access to education, skill development and employment opportunities, recognition of academic credentials and qualifications to marginalisation, rejection of qualifications and academic credentials, withholding epistemic authority, lack of acknowledgement and respect of their culture. The latter responses function as barriers to social integration and upward economic mobility as they cultivate economic disadvantage and dependence, psychological insecurity, academic failure, cultural isolation and an overall loss of human potential. Anna Krasteva (2013) argues that the educational measures put in place by receiving countries are in direct relation with their demographic goals, local and national commitments to multiculturalism, resources available, numbers of received refugees, and the political agendas of political, governmental and administrative elites. In the UK, the main intervention target is the achievement of English language proficiency, which is considered to be the leading risk factor for low attainment among recent international arrival students (Strand et al. 2015). To this end, schools can access funding based on their enrolment numbers of underachieving ethnic minority students and English language learners to meet the costs of additional support teachers (Nusche 2009, 18). Mechtild Gomolla (2006) has noted that in order to access such resources, schools are required to provide a clear methodology for identifying inequalities, designing modes of intervention, and monitoring progress and evaluating success. In order to achieve these requirements, schools have to place ethnic monitoring at the heart of collecting and analysing achievement data.

Mondli Hlatshwayo and Salim Vally's (2014) analysis of the barriers faced by immigrants and refugees in South Africa identifies multiple factors that not only reduce their educational attainments but also prevent them from accessing public education. Among the latter, the authors highlight institutional and everyday xenophobia and prejudice, administrative-bureaucratic hindrances such as lack of documentation, language differences, and the limited scope of public resources. Hlatshwayo and Vally emphasise the role of public resentments toward migrants, who are perceived to overcrowd and drain the education system. Once again, these sentiments do not go unchallenged. They are confronted by counter-narratives and alternative discourses for educational equality from the part of civil society organisations. NGOs supplement the state resources targeting migrant learners with donor-funded programs aimed specifically at the inclusion of the migrant children most at risk to fall between the cracks of the public education systems.

In relation to migrants' education, France enacts the classic instantiation of civic republicanism, with measures meant to set a direct link between the state and its populace, thus bypassing the mediation of communities. The reception classes welcoming migrant students are structured by age, specific study hours and French language instruction. Anna Krasteva specifies that the school is ultimately viewed in France as "as a space for integration and excessive differentiation is not stimulated" (Krasteva 2013, 13). Because residential segregation patterns show that particular areas tend to be inhabited preponderantly by migrants and since migrants students cannot be singled out for specifically funded programmes on the basis of ethnicity for constitutional reasons, they may only indirectly benefit from French Priority Education Zones (ZEP) area policies. These policies are meant to supplement teaching and non-teaching activities through the provision of additional funding on grounds of socio-economic and educational disadvantage. The shortcomings of this system of support continue to be analysed and debated due to its limited scope in terms of available resources, lack of improved educational outcomes, the flight of middle-class students from ZEP, the stigmatising effect for the remaining students, parents and teachers serviced by ZEP (Nusche 2009).

Far apart from France, Switzerland implements a programme titled Quality in Multi-Ethnic Schools (QMES). QMES is directed to schools with more

than 40% enrolment of students from migrant backgrounds. The programme targets ethnic and cultural diversity directly by ensuring that additional financial resources alongside teaching and administrative support. The supplementary funds can be channelled towards the provision of

“attractive incentives and professional support, additional support from the local administration, including advisory services, professional development, materials, handbooks, local networks and evaluations, ... [to enhance] cooperation between schools and the local administration, ... [to offer] language instruction, adaptation of assessments to the needs of linguistic and socio-cultural diversity, and an inclusive and non-discriminatory school ethos” (Gomolla in Nusche 2009, 21).

In sum, migrants' entrance into education, their school careers and final educational outcomes are determined by a multitude of factors which are embedded in geopolitical arrangements that have also shaped the parameters of their international mobility. The policies and institutional arrangements that shape educational opportunities during transition, arrival, and settlement are the most important determinants of their futures. Migration scholar Maurice Crul emphasises the fact that migrants and particularly refugee children run a very high risk of becoming a 'lost generation.' As a means of prevention, many migration and education researchers have surveyed and evaluated what could count as best practices for equalising the field of educational, and later on the employment opportunities for migrant learners. By looking at Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, and Turkey, Crul concluded that “equality in education is not the reality of refugee learners” (Crul 2017). By foregrounding age as analytics, he concluded that younger migrant students seem to have fewer difficulties in integration compared with students who transition to different school systems, unfamiliar linguistic terrains, social environments devoid of networks, and very likely high-density classes, and segregated communities around the end of compulsory education. When migrant learners are offered educational opportunities that do not match their educational and professional aspirations nor their intellectual abilities and learning capabilities, young people are tracked into vocational training, which does not equip them with equal

chances to compete on local labour markets. This is not to deny the recognition of value in the case of occupations and livelihoods which may follow vocational training. Crul's recommendations emphasise that migrant learners' access to all schooling opportunities, from preschool to post-compulsory education, irrespective of entrance age, is the cornerstone of equality in education. The specificity of migrant learners' life circumstances has to be addressed in the form of additional support designed to maximise their chances of continuing on academic tracks and thus to bypass the failed aspirations and waste of talent and ability that occurs when migrant learners are directed towards the lowest vocational tracks. Finally, introductory courses or academic terms designed to welcome migrant learners and to clarify the meanings of new educational contexts, continued second language support past the introductory stages of transition, and the multiplication of the paths that lead into adult education are measures which stave off a lack of educational achievement among migrant learners.

Rifat Mahbub (2015) points out that studies that account for the educational histories and social positionalities of migrant learners' pre-migration lives tend to show that families with a high level of educational achievement and families who offer extensive educational support pre-migration tend to lead to better post-migration educational outcomes for their children. Most importantly, such an analytical approach also dismantles a simplistic representation of sending countries as culturally backward or homogeneously impoverished. When pre-migration educational achievement levels are considered in relation to the professional trajectories of adult migrants, the empirical evidence unveils rather a tenuous picture with significant exceptions which call for different analytical perspectives. Mahbub shows that in south Asian countries like Bangladesh, India or Sri Lanka, the progressive changes in girls and women's education have not been caught up with by their subsequent employment or economic autonomy. Conservative ideologies, normative scripts of middle-class femininity continue to be in tension with high levels of education while aligning with the gender norms that govern employability and success in the labour market locally. Increasingly national educational agendas of the region are being reshaped to enable higher education to fulfil the goal of 'grooming for the global,' hence the following suit with larger trends of educational privatisation and internationalisation and increase out-migra-

tion. The negotiations that girls and women carry out to reconcile tensions between academic achievement, social class, gender norms and heteronormativities deserve attention at this juncture where the local educational systems and labour markets meet those of transnational scale. Mahbub's (2015) own empirical research on educated Bangladeshi women in the UK uses new methodological orientations towards more sustained analytical engagements with the pre-migration lives of migrants. He argues that "the focus on the 'past' and the 'past through the present'" generates contextual knowledge about the pre-migration education of migrants that could further shed light on questions such as "What happens to those women who move between education and employment systems in different countries? How might their achievements be recognised and what does this mean for their future participation in employment?" (Mahbub 2015, 873). The women in his study were middle-class and had very high levels of achievement. In all their cases, gender, as well as class, were identified as strong determinants of the qualifications levels that they had been able to achieve in their home country of Bangladesh. Once arrived in the UK, the specialities of their high qualifications led to differential access to the labour market. Academic degrees in engineering and hard sciences were more readily recognised, consequently they facilitated more rapid access to well established and respected professional jobs. Mahbub's study demonstrates that qualifications are organised in hierarchised structures which inflect fine differences in terms of how girls and women become recognised as a particular type of achievers (*ibid.*, 885). In the UK, engineering and science professions continue to function as gendered masculine fields of employment due to a wide range of factors among which lack of public care for dependent children, insufficient resources for training, and lack of opportunities for career advancement lack of encouragement from management (Wynarczyk and Render 2006). The hierarchised system of achievement analysed by Mahbub is also shaped by UK gender structures of labour which come to affect the lives of highly educated women from Bangladesh beyond the scope of gender relations within the family, gender norms back home, and recent changes that reshaped education into a preparatory process for global high-skilled labour markets.

The recent call of migration scholars for more analytical attention be given to the pre-migration context of migrants' lives enabled an analytical arc that rendered visible the fact that some women arrive in their new host countries

from positions of relative class privilege, and professional work experiences. Such findings called for an analytical lens that reaches past an additive model of gender roles and class positionality. In trying to identify other pre-migration that lead to women's professional deskilling in host countries, Semela and Cochrane (2019) oriented their analysis towards the conditions that lead to displacement from their places of origin. Certainly during the current times when migration is a hot button issue for xenophobic discourses and anti-asylum seeker, anti-refugee and anti-immigrant sentiments in Europe and the US, explanatory models that present migration as primarily driven by 'opportunity abroad' are blown up of proportion to the point where they foreclose analytical nuance. Semela and Cochrane remind scholars and the public that migration is equally driven by "vulnerability in their place of origin" (Semela and Cochrane 2019, 15). When the vicissitudes of war, gang violence, civil war, neoliberal economic policies or economic restructuring destroy people's lives across the globe, countless refugees, asylum seekers and "many others who are framed as economic migrants or economic victims" are forced to accept "work opportunities ... often precarious, low-paid and operate with restrictive agreements" (ibid.). In addition to Semela and Cochrane's point, Jade Larissa Schiff calls attention to the fact that the structural injustices faced by refugees, in particular, are rooted in "an international order that privileges sovereign boundaries over movement and citizenship over non-citizenship, an international society that privileges conformity over nonconformity, and the global economy in which the stateless are deemed superfluous" (Schiff 2018, 737-738). Moreover, the boundaries of citizenship unequivocally exclude asylum seekers, who on their journeys towards citizenship are subjected to processes of evaluation and recognition reliant on objective requirements and subjective criteria often shaped by racialising discourses and gender- and class-normative notions of 'good' and 'bad' character (Kapoor and Narcowicz in Lovin forthcoming). Even in receiving countries with conducive policy frameworks and within the contexts of professional fields which tend to incorporate highly skilled migrant labour more readily, a closer look at gender differentiation through the analytical linking of pre-migration and post-migration structural conditions is instructive.

In his survey of Ireland's provision for refugee and migrant education, Karl Kitching traced the arc of state strategies by linking it to Ireland's shift

from net emigration to immigration in 1996. Thus the Vietnamese refugees who arrived in Ireland in 1976 were met with no cultural and language support, which in turn paved the way to societal marginalisation, early school leaving and low English proficiency. More than a decade later, a reception centre was established in anticipation of the arrival of Bosnian refugees in 1992. In the same year, the Department of Education issues a green paper on the educational needs of the Travelling community, and it would not be until 1996 that the idea of school support for migrant learners enters policy and educational praxis.

Kitching is among the few scholars who approach migrant education policies and practices through the lens of critical race theory and calls attention to the fact that many “liberal state strategies of language support [which] neglect the heterogeneity of English language practices available to, created and taken up by students of various ethnic heritages, hybridised and classed locations” (Kitching 2014, 221). Secondly, even in contexts that acknowledge the multiculturalism of their polities, education policies tend to reproduce neoliberal vocabularies and rationales of “econo-individualism” and frame newcomers in “overly-idealised rational choice terms”, which strongly facilitate racialisation anew and may facilitate evidence of good/bad constitutions of migrants in local schools (ibid., 225). In Kitching’s astute critique it is essential to approach even the formation of desirable learner identities through an anti-racist critique that combines macro and micro planes of analysis by taking into consideration the interactions of structural and institutional racisms with everyday life instances of their reaffirmations and refutations.

Within the more migration favourable context of Scotland, the asylum seekers and refugees articulated critiques of that linked institutional forces with economic and sociocultural structures of domination. Among them, racialised assumptions about cultural difference, gendered divisions of work, informal economies reliant on gendered and racialised migrant work ultimately produced refugee and asylum-seeking women in particular as low-skilled feminised workers. Scotland’s commitment to ensuring that migrants have access to education, employment, and consultative policy-making process led to the identification of gendered specific barriers. The shortage of affordable childcare and gender norms that attribute childcare

to women within the home, prevent refugee and asylum-seeking women from taking on educational opportunities such as English language classes and professional training. Deskilling and underemployment in feminised sectors of the local economy have been connected simultaneously to difficulties in the recognition of qualifications for skilled employment as well as in relations to the available paths towards postgraduate training for new specialisations. The production of migrants as low-skilled feminised workers was thus exposed during consultations as a hidden function of structural arrangements and cultural mechanisms of exclusion and marginalisation which are not clearly visible as they were intertwined with discourses that represent asylum seekers, refugees, and by extension migrants, as unassimilable (Lovin, forthcoming).

Recently, Amarita Hari (2018) turned her attention to the impact of gender ideologies onto professional and reproductive work trajectories of ICT professional women who migrated from India to Canada. Her analysis shows that her female research participants were more likely to take on reproductive roles within the family. Importantly, this orientation away from the labour market did not take place under the pressure of cultural factors, or in other words, due to their conscription to traditional gender roles. Hari explains that it was a consequence of Canada's structural conditions: "Preference for Canadian-educated workers, expensive childcare, and job mobility within the male-dominated ICT sector increase the likelihood that women will sacrifice career ambitions on behalf of the family needs" (Hari 2018, 557). The gendered deskilling undergone by Hari's research participants calls for careful scrutiny of the subtler state mechanisms of exclusion that are at work within contexts perceived as more conducive and committed to migrant equality and multiculturalism as well as in relation to migrating subjects construed as less vulnerable.

Gendered deskilling among professional migrant women has been documented across migrant groups and countries of arrival. A feminist geographer Geraldine Pratt (2004) has linked deskilling to immigration and ghettoization within low-paid and marginal occupations and has emphasised that immigrants obtain lower return on educational investment. In addition, she highlights that these trends have proved "remarkably resistant to change, particularly for women" (2004, 3). The analytics of 'the feminisation of migration'

has gained prominence during the past two decades as a means to recapturing manifestations of agency in situations of gendered deskilling, precarisation as well as the struggle against structural inequality. Throughout C19 and C20, on many routes of voluntary or forced migration, half of those on the move were women. The gender ratios of migrants have varied historically, from country to country, route to route and community to community. There are still places on the globe where the mobility of women is significantly restricted. The function of this concept is not to signal increased levels of women's presence among the world's migrants. Instead, the analytics of feminisation of migration informs theoretical and empirical inquiries that unearth instances and nuances of women's agency during processes of migration, displacement and resettlement. This endeavour has aimed to set up an alternative framework to the older paradigms of migration studies, which used to define women migrants as passive followers of husbands and parents. In addition, the analytics of the feminisation of migration has helped migration scholars to unveil patterns of mobility that reproduce the triple shift of women's labour on a global scale. As pointed out by Geraldine Pratt, Amarita Hari, Patricia Hondegneu-Sotelo, and Rhacel Salazar Parrennas the education and work trajectories of many migrants take the route of deskilling. Women's working lives tend to stagnate in spaces of reproductive, domestic and care labour, sex work, and other feminised industries characterised by low remuneration, prestige, and job security. Alongside critical race theorists, feminist scholars have urged for analytics that accounts for the multiple and invisible ways in which gender, age, racialisation, nationality, migration status, pre-migration, in-between and post-migration life contexts interact and produce conditions of vulnerability, exploitation and marginalisation.

Crucially significant analytics developed by black feminists in the US, intersectionality deepens the understating of what, how, when, and to what ends categories of difference emerge. By considering such categories in relation to the structures that produce them, intersectional analyses are amongst the most useful frameworks for the examination of complex socio-economic inequalities and the simultaneity of oppression. Moreover, the objectives of intersectional analyses do not end with the conclusions of theorisation but continue with searches for methodological innovations and new possibilities for social action.

Intersectional thinking could be traced back to the work of civil rights activists like Sojourner Truth and Ida B. Wells and later on to lesbian black feminists like Audre Lorde, Barbara Smith and the Combahee River Collective Statement in the US. The analytical category of intersectionality itself was coined by legal scholar Kimberly Crenshaw in 1989 as a strategy accounting to the various intersections of race and gender in contexts of violence perpetrated against women of colour in the United States (Crenshaw 1989; 1991). Later on, discourses of intersectionality have become productive in addressing social hierarchies and inequalities beyond racialisation and gendering, such as those stemming from heteronormativity, ableism, and citizenship. In addition, they have been increasingly employed to illuminate the structural violence experienced by marginalised women across the globe. Intersectionality has crossed not only geographical and geopolitical boundaries but also disciplinary ones, through theoretical and methodological applications across disciplinary fields and interdisciplinary projects such as legal studies, sociology, anthropology, education, migration studies, or policy studies. Sarah A. Robert and Min Yu point out that in the field of education intersectional analysis captures “social and educational inequalities not as segmented, but rather, as multiply determined and intertwined” (Robert and Yu 2018, 95). During its cross-disciplinary and geographical travels, intersectionality has at times been viewed as an analysis that linked difference to processes of identity. I join critical voices such as Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2016) who stress that such deployments restrict its analytical power:

“The hollowing-out of meanings of rich scholarly traditions that have long been associated with processes and systems of social inequalities – for example, capitalism, colonialism, racism, patriarchy, and nationalism – and replacing them with shortcut terms of race, class, gender, and nation may appear to be benign substitution, but much is lost when systems of power compete for space under some versions of intersectionality” (Collins and Bilge 2016, 201).

In considering the organisation of power within the context of migration, Denise Horn and Serena Parekh remind us to be circumspect of depoliticising explanations, (now widely circulated across media, political, policy

and development discourses), which argue that migrant women cannot offer to the economies of their receiving countries anything other than feminine skills, accrued by way of “familiar gendered roles, produced and reproduced through heteronormative family structures” (Horn and Parekh 2018, 505). Disengaging from explanations that attribute inequality to the level of either individual or cultural attributes can be achieved when migration and education scholars are willing to consider the ways in which transnational systems of inequality and social division emerge within global economic systems along multiple axes of difference.

In resurgent nationalist contexts, an intersectional analysis of citizenship holds the potential to move past homogenised understandings of inclusion and allows us to differentiate among locations, identities and political values while holding on the imperative of fundamental nonracism and nonsexism (Yuval-Davis 2007, 572). In relation to migrant education, intersectional analyses produce diachronic explanations that reach past presentist explanations that account exclusively for the interplay of multilingualism, nationality and poverty, in order to cast light on the “intersectional legacies of gender-race-location within transnational educational policy” (Stambach and David, 2005).

On the other side, within the current geopolitical framework of neo-colonialism the invocation of gender equality becomes instrumental to the articulation of a racialising rhetoric that sustains foreign interference and restrictive immigration policies under the veil of progressive politics (Abu-Lughod 2013; Sampaio 2015) Thus, assigning gender inequality to cultures and religions elsewhere can lead to reductive distortions of feminist arguments and their deployment as discursive strategies of xenophobic politics in service of contemporary neoliberal reconfiguration of the global economy. At this juncture, the challenge faced by the feminist scholars of the migration-education nexus is to attend to the multiple axes of power that work in concert towards the creation repression and inequality for migrant women, who “like women from any other cultural/ social/ national background, may potentially (and often factually) be subjected within their society”, and at the same time to hone a critical recognition of the “representations and conceptualisations in Western European cultural imagery, [which] are informed by (and in turn inform) deeply rooted racist stereotypes as well as

economic interests and practices, which affect other non-western (migrant) women as well” (Farris 2017, 5).

In her latest book, *In the Name of Women’s Rights*, Sara S. Farris (2017) looks at the used of women’s rights vocabularies in the civic education and integration of Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands, France, and Italy. Her analysis shows that since 2007, the civic integration programs have placed a great emphasis on “the need of these women to emancipate themselves by entering the productive public” (ibid.,15). The problem with this approach lies in its rather complex and contradictory entanglement of old colonial rhetoric with newer ideologies of neoliberalism, neoliberal global workfare strategies and feminist thought. First of all, it recirculates a perspective held by many western feminists since the 1970s, which equated emancipation with economic independence and reinforced the binary separation of productive work and social reproduction. The in-depth analysis of educational programs meant to address the difficulties faced by migrant women on the labour market showed that they systematically directed women towards feminised occupations – “the very sphere (domestic, low-paying, and precarious jobs) from which the feminist movement had historically tried to liberate women” (ibid.). Having been tracked into “hotel cleaning, house-keeping, child-minding, and caregiving for the elderly and/or the disabled”, migrant women thus become “the main providers of social reproduction in a context of a growing demand for care” (ibid., 16). Farris stresses that in the aftermath of global economic crises, Muslim and non-western migrant women represented a group whose rates of employment grew. At the confluence of pressing care needs arising from an ageing population and the retreat of the welfare state from social service provision, the migrant women have been channelled onto strategic roles in the social and reproductive sectors of childcare, elderly care, and cleaning. Importantly, at a time of simultaneous neoliberal restructuring and neoliberal crisis, this trend was accompanied by the gendering disjuncture that disassociated migrant women from tropes of ‘job stealers,’ ‘cultural and social threats,’ and ‘welfare system parasites’ while allowing the association with these descriptions to continue routinely in the case of Muslim and non-western migrant men. In addition, during the production of care labour as a sector run by a marginalised and vulnerable workforce, Farris points out that the “anti-Muslim rhetoric has become

the dominant anti-Other rhetoric” – a discursive modality that recycles “representations and stereotypes that were deployed during colonial times” into an anti-Islam rhetoric which “has permeated institutional mechanisms that target the non-western migrant population at large” (ibid 4–5, 8).

## CONCLUSION

By way of concluding the second section of my explorations of the gendering and racialization valences of contemporary migrants’ education, as well as the paper, I argue that the value of intersectional analytics reaches well past the analytical problematisation of one-dimensional categories (McCall 2005, 1786). Intersectional inquiries unveil the complexity of lived experience within social groups and could become tools that give “people better access to the complexity of the world and themselves” (Collins and Bilge 2016, 193). Processes of othering thorough gendering and racialisation are part and parcel of imperial and contemporary war-making enterprises that construct ‘enemies’ and divide the globe into ‘stable’ and ‘failed’ states through the recirculation of the old binary of civilised versus barbaric (Hawkesworth 2016).

As I was finishing the paper, I came across an article titled “Genetic Correlates of Social Stratification in Great Britain” just published in the journal *Nature Human Behaviour* by Abdel Abdellaoui et al. The authors of the study capitalised on vast amounts of data and new data mining methods consisting of computing algorithms able to identify correlations between complex social traits and minute variations in DNA, called single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs). Abdel Abdellaoui et al. concluded that the inhabitants of the most economically deprived regions of the UK, the former coal-mining areas, presented on average fewer genetic variants that correlated with educational attainment (Abdellaoui et al. 2019, 1). The authors also identified similar geographic patterns associated with people’s political views, in this particular case, a higher likelihood to have voted for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union in the Brexit referendum (ibid., 3). According to Abdellaoui et al., the out-migration of the more-educated could be the explanation for such regional patterning: “Selective migration has led to geographic clustering of social and economic needs, which can coincide with collective attitudes towards how communities should be or-

ganized and governed” (ibid., 3). In an interview for *Nature New Feature* Blog, Abdellaoui stresses that “[t]here are a whole bunch of variables that are clustering in the lower economic areas, but it’s very difficult to say anything about directions of causality.” Yet he also adds: “If [out-migration] goes on for multiple generations, then for the sort of social inequalities already there, you run the risk of increasing those inequalities on a biological level” (Abdellaoui in Adam 2019).

What research questions could have possibly guided the researchers to these findings? And what could justify the emergence of a new articulation of social and biological studies in the form of sociogenomics? A historian of biology, Nathaniel Comfort explains that the endeavours of sociogenomics are not lead by hypotheses; they are inductive and rely on pre-collected data. Abdellaoui himself explains: “I try to understand human genetic variation and this is what I run into [...] There are a whole bunch of variables that are clustering in the lower economic areas, but it’s very difficult to say anything about directions of causality” (ibid., 2019). Comfort situates such research quests in the tradition of hereditarian social sciences dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He links them to Francis Galton’s searches for personality traits such as ‘talent’ and ‘genius’ given by nature and shaped by nurture through the lens of anthropometric examinations and statistical correlations, which cast him as one of the pioneers of the eugenic movement (Comfort 2018). And a century later to the endeavours of educational psychologist Arthur Jensen, who argued on the basis of psychometrics that African-American children were innately less intelligent than white children. He went on to formulate educational policies of separate and unequal school tracks, which supposedly benefitted African-American children by not over-challenging them with abstract reasoning (ibid., 2018).

While correlation does not equate causation, statistical significance does not equate biological significance, and complex social traits are polygenic, involving tens of thousands of SNPs which could behave differently in different genomes or in different environments such findings are already mobilised as evidence in support to white superiority and nationalism (ibid., 2018). At the same time, such seemingly accidental findings reflect, in fact, values and preoccupations of their social environments, and they will be decoded under the pressure of residual attachments to older forms of biological

determinism. History showed us that previous iterations of biologism have emerged in connection with socio-economic agendas. In this particular moment, Abdellaoui et al.'s findings have serious implications outside the space of data crunching. Their correlates could be mobilised toward the de-legitimisation of 'leave' voters at the 2016 Brexit referendum based on their low attainment. Or they could be mobilised towards anti-mobility policies at a regional or national level. Not the least, they could be used to sustain the inequality of educational opportunity encountered by migrant learners as they could be framed as benefiting from being tracked to the lowest vocational training and deskilled labour sectors. With that, I join Comfort in asking how we can prevent polygenic scores for educational attainment get in the hands of those who need them as tools for social stratification? He advocates for a higher awareness of the social critiques of science among geneticists who ultimately should "understand their work in both its scientific and historical contexts" (ibid., 2018).

In relation to subject of my explorations, feminist constructionist, anti-essentialist critiques and intersectional approaches to the education-migration nexus can also render visible the points where institutional power arrangements, state policy, and discursive structure of domination and subordination limit the life possibilities of those defined by certain difference categories as they simultaneously expand the life possibilities of those overlapping with locations defined by more privileged points of intersection (Cooper 2016, 392). The categories imposed by modern nation-states to render its citizenry legally legible in relation to gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality are also coextensive with the inclusion or exclusion from the realm of citizenship as well as the terms of access to citizenship rights, from education to employment, housing to family formation, and health services to social security (Hawkesworth 2019). The cultural deficit models and the supposed neutrality of assimilationism will continue their insidious work as long as gendering, racialisation, citizenship privilege, heteronormativity are not employed in the scrutiny of historical and contemporary forms of state violence against immigrants, people of colour, and the economically disadvantaged as they manifest thorough unequal educational and employment opportunities, segregated and dilapidated housing, police harassment, and incarceration.

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## Kroz prizmu feminističke teorije: prošlost, sadašnjost i budućnost obrazovnih politika ravnopravnosti za migrante i migrantkinje

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**Sažetak:** Tekst ispituje značaj i doprinose feminističkih teorija (feminističkog konstrukcionizma, feminističkih antiesencijalističkih kritika, pojava feminizacije migracija i intersekcionalne analize) za analitička ispitivanja neksusa/isprepletanosti migracija–obrazovanja. Tekst otvara prošireni uvod koji situira obrazovanje u odnosu prema fenomenima migracije, ali i širem kontekstu izgradnje nacije, kolonijalne ekspanzije i neravnomernog regionalnog razvoja. Uvidi iz feminističkih teorija se smatraju ključnim za usloznjavanje razumevanja režima istorijske vidljivosti i analitičkih orijentacija u razumevanju zapadnih i zemalja sa globalnog severa kao (navodnog) prostora mogućnosti, pravičnosti i jednakog tretmana, gde težak rad, diplome i zvanična uverenja o obrazovanju garantuju socioekonomsku mobilnost nagore za sve „dobre” migrante/migrantkinje. Prvi deo teksta situira analitički aparat feminističkog konstrukcionizma u odnosu prema državnim intervencijama u intersekciju režima migracija–obrazovanja ispitivanjem konfluencija između biološkog i kulturalnog determinizma u oblikovanju životnih izgleda migranata/migrantkinja preko rodnih i „rasnih” socioekonomskih uloga i hijerarhija ljudske vrednosti i potencijala u sadašnjem globalizovanom poretku. Počevši sa pojmom feminizacije migracija i zaključujući sa analitikom intersekcionalnosti, drugi deo teksta pokazuje kako su slepe mrlje u istraživanjima i javnim politikama u odnosu prema procesima i pitanjima roda i rasijalizacije umetnute i otelovljene u istorijske i savremene sisteme moći, i kako vode ka ishodima koji ne nude vizije jednakosti u obrazovanju migrantkinja i migranata.

**Ključne reči:** migranti/migrantkinje, obrazovanje, rod, rasijalizacija, intersekcionalnost, feministički konstrukcionizam, feminizacija migracija, obezvređivanje, obrazovne politike, jednakost u obrazovanju