Introduction

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Abstract

While the declared global "refugee crisis" has received considerable scholarly attention, little of it has focused on the intersecting dynamics of oppression, discrimination, violence, and subjugation. Introducing the special issue, this article defines feminist "intersectionality" as a research framework and a no-borders activist orientation in transnational and anti-national solidarity with people displaced by war, capitalism, and reproductive heteronormativity, encountering militarized nation-state borders. Our introduction surveys work in migration studies that engages with intersectionality as an analytic and offers a synopsis of the articles in the special issue. As a whole, the special issue seeks to make an intersectional feminist intervention in research produced about (forced) migration.

Résumé

Alors que les universitaires se sont beaucoup intéressés à la « crise des réfugiés » mondiale qui a été déclarée, ils n'ont que peu envisagé les dynamiques croisées de l'oppression, la discrimination, la violence et la subjugation. Le texte introductif de ce numéro spécial définit « l'intersectionnalité » féministe transnationale comme cadre de recherche et comme un activisme orienté sans frontières solidaire des personnes déplacées par la guerre, le capitalisme et l'hétéronormativité de la reproduction, qui se heurtent à des frontières nationales et étatiques militarisées. Cette introduction examine les études sur la migration qui retiennent l'intersectionnalité comme perspective d'analyse et offre un sommaire des articles de ce numéro spécial qui, envisagé dans son ensemble, vise à dégager une intervention féministe intersectionnelle dans les travaux de recherche qui concernent la migration (forcée).

This special issue emerges out of a larger, developing project to build a network of feminist scholars and organizers under the name Feminist Researchers against Borders (FRAB).[1] Our project aims to build durable collaborations across disciplinary boundaries and national borders among scholars and organizers whose work emerges from a feminist perspective that centres gender and sexuality as key analytic lenses through which the repercussions of war, violence, forced displacement, asylum, and resettlement can be understood. What unites us is that we are feminists who have been troubled by the absence of intersectional analyses in studies on the "refugee crisis," even as border and (forced) migration studies have proliferated. In this regard, we take the inextricability of racial, gendered, sexual, and class power relations as the entry point to interrogate how the current "refugee crisis" is constructed and contested. As researchers committed to ethical reflexivity, we enter into this work with concerns over the circulation of research on "refugees" in an economy that turns human suffering into the currency of scholarship, divorced from the responsibility to transform the conditions that shape violence. Further, we are concerned with the way our own work risks entering into the broader state objectives of migration management that allow nation-states to criminalize and capitalize upon cross-border movement,[2] while refusing entry to millions of people and detaining and deporting countless others.

Our intervention comes at a moment when the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has announced that there are now more refugees and internally displaced people worldwide than ever before.[3] What has been termed the "refugee crisis" has been most widely represented by the largest group of refugees, Syrians fleeing the war that began in 2011, who comprise 5.4 million people displaced primarily to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Europe, and overseas; 6.1 million people have been internally displaced, while 2.98 million are in besieged areas, according to UNHCR statistics.[4] However, as Denise Horn and Serena Parekh remind us, the human experience of "displacement" is far broader than just this "refugee crisis."[5] Forced migration and displacement have been a central feature of human experience since the foundation of the modern nation-state, the quintessence of which is the control of human movement at the limits of its territory and within its social body.[6] The present "refugee crisis" is a product of the accelerated conditions of war and state violence, which are inextricable from globalized capitalism, histories of colonialism, and contemporary imperialism. It also foreshadows the increasing global human displacement that results from climate change.

To understand the current "refugee crisis," it is important to note that seeking asylum is a legal right under the international 1951 Refugee Convention. On the basis of this convention, signatory countries are obliged to examine the claims for protection from persecution of every individual who arrives at their borders. However, the convention does not oblige signatory countries to provide legal entry or safe passage. Consequently, European and North American countries have created visa restrictions to deny entry to people from countries ravaged by war and imperialism, including debt colonialism. The result is what has been referred to as a "hellish dead-end" for refugees.[7] Put differently, since many need a visa to enter a country, and a visa requires money and must meet strict criteria, one cannot claim asylum from abroad without substantial access to social, political, and economic mobility.[8] As Adrienne Millbank has argued, the current crisis starkly shows that the 1951 convention is outdated, while the problems of holding states accountable to their obligations have been known for decades.[9]

In response to this conjuncture, the articles gathered in this special issue interrogate assumptions about "deserving" subjects within refugee law and humanitarian reason;[10] contributors critically assess the ways in which anxieties, fears, and desires surrounding the figure of the refugee are produced by socio-legal constructs and political economic relations, including those that articulate racial capitalism and hetero-patriarchy. One way the distribution of deserving subjects has manifested is through the terminology used in relation to the "migration/refugee crisis." As Ron Kaye explains, the use of certain terms casts doubt upon the "genuineness" of some claimants' refugee status, as stipulated by the UNHCR and interpreted by signatory state authorities.[11] A report from the UNHCR has similarly illustrated that confusing terminology is directly related to "the negative myths associated with asylum seekers and refugees."[12] It found that, although the majority of those now in Europe would qualify as "refugees" because they are "fleeing from war, conflict or persecution at home, as well as deteriorating conditions in many refugee-hosting countries," they are most often referred to as "migrants."[13] While we use the term *refugee* in our title, some contributors to this special issue have opted to use other labels, especially *migrant*, to describe the "figure" at the heart of this "crisis."[14] Rather than insisting on the use of one label throughout, and given that all of the aforementioned labels are state and supranational categories, we wanted individual authors to use the term(s) that seemed most appropriate to them for the specific arguments they make and the contexts on which they focus.

Although the conditions shaping migration and the "refugee crisis" provide intertwined concerns for our special issue, the varied use of the terms is not meant to imply that they are interchangeable. Rather, they signal the complex political ways that language and terminology feature in general understandings of the "crisis."[15] In debates surrounding linguistic correctness, some have advocated dropping the distinction between *refugees* and *migrants* (some of whom are designated as "irregular") for the universal designator *refugee* (with the argument that economic "push factors" are as vital to people's survival as is war or political persecution), while others argue for the universal designator *migrant* (with the argument that *refugee* is a stigmatizing and exclusionary juridical category that social movements ought not to adopt). Such debates highlight the way language is used variously to undermine and defend the protected rights of those entitled to make refugee claims. This also points to the problem of the distinction made between refugees and migrants within the legal frameworks themselves. In this sense, the terminology that marks people crossing borders can be understood as a state tactic for naturalizing distinctions between those who "deserve state protection" and those to whom it can be denied. As Nicholas De Genova points out, the vacillating use, ambivalence, and equivocation of these terms and labels in mass media news coverage in Europe "are telling signals of the ambiguities and contradictions that bedevil such terminological categories as governmental contrivances."[16] Indeed, such debates highlight the way language is used variously to undermine and defend the protected rights of those entitled to make refugee claims.

Focusing on the legal status of migrants in Calais, France, Marie-Benedicte Dembour and Marie Martin argue that

because these migrants are not "authorized aliens," they are excluded from the regime of rights that is in place only for those who have the status of national citizens or regularized migrants.[17] The process of determining whether an asylum seeker is a refugee is not only, typically, in the hands of national authorities, but also municipalities; thus, refusal of the legal designation of "refugee status" can be a powerful means to regulate access to rights in the city and the nation-state. Movement is ever more intensely controlled and instigated while the border becomes ever more mobile, and people ever more stuck (including being stuck in movement).[18] As Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez examines in her contribution to this issue, the binary between "forced" and "voluntary" migration underpinning these debates can be a means to deny the global entanglements of racial capitalism and what she terms "settler-colonialism migration," which structure human movement. We argue that an intersectional feminist approach to forced migration questions the reliance of asylum decisions (as well as the whole asylum infrastructure) on the construction of deserving and undeserving victims of violence—a juridical distinction that naturalizes certain forms of violence that are inherent in racial capitalism and hetero-patriarchy and leave unchallenged the power of nation-states to arbitrarily deny movement across national borders.

The binary distinction between "deserving" and "undeserving" migrants illustrates the internal contradictions embedded in national policies on refugees. In the case of Canada, the turn to viewing the nation-state as a protector of human rights demonstrates the instrumentalization of refugees fleeing sexuality- and gender-based violence. In his contribution to this special issue, Edward Ou Jin Lee argues that the role of the nation-state in adjudicating refugee claims is embedded in a convergence between national bordering and colonial formations. Lee argues that Canadian refugee policies that block queer and trans refugee claims from the Global South reveal the legacies of colonial violence that produce uneven geopolitical conditions that shape homophobic violence in the Global South, thus denying the coimplications of colonial violence in Canada and elsewhere. This echoes the work in progress of other members of our network, such as Melissa Autumn White, whose research on the Rainbow Refugees Assistance Program in Canada situates the nation-state's project of opening up sponsorship of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) refugees in neo-liberal policies that reinforce Canada's branded humanitarianism. This illustrates how seemingly contradictory practices in national responses to forced migration can serve to reinforce the nation-state: while parading tokenized refugees as emblems of Canada's self-congratulatory humanitarianism, the nation-state forecloses and denies asylum to thousands of possible claimants through ineligibility policies.

In what follows, we first problematize the construction of the "refugee crisis," joining a growing body of critical scholars who examine how the discourse of "crisis" functions to secure national and supranational projects of "migration management."[19] We then survey the existing and emerging scholarship, which lays the ground for our own intersectional feminist intervention. We close the introduction by briefly describing the articles that comprise the special issue.

Querying the "Refugee Crisis"

Describing the current situation of global mobility as a "crisis" questions for whom there is a crisis. As De Genova has written, understanding mobility in terms of crisis is a way to reconfigure it into "a device for the authorization of exceptional or 'emergency' governmental measures aimed at enhancing and expanding border enforcement and immigration policing."[20] The language of crisis thus shifts the focus from the *experience of displacement as a crisis for refugees*, to the *perception of their entry as a crisis for nation-states*. The shift from crisis as the *cause* of forced migration to the construction of crisis as an *effect* of human mobility has a number of important political effects, not least of which is that it enables accelerated border militarization (as evinced by the deployment of Frontex and NATO in the Aegean and Mediterranean seas) and the closure of paths to safety (e.g., the fencing of the Evros land border between Turkey and Greece in 2012, or of the Hungarian border with Serbia and Croatia in 2015), ostensibly as the means to "manage the crisis." As Sara Ahmed has argued, the declaration of "crisis" enables the institution and justification of "new forms of security, border policing, and surveillance … It is not simply that these crises exist, and that fears and anxieties come into being as a necessary effect of that existence. Rather, it is the very production of the crisis that is crucial."[21]

The declaration of "crisis," then, has a crucial relationship to the introduction or augmentation of techniques of governmentality. As Aila Spathopoulou, Myrto Tsilimpounidi, and Anna Carastathis argue in their contribution in this issue, it is not incidental that the declaration of "crisis" has led to (or was pre-visaged by) the institution of what the EU terms "hotspots"[22] in Greece and Italy; that is, detention centres in which people on the move are sorted into legitimate refugees "deserving" international protection and "illegal" economic migrants slated for deportation. The construction of "crisis" is always ideological; therefore, its invocation and location in a particular space and time is always political, both as a discursive construction and in its material effects. Myrto Tsilimpounidi suggests that the representation of crisis as a rupture of a prior state of normalcy to which we could,

eventually, return, functions to rehabilitate the system in crisis, foreclosing the states of emergence intrinsic to a state of emergency.[23] In this sense, crisis is potentially a moment to reflect upon fixed categories of experience and analysis, the violent rupture of which can impel us to devise new methods to register the invisible or unseen. Bringing these analyses to the question of how the current "refugee crisis" is constructed in racialized and gendered ways points toward the need to think through not only how states reconsolidate borders in response to an articulation of human mobility—projected onto the figure of the refugee / economic migrant / illegal immigrant—as a social threat, but also how societies transform their politics of belonging and estrangement precisely by framing the mobility and presence of some people as a danger, or alternately as an opportunity for forming new social relationships and new ways of dwelling in place together. The "crisis" becomes one of "integration" of refugees in "host" societies, or its supposed impossibility.

Whether "for" or "against" "integration," the terms of this debate engage in an insidious reconstruction of the past, implying that once we were all the same, we never moved, and we all understood each other, as Gutiérrez Rodríguez argues in her contribution to this issue. The relatively recent history of the nation-state is imagined as ahistorical and universal, naturalizing "ethnicized bonds" and the violent operations of demographic racism.[24] Arguably, much work that is produced in forced migration studies reproduces "methodological nationalism" by reifying the violence of border and citizenship regimes in the figure of the refugee.[25] Thus migration is understood as an "antinomy" to the nation-state and its naturalized isomorphisms between citizenry, nation, sovereign, and state.[26] Since migration is viewed from the hegemonic perspective of stasis (staying put in one's supposedly natural place), migrants are constructed as "failed citizens."[27] Yet this conceals the fact that the systems of capitalism globalized through colonialism are in constant crisis, producing contradictory temporalities and social relations of perpetual conflict and perpetual movement.

If crisis is fundamental to the post-colonial project of nation-states and of EU integration, it reverberates in the liminal spaces both within and outside "Europe" of uneven development and incomplete democratization, through ongoing accumulation by dispossession.[28] As Gutiérrez Rodriguez and Lee each argue, the "refugee crisis" exists in continuity with, and is not a rupture of, the colonial project; its technocratic, militarized management has led to unspeakable human suffering and devastation for the people caught in its machinery. To the extent that people are defined by migration regimes as belonging to particular naturalized categories—through which some people are always imagined as being of a place, and others as perpetually out of place—migration is always imagined as a crisis for the nation. In that sense, in a time of multiple, successively declared, and overlapping—indeed, intersecting—crises, it is useful to be reminded, as Bridget Anderson, Nandita Sharma, and Cynthia Wright have argued, that "people's mobility is seen as only ever caused by crisis and as crisis producing."[29]

Mind the Gap: Intersections in (Forced) Migration Studies

Intersectional research has consistently shown that experiences of migration and displacement differ significantly, depending on how people are positioned in hierarchies of gender, race, class, age, religion, and sexuality.[30] Nevertheless, the majority of (forced) migration scholarship continues to approach the subject without attending to the simultaneity of experiences and co-implication of positionalities shaped by gendered, racialized, class, and sexuality-based power relations.[31] While the "question of gender" in migration was first raised in the 1970s and 1980s,[32] it nevertheless remains a marginal focus within the scholarly field of studies on migration.[33] For example, Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo has analyzed a leading social science journal in the field, *International Migration Review*, finding only seven articles that contained either the word *woman* or *gender* in the title between 2007 and 2009.[34]

Although research on gender and migration has been growing in the decade between her research and the publication of this special issue,[35] the questions shaping such research remain a point of feminist concern. As Ingrid Palmary, Erica Burman, Khatidja Chantler, and Peace Kiguwa argue, "The question should be less about why gender has not been (as yet) 'mainstreamed' into migration, than about how and why it figures in conceptualizations of mobility, and with what effects."[36] Thus, although leading journals have increasingly featured research that makes mention of gender in migration—just under 20 per cent of the articles published in 2016 to 2017 address gender[37]—looking at *how* gender is positioned in these articles illustrates the methodological absence of an intersectional approach. For example, two articles recently featured in *International Migration Review* deploy a "gender-based analysis" in an empirical assessment of whether migrant communities hold views of gender that are, in the words of the authors, "more egalitarian" or "more traditional."[38] We see this type of research as emblematic of the essentialized and single-axis approach to gender-based research, the premises of which we hope to problematize using an intersectional feminist approach.[39] Palmary and her collaborators suggest that such research has a pathologizing effect on the category of "the migrant," by decontextualizing, essentializing, and naturalizing migrants as an organic category of research analysis.[40] While attempts to make gender

differences in migration visible may reveal useful information about population demographics, they simultaneously reduce these differences to gender in isolation from the wider conditions shaping experiences of displacement and resettlement. Moreover, this deployment of "gender" as an essentially demographic category mirrors nation-state logic, naturalizing its production of a binary gender system, and eliding how gender is produced and reproduced in nationalized and transnational heteropatriarchal power relations.[41]

Introducing an intersectional feminist analysis can help us examine the resulting gap in current research and new possibilities for attending to the concomitant ways that gender and sexuality, for instance, shape the lives of refugees and migrants, extending beyond the typical foci on reproduction and population management. We define an intersectional feminist approach in the next section; prefiguring that discussion, we offer a few examples in relation to which an intersectional lens has the potential to yield new framings. When "women" are centred in work on migration, they are often constructed as mothers, wives, daughters, and not as political agents, workers, community leaders, or public figures; this reduces the interests of women to their roles within heteronormative formulations of the family. "Women" are assumed to be cisgender, heterosexual, and defined primarily through their compulsory positioning in the heteropatriarchal family, the existence of which is naturalized as an effect of "their" cultures. Thus, in advancing an intersectional approach to research on gender in (forced) migration, for example, we can introduce a different set of questions that examine gender, kinship, and reproduction beyond the dominant focus on women, maternity, and fertility.

What interpersonal, institutional, infrastructural, and experiential constraints and inducements shape the choices migrant women make about reproduction? What happens to kinship relations when familial estrangement and death shape the migratory experience? How are non-biological and non-heteronormative forms of kinship affected by the construction and state recognition of "family" in procreative, nuclear, and hetero-patriarchal terms? Further, what different challenges arise when researchers consider the way single parenting, trans parenting, and queer parenting are introduced into projects that examine family development, reproduction, and fertility? Combined with an analysis of the racial projects of nation-states, an intersectional feminist approach to reproduction might ask instead how migrant women's reproductive roles posit them as either threats to the racialized citizen or as burdens on health-care systems, as (im)possible users of maternity and fertility medical services. Therefore, while fertility is an important aspect of the lives of some women, specifically as a result of their positioning as agents of reproduction of the racialized nation-state according to a hetero-patriarchal logic, it remains a limited frame through which to consider the gendered dimensions of migration. To take another example, research on labour migration and state policy frequently fails to consider the intersecting dynamics shaping political economy. As a result, labour migration continues to be treated as though it is a "genderless" experience within the majority of scholarship in the field.[42] Moreover, since the "generic migrant" is not genderless but implicitly a heterosexual and cisgender adult man, the lack of an explicit focus on gender in migration amounts to the erasure of those who identify as women, as trans people, as non-binary genders, and/or as non-heterosexual.

Our intervention joins other intersectional interventions in border and migration scholarship that urge attention to how gender, sexuality, racialization, age, (dis)ability, and class are implicated in these processes.[43] Such interventions are still relatively rare, since they continue to be marginalized within border and migration studies. It is, for instance, significant that despite being able to trace calls for migration scholarship attentive to the intersections of race, gender, and class to at least ten years ago,[44] the urgency of these calls does not seem to have been diminished a decade later. We see this special issue as contributing to the critique and analysis set out in prior special issues that point to these oversights. A recent example is the November 2016 special issue of the *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Soziologie* (Austrian Journal for Sociology), which described its intervention as contributing to overcoming "a number of major omissions and curtailed interests in the field of migration studies" which include "deemphasizing [*sic*] gender and sexuality, ignoring the 'intersectional' interplay of gender with other dimensions of inequality in migration societies, Eurocentric preoccupation, [the] non-consideration of the agency of migrants and [being] caught up in methodological nationalism."[45]

This special issue continues the work of other collaborations that address intersectional analyses of borders and migration, such as the 2015 special issue of *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power,* "Investigating Intersectionalities, Gendering Mobilities, Racializing Trans/Nationalism."[46] In the introduction, the issue's editors argue for the need to situate an analysis of migration specifically in relation to racializing processes and colonial configurations of power, while also gesturing toward the importance of gender and class. Ultimately, they argue, "intersectionality is analytically important in accounting for the diverse racial, class and gendered experiences in international migration."[47] Locating our current intervention within *Refuge*'s own trajectory, it is significant that in the 2009 special issue, "No Borders as a Practical Political Project," editors Bridget Anderson, Nandita Sharma, and Cynthia Wright argue for the need to understand borders as ideological instruments producing

inequality through mechanisms "that are deeply racialized, gendered, sexualized, and productive of class relations."[48] The repetition of the insistence on the need to attend to the converging systems of capitalism, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy, gendering, and the production of racialized genders, sexualities, disabilities, and class relations in (forced) migration, and their inextricable relationship to processes of bordering, found across this work is one that we are, once again, repeating.

The contributors to this special issue offer an answer to that call, drawing on queer migration frameworks, post-colonial and de-colonial theory, a no-border politics, and an intersectional analytic sensibility,[49] thus helping form the emerging field of scholarship on intersectional feminist research on borders and (forced) migration. This research demonstrates how migration policies, citizenship, and migrant advocacy converge; for instance, in the reproduction of heteronormative nationalisms through family reunification policies that place the burden of proof on queer migrants to legitimate their claims for status and/or asylum through heteronormalized evidence of kinship,[50] which mark the boundaries of intelligibility of intimate relationships.[51] Queer and trans migrant research and activism reveal the heteronormative function of birth and citizenship. The natural citizen through birth, and the naturalized citizen through migration are co-constituted by the reproductive history or futurity of the migrant's role in relation to the nation-state. Thus a deserving migrant does not challenge the reproductive order of citizenship through non-normative forms of family kinship. Much as migration is used to naturalize citizenship and border regimes, it is also used to naturalize the deeply gendered and racialized structures of societies governed by the nation-state form by binding the recognition of certain rights and entitlements to the mirroring of the heterosexual couple. Moreover, since in Europe, North America, and Australia migration policies are intrinsically bound up in projects of whiteness, and the reproduction of the nation around whiteness, these reproductions of citizenship have a fundamentally racist character—not only in centres of white supremacy but in all nation-states that regulate the inheritability or transitivity of belonging through reproductive logics. Given that these processes are essential to how migration and citizenship are bordered by nation-states, they need to be centred in research and activism, and not added as afterthoughts to a predominantly heteronormative, racial-colonial frame.

Currents of critical scholarship located within the fields of migration and border studies have engaged in critiques of the alignment of state policies and scholarship, particularly pushing back against the ways more traditional work in these fields has positioned migrants as passive objects,[52] and against simplistic notions of bordering, seeking to give more dynamic accounts of how borders are brought into being through acts of bordering.[53] These critical accounts, while emphasizing autonomy and mobility, and displacing the false dichotomies put in place by migration regimes—such as the migrant/refugee distinction, discussed above—have nevertheless also continued to marginalize questions of gender, sexuality, and racialization.[54] This marginalization functions not only through a failure to attend to the intersections of gender, racialization, and sexuality, but sometimes through a more structural move, in which experiences of power that rely upon and are effects of gendering and racialization are abstracted from migration dynamics in order to put forward theoretical claims about the functioning of borders, and the production of migration statuses, in general.[55] Recognition of these oversights has led scholars working within these subfields to explicitly call for more attention to processes of gendering and racialization.[56] Yet while Victoria Basham and Nick Vaughan-Williams observe that "particular regimes of mobility and immobility are only imaginable, implementable and sustainable because they tap into and reify prior assumptions about gender, race, class and their interconnectivity in contemporary political life,"[57] a comprehensive intersectional feminist approach has yet to materialize.

Defining an Intersectional Feminist Approach

In calling for an explicitly feminist intersectional approach to the question of migration and displacement, we hope this special issue can do two things. First, we hope it will offer a way of reading the phenomena that have gained visibility and that have been rendered invisible by the discursive construction of the "refugee crisis" against the grain of current research on refugees and migration, in order to trouble the logics that frame this field of scholarship. Second, we aim to encourage researchers to consider the implications of an intersectional approach to (forced) migration. Perhaps the most important implication, for us, is intersectionality as an analytic and political *commitment* to challenging the systems, infrastructures, and logics that inflict violence on those deemed "out of place" by fortressed nation-states. Here we are invoking intersectionality as a provisional concept, confronting us with "a profound challenge, as opposed to a determinate resolution of cognitive essentialism, binary categorization, and conceptual exclusion."[58] Thus, the aforementioned "intersectional call" to (forced) migration studies is understood not in quantitative terms—calling for the study of ever "more intersections"[59]—but in terms of reframing, deconstructing, and contesting how categories of oppression and struggle are reproduced in research and activism around what is termed the "refugee crisis." As Jennifer Nash has argued, the call for more intersections, and the "logic of

more" to "complicate, nuance, and deepen" feminist scholarship positions intersectionality as a guarantor of better scholarship and more inclusive politics, an ameliorative politics to improve institutions by "institutionalizing the margins."[60] By contrast, the intersectional approach we advocate with respect to border and (forced) migration studies takes an abolitionist approach to institutions that reproduce systems of power. This is consistent with the aims of Feminist Researchers against Borders, who are unified around a commitment to "dismantle the structures that produce, constrain, criminalize, control, and shape immobilities and mobilities, whether forced, coercive, elective, or otherwise—including the borders of the modern nation state and its management of human life and ecology through gender, class, sexuality, racialization, ableism, citizenship, and colonialism."[61] The contributors to this special issue reflect upon, problematize, and/or reject the use of state categories—which are inheritances of the coloniality of power—in research about, and solidarity movements with, refugees. Not only for the reason that state categories are representational acts that materialize violently to push those whom they exclude overboard; but that even those whom they include they dehumanize.[62]

This conception of intersectionality—as a critique of state power in shaping the foundational categories of perception and representation that also drive resistance to oppression—is drawn from the critical race legal scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw[63] and is prefigured by a tradition of Black feminist thought that can be traced to the nineteenth century, when Black women were not citizens, and they contested the violence of citizenship in a colonial, racial state (and did not simply seek inclusion within it). In part as the result of a whitewashing of its radical history,[64] we believe intersectionality is a term now often misunderstood and misused by academics and activists. As Sirma Bilge argues, the annexing of "intersectionality to disciplinary feminism and decentering the constitutive role of race in intersectional thought and praxis"[65] is part of how intersectionality has become a "buzzword,"[66] not only in women's, gender, and sexuality studies courses, but also in mainstream disciplines and social movements.[67] A casual application of the term that merely pays lip service to race, sexuality, or class in gender-based analyses troubles us. We see this non-rigorous overuse of the term as a type of co-optation, or, as Nikol Alexander-Floyd has put it, even as a form of neo-colonial appropriation that detaches intersectionality from the concerns of Black feminists who introduced the analytic.[68] As Alexander-Floyd and numerous scholars have observed, although intersectionality emerged as a vital lens, the "mainstreaming" of the concept has resulted in its depoliticization.[69] Thus, in addition to "intersectionality" being deployed in various ways by authors in this special issue as a theoretical approach, an analytic sensibility, and/or a methodological framework, we want to underline the significance of the politics of intersectionality. Specifically, following the call of Black and transnational feminists, we are calling for a feminist praxis premised on a politics of location[70] or translocation.[71] In this context, an intersectional approach is inextricable from a no-borders politics, that seeks to dismantle the nation-state system and its various practices of bordering and the multiple manifestations of power and domination that it embodies. As Jasbir Puar argues, "Intersectional critique has both intervened in the legal and capitalist structures that demand the fixity of the rights-bearing subject and has also simultaneously reproduced the disciplinary demands of that subject formation."[72] Building on critiques of dominant interpretations of intersectionality and their accommodationist relation to state power, we view intersectionality as a commitment to undoing the effects of the nation-state (and the systems that crystallize within it): its hold on our imaginations, affects, perceptions, concepts, solidarities, and mobilizations.

Intersectionality, as we are invoking it in this context, is therefore an intervention into categorical exclusions that secure the fixity of naturalized, apparently self-evident categories of oppression and of struggle. Rather than viewing systems of oppression as homogeneous in the effects they may have in people's lives, intersectionality as an analytic can denaturalize categories into which people are placed by state demographic projects, and are adopted in social movements, advocacy efforts, and other contexts of critical praxis. An intersectional sensibility can help us identify who falls (or is pushed) through the cracks of representational dilemmas that result when categories of oppression and struggle (for instance, refugee/economic migrant; migrant/native; host/guest, etc.) are constructed as mutually exclusive. Moreover, it can reveal dimensions and dynamics of power that are rendered invisible or hidden from view by hegemonic framings. For instance, the heteronormative construction of refugees as "men, women, and children" reproduces the institution of the family while obscuring the homophobic and transphobic oppressions and persecution that LGBTQI+[73] people face, both in their countries of origin and in/through necro-political migration regimes.[74] In this sense, as the contribution of Edward Ou Jin Lee in this issue demonstrates,[75] an intersectional feminist perspective is crucial in that it offers analytic and organizing tools to confront a global reality in which people's reasons for needing to leave and being refused the legal ability to stay are proliferating, which further demonstrates how the Geneva Convention's definitions of who is to be granted protection or who deserves pathways to relative safety fail to align with the realities of (forced) migration.[76]

Intersectionality is invoked not as a guarantor of a "critical" feminist epistemology, but as a methodological

commitment to uncover layered histories and geographies of power of which we may not be conscious. This will require collaborative praxis across, beyond, and, most importantly, *against* borders of multiple kinds. Indeed, an intersectional approach to migration problematizes the fixed categories of identity through which people's subjective and embodied experiences are clinically, juridically, or analytically sorted and (mis)understood: the universality of gender and sexuality; the self-evidence of racial, ethnic, and religious divisions; and the fixity of class, caste, and status in trans-local contexts. In this sense, we seek to underscore the point that it is not only identity that affects migration experiences, but migration that affects and effects identities. This is a challenge to intersectionality studies as a field that seems committed to nativist U.S. constructions of identity rooted parochially not only in the social movements that emerged there, but in the demographic projects of that nation-state that inform how "communities of struggle" have formed and understand their normative subjects in (anti-)segregationist terms.[77] As Floya Anthias has suggested, neither can "migration" (or even its ostensibly exhaustive subcategories, e.g., "voluntary"/"forced") in intersectional terms be understood as a singular, homogeneous process that is undergone by self-evident groups; nor can intersectional theories of identity, power, and belonging ignore the effects of "translocational" processes in subject-formation in a structurally violent, pervasively mobile world.[78]

In advancing an intersectional feminist approach to what has been constructed as the "refugee crisis," we therefore argue that research "on" refugees and migrants must take into account how those pushed into categories of "refugee," "migrant," and "citizen" are constituted by intersecting systems of capitalism, white supremacy, and hetero-patriarchy, and their dynamics of discrimination, violence, and subjugation. This means that power relations are multidirectional and contradictory and do not only constitute the exterior of mutually exclusive categories (such as migrant/citizen) but their interiority and interconnection as well. It also means that categories of oppression inform, and are informed by, categories of struggle. Tracing this multidirectional relationship between hegemonic power and oppositional movements, we follow two key insights of intersectionality as an analytic: the observation of the "irony" of the fact that social movements often "adopt a top-down approach to discrimination" and oppression;[79] and that in processes of retrenchment, "symbolic change" is used by the state to "legitimize and thus reinforce ongoing material subordination" while co-opting and defusing radical and reformist politics.[80] Mindful of the gaps and the continuities between the various forms of power that constitute the field of knowledge "about" oppressed groups, we propose the project of intersectional feminist research about borders and (forced) migration as taking us along a trajectory through and beyond the naturalized categories—themselves constituted through acts of bordering—and to solidarities and coalitions against borders.

Description of Articles

The first two articles in this special issue locate the construction of migration as a "crisis" within diachronic national colonial projects, contributing to the production of socio-legal categories, which in turn legitimize states' attempts to control movement. Taking a de-colonial approach, Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez brings questions of race (particularly whiteness) and colonialism to the foreground of discussions on migration, which have been repressed in anxieties of long historical duration, but also as the "refugee crisis" has been unfolding in Europe, and especially in Germany, since 2015. As Gutiérrez Rodríguez insists, no part of Germany has been "untouched" by the entangled histories of coloniality. As she puts it, "The coloniality of migration operates within the matrix of social classification based on racial hierarchies," themselves reminiscent of colonial differentiation.[81] Placing migration patterns and claims for asylum within this history, the racial, ethnicized, and gendered logics of both inclusionary and exclusionary practices become evident.

In their article, Aila Spathopoulou, Myrto Tsilimpounidi, and Anna Carastathis offer an insightful exploration of what they refer to as the "vocabularies of crisis," tracing the political origins, etymologies, and the contemporary meanings of "crisis" and "hotspots," and of state categories such as "citizen," "migrant," or "refugee." In denaturalizing these terms, they ask what is produced, and in turn what is eclipsed by certain articulations, and remind us that these categories are invented by states (and supranational institutions) in order to control movement. Using Greece as a case study for the intersecting crises that have unfolded there, they illustrate the ways in which discourses of crisis have been transformed hegemonically, producing normative subjects of suffering.

Moving across the Aegean Sea, the two articles that follow turn to the located histories and experiences of refugee resettlement in Turkey. Nergis Canefe's article seeks to move past the Eurocentrism of the discourse of the "refugee crisis," considering the interwoven histories that have shaped movements of migration, displacement, trade, and travel across the Mediterranean. Canefe contextualizes the current "crisis" in terms of socio-legal histories and specifically shows how labour and gendered precarity is produced and sustained through socio-legal status for Syrian women in Turkey by examining the relations between forms of precarity that frame what she terms "refugee reception regimes in the Middle East."

Seçil Dağtaş's piece considers the positionality and experience of women who have recently arrived in Turkey

from Syria, in this case by taking up the complex politics and positionalities of hospitality. Drawing on her long-term fieldwork in Hatay, the Turkish province bordering Syria to the northwest, Dağtaş challenges victimizing depictions of sexual and gender-based violence by turning to the day-to-day experiences of women who live in the region. She argues for an approach to these practices that views them as "contingent assemblages of gendered practices and religious discourses,"[82] while drawing attention to the tension within relations of hospitality for Syrian women in the province. She argues that hospitality is an act that is at some level denied to these women, since they are seen as "guests" themselves, denied the status of "hosts," and faced with the refusal of their hospitality by other neighbourhood dwellers. For many of Dağtaş's research participants, acting as "host" makes it possible for them to feel at home; thus, they experience a refusal of entry into the community as anything more than a guest, while the extension of hospitality is a form of intervention in this exclusion. She shows how these acts of hospitality can therefore be understood as providing a counter to state-level notions of "cosmo-political" hospitality.

Finally, in the last article, Edward Ou Jin Lee invites us to consider the complex role that the nation-state plays in limiting and enabling the movement of people through the socio-legal processes emergent in "refugee and migrant resettlement." This work reveals the way state processes shape migrants' and refugees' experiences of (in)hospitality and (non-)belonging by interrogating the colonial legacies and hetero-patriarchal and cisnormative ideologies that shape Canadian policies. Specifically, Edward Ou Jin Lee examines the relationship between the legacies of colonial history as "forgotten histories" of violence that embed Canada's national borders in the project of racial exclusion that connect histories of slavery, genocide, and indentureship to contemporary exclusionary practices in refugee adjudication. In particular, Lee historicizes the conditions shaping homophobic persecution in the Global South to the imposition of European colonial anti-sodomy laws that criminalized homosexuality and gender inversion in the colonies, and the later incorporation of these legal prohibitions in criminal law in the establishment of the modern, post-colonial nation-states. Drawing on interviews with queer and trans refugee claimants from the Global South, Lee argues that Canadian refugee policies deploy "hetero-cisnormative" logics that exclude queer and trans refugees from asylum through eligibility criteria, such as denying travel visas to queer and trans people from the Global South in order to inhibit future asylum claims.

Following the tenet of feminist praxis, we offer this special issue as an entry point for working intersectionally and collaboratively against borders, as feminist researchers and activists. To this end, what might it mean to think with and alongside one another, and how can we actively struggle with the ethical and political challenges facing us collectively? The articles that follow move us between and across several geopolitical, formal, and informal spaces of knowledge production. Our hope is that this issue speaks "to" and "with" grassroots and transnational organizers, researchers, activists, and academics. In this sense, our approach follows in the tradition of transnational feminist scholarship,[83] which, as Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar define it, means "rethinking the meanings and possibilities of feminist praxis" beyond the three related binaries of "individually/collaboratively produced knowledges, academia/activism, and theory/method."[84] We hope the work gathered in this special issue, but also the work of researchers and activists who made it possible, will contribute to a practical-political overcoming of the false divide not only between empirically and theoretically driven work, but also between research and practices of coalition, resistance, contestation, and transformation.

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Notes

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73 LGBTQI+ is used here as shorthand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (transgender and transsexual), queer, intersex, and the additional inclusion of other sexualities and genders, such as asexuality, two-spirit, questioning, allies, pansexual, and other emergent identities.

74 For more on trans necropolitics and migration, see Nael Bhanji, "Trans/scriptions: Homing Desires, (Trans)sexual Citizenship and Racialized Bodies," in *Transgender Migrations: The Bodies, Borders, and Politics of Transition*, ed. Trystan Cotten, 157–75 (New York: Routledge, 2012); C. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritaworn, "Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife," in *The Transgender Studies Reader,* ed. Susan Stryker and Airen Z. Aizura, 66–76 (New York: Routledge, 2013).

75 Both White and Lee analyze how LGBTQ+ refugee activism transacts with the coloniality of state power in offering and denying international protection. For instance, the Canadian government's response to the "refugee crisis" has been to use gender, sexuality, and nation as key factors in determining who is accepted and who is rejected under the government's resettlement program: insofar as the selection criteria have prioritized government sponsorship of "whole Syrian families," "LGBTQ Syrians," and Syrian women deemed "vulnerable to exploitation."

76 Jordan, "Un/Convention(al) Refugees."

77 Carastathis, *Intersectionality*; AnaLouise Keating, *Transformation Now! Toward a Post-Oppositional Politics of Change* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2013); Roderick Ferguson, "Reading Intersectionality," *Transcripts* 2 (2012): 93; Puar, "I Would Rather Be a Cyborg," 54.

78 Anthias, "Transnational Mobilities."

79 Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing," 167.

80 Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Twenty Years of CRT: Looking Back to Look Forward," *Connecticut Law Review* 43, no. 5 (2011): 1313. Also see Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Race, Reform, and Retrenchment: Transformation and Legitimation in Antidiscrimination Law," *Harvard Law Review* 101, no. 7 (1988): 1331–87.

81 Gutiérrez Rodríguez, "The Coloniality of Migration and the 'Refugee Crisis': On the Asylum-Migration Nexus, the Transatlantic White European Settler Colonialism-Migration and Racial Capitalism," this issue.

82 Seçil Dağtaş, "Inhabiting Difference across Religion and Gender: Displaced Women's Experiences at Turkey's Border with Syria," this issue.

83 Alexander and Mohanty, "Cartographies of Knowledge and Power."

84 Richa Nagar and Amanda Lock Swarr, eds., *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 2.

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