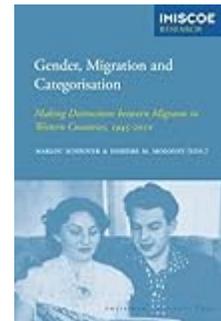




Marlou Schrover, Deirdre M. Moloney, eds. *Gender, Migration and Categorisation: Making Distinctions between Migrants in Western Countries, 1945-2010*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013. 272 pp. \$49.95 (paper), ISBN 978-90-8964-573-9.



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By calling on scholars in migration studies to focus on the categorization of mobile people as a gendered discursive practice with very real material consequences, the editors of this volume of collected essays outline an important, valuable, and innovative approach to the study of international migration. I nevertheless concluded my reading of this book with the wish that the editors had chosen to co-author a monograph rather than to edit a collection of essays on how gender shapes categorization.

The problem is not the quality of the collected essays themselves. On the contrary, most of the essays included in this volume are individually valuable and are the product of careful research and interpretation. The problem is that too few of the case studies collected in *Gender, Migration, and Categorisation* work closely and critically with the concept of categorization itself. (In fact, the word scarcely appears in the case study essays.) The essays demonstrate that the analysis of categorization could take diverse directions. Such analysis might, for example, focus on how categories are defined and change over time or instead focus on how migrants, their advocates, and their adversaries mobilize discursively and politically to construct individuals as categories of bureaucratic governance. To their credit, the editors themselves try very hard by providing both an introduction

and an afterword—to provide analytical threads across the case studies collected here. But despite these efforts, some of their generalizations about categorization, while plausible, do not rest as firmly as they might have had the authors of the case studies engaged more actively with categorization as well as with broader issues of the relationship of gender and migration.

Editors Schrover and Moloney define categorization as “the grouping of individuals into collective entities that come with rights (or the denial thereof)” (p. 9). Following Foucault, they are mainly interested in categories that become discursive technologies for the governance of mobile people. Thus, while the word “refugee” has existed in several modern European languages since the seventeenth century, the refugee became a category within national migration debates, policies, and enumeration only in the twentieth century—which is the focus of all the essays of the collection. Most scholars will easily recognize the analytical territory the editors define with their definition of categorization: as complex human beings, migrants’ lives rarely match neatly any one of the multiple categories that states invent to make them governable. And of course the categories themselves change over time, creating a large challenge for scholars who would use them to study the *longue durée* of migratory

patterns and phenomena. Overall, Schrover and Moloney seek to open a new way of thinking about migration that draws on both the insights of gender studies, with its focus on the discursive, and of the empirical social sciences that more often analyze policy, power, and politics in a material or *àreal* world. This is analytically exciting territory and the editors provide a good foundation for future work on categorization.

In the editors' words, "Categories of migrants are like communicating vessels: migrants change categories, and the bureaucrats who decide on entry or residence might allocate them to different categories. When one route closes, another may open" (p. 9). This collection of essays is meant, then, to illustrate the gendering of categorization and to explain when and why changes in categorization occur. In their introduction the editors suggest that analysis of media discourse during moments of intensive debate and contestation over categorization will provide the most productive focus for studies of categorization.

The editors' introduction also offers an overview of recent scholarly work on gender and migration that is useful although not particularly focused on categorization. This overview suggests mainly that the study of categorization contributes to a better understanding of how gender figures in the public arenas of policy, media, and the rights of citizens and resident foreigners. Gender matters, in short, in creating differences among migrants and between migrant outsiders and native insiders.

The essays that focus on refugees (in the United States, Canada, and the Netherlands) and family migrants (in the Netherlands and France) provide ample illustration of how gender shapes national migration policies and the rights of male and female migrants. Essays on the Armenian refugees of the World War I era, on queer migrants recently seeking asylum into the United States, and on the growing importance and contestation of family membership among postcolonial migrants to France and the Netherlands illustrate how individual migrants may be shifted bureaucratically from one category to another (e.g., from refugee or family migrants to undocumented or paperless, and thus rights-less, foreigners). Connie Oxford's essay on queers and American asylum policies is especially clear in showing, first, how private identities must be made public in order to fit policy requirements and, subsequently, how the documentation of victimization becomes a necessary step in matching migrant desires to policy criteria. Similarly, French debates over the use of DNA analysis to determine the

legitimacy of blood relations among family unification migrants rest on the public scrutiny of private identities and relations. Tycho Walaard's analysis of application for asylum in the Netherlands of war resisters from Portugal and the United States also illustrates how Portuguese seeking asylum gained resident permits as labor migrants, thus helping to sidestep a brewing domestic political crisis over these so-called new (that is to say, not anticommunist) refugees. This case study also provides an introduction to the "personalization" of debates over categories that the editors discuss in their afterword. In the Netherlands, a single American antiwar applicant (and not the many applicants from Portugal) came to symbolize to the broader public the challenge of broadening the country's asylum policies. The American antiwar resister came to be seen as a stalwart, principled, and heroic man, not that different from earlier anticommunist refugees. By contrast, according to the editors, the personalization of categories that include many women more often develops portraits of individual female victims in need of assistance and rescue.

Few of the contributing authors who study refugees or family migrants adopt either the methods or analytical focus advocated by the editors. Most situate their work within scholarly literatures on gender and policy rather than respond to the editors' theorization of categorization. Or, to use the theoretical perspective named by several contributors, they "frame" their work as studies in policy, rather than as studies of categorization. The essay by Monica Boyd and Joanne Nowak on Mexicans seeking asylum in Canada and the essay by Catherine Raissiguier on French bio-policies come closest to analyzing media debates among the group of essays focused on refugees and family migrants. The other essays productively examine not categorization but rather the construction of contending narratives in policy statements and advocacy letters and campaigns. Even if categorization is inherent to policymaking and to advocacy (as seems almost certain) and even if media debates constitute only one component of policy debates, this casual slippage of focus and methods across essays tends to shift readers' attention away from the analytical thread "categorization" the editors hope to draw through the collected essays. The reader learns a great deal about gender, migration, and policy but does not always see how categorization matters analytically in understanding their relationship.

The final three essays of this collection focus on debates over integration and multiculturalism in Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands, with particular attention to the theme (familiar to many who have studied gender

and ethnicity, race, or nationality) of how gender ideologies and gender practices mark cultural groups not only as separate and different but also as discursively homogeneous. Initially, at least, this transition from the analysis of migration policies to policies for "living together" (or "living apart together") may strike a reader as a somewhat rough one. The employment, family relations, and, especially, the covering of parts or all of the head by female Muslim migrants comes clearly into focus in this cluster of essays, as do the efforts on the part of conservative native men to support gender equality as part of their own cultures by stigmatizing and "othering" migrant women and Islam itself. But how this gendering of group boundaries is related to categorization remains somewhat elusive. Again, the gendering of policy becomes clear but the usefulness of categorization as an analytical concept is scarcely reinforced.

Editors Schrover and Moloney take up this issue in their afterword. There, they argue that the creation of difference through the gendered categorization of migrants fueled debates about the categorization and boundaries of the receiving nations themselves. Categorization, the editors suggest, makes and unmakes groups, including nations themselves. This seems a plausible and potentially useful hypothesis; indeed I found it somewhat more plausible and powerful than the editors' "transfer-

ral model" (also presented in the afterword), which they hope can "explain the relationship between categorization and gender, class and ethnicity" (p. 261). Unfortunately, it is not a hypothesis that is explicitly or critically addressed by most of the contributors to the volume, who address either policy towards migration or nation-building policies such as integration or multiculturalism. And neither do the contributors frame their work within the "transfer model" which calls attention instead to the way that discourses sometimes travel across categories, for example, from anticolonial and civil rights movements to family rights, refugee rights, and gay rights movements. Again, this divide between editors and authors is to be regretted because such framing would have clarified further the promising beginning the editors have made by introducing this issue into their analysis of debates over migration categories.

One can of course hope—and I do—that scholars interested in gender and migration will now launch a spatially encompassing sequence of case studies that focus directly on categorization as a gendered process, one that not only links migration and nation-building but that also, to some unknown degree, determines what scholars can actually know about either phenomenon. Certainly, this valuable collection is a good beginning, and it will point future researchers in the right direction.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

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