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Migration Research, Coloniality and Epistemic Injustice

Karl Landström and Heaven Crawley

Introduction

In this chapter, we draw on a combination of feminist social epistemology and decolonial theory to take stock of ongoing critical debates among migration scholars regarding the ethics and social epistemology of their knowledge producing practices. While most migration scholars engaging in these debates do not draw on the concepts of epistemic injustice and epistemic oppression, we argue that applying these concepts takes us beyond a description of the need to decentre migration research, towards a critique of the ways in which migration research itself contributes to epistemic injustice and oppression. Understanding the processes through which this happens, rather than just

K. Landström (✉)
Responsible and Sustainable Business Lab, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK
e-mail: karl.landstrom@ntu.ac.uk

H. Crawley
United Nations University Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR), New York, NY, USA
e-mail: crawley@unu.edu

K. Landström
African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa

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the epistemic outcomes, can help us to identify ways to address the structural inequalities with which the production of migration knowledge is often associated.

We argue, for example, that the debates about the eurocentrism of contemporary academic migration scholarship can be fruitfully thought of as matters of epistemic oppression (see Dotson, 2012, 2014). These debates are, at their core, about systematic undue exclusions of certain perspectives, viewpoints and communities from the epistemic communities and the epistemic endeavours of migration researchers. These exclusions produce deficiencies in the shared epistemic resources among these scholars, and the practitioners and policymakers they inform. We use the debate regarding eurocentrism as one of several examples to illustrate how contemporary critiques of academic migration scholarship can be deepened by being viewed through the lens of epistemic marginalisation. This lens makes it possible to clearly analyse and spell out what is at stake, both ethically and epistemically, in these debates. Moreover, the conceptual framework of epistemic injustice not only provides the analytic tools for a deeper critique, but also enables the identification of forward-looking proposals which can be developed by migration scholars to address the socio-epistemic injustices in their field. We illustrate this potential by applying the conceptual apparatus developed around epistemic injustice to three different approaches that migration scholars have presented as potential correctives to the eurocentrism of their field.

The chapter is structured as follows. We start by outlining recent critiques of academic migration research by migration scholars themselves. In the section that follows, we argue that many of these critiques can be deepened through the application of an epistemic injustice lens, which helps us to understand how epistemic injustice and oppression take place. We then draw on the critique of eurocentrism in migration research to assess three different approaches developed by migration scholars. We argue that while two of these approaches have significant limitations in helping us to understand, and address, epistemic injustices, the third approach seems to be more promising. The chapter ends with a concluding section in which the arguments are summarised and the normative implications spelt out.

The State of Academic Migration Research

Like many other research areas across the humanities and the social sciences, topics such as eurocentrism, decolonisation and decentring have been the subject of increasing interest within the field of migration studies (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020; Mayblin & Turner, 2020). It is widely acknowledged, for example, that the study of migration has been dominated by scholarship produced in the Global North (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020, this volume; Gardner & Osella, 2003; Piguet et al., 2018; Pisarevskaya et al., 2020) and that the theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches and underlying assumptions of migration studies are primarily based on European traditions (Mayblin & Turner, 2020).

Reflecting this, it has been argued that migration research interests and priorities often align with the political and policy priorities of the Global North (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Scholten, 2018). A common theme among many of these critiques is their examination of the core premises for knowledge production on migration within the academy (Amelina, 2022; Nieswand & Drotbohm, 2014), and the development of alternative strategies for doing so (Raghuram, 2021). Such alternative strategies and approaches have been developed as part of calls for the denaturalisation (Amelina & Faist, 2012), demigranticisation (Dahinden, 2016) and decolonisation (Mayblin & Turner, 2020) of the production of knowledge on migration. It has also been suggested that migration research suffers from a "representation challenge", prompting calls for critical examination of the role of scientists and research in "othering" discourses both within and outside of the academy (Amelina, 2022). According to Amelina (2022), this "representation challenge" consists of three intertwined components.

Firstly, migration knowledge production reproduces a "figure of the migrant" (Nail, 2015) which reflects dominant political discourses and, in particular, discourses centred on the nation states of the Global North (Amelina, 2022). This has led some migration scholars to question the categories adopted in discourses on migration both within and outside of academic research (Bakewell, 2008; Collyer & de Haas, 2012; Koser & Martin, 2011; Zetter, 2007). Migration scholars have long questioned the possibility of clearly and easily distinguishing between different types of migrants and called for a move beyond simplistic dichotomies such as between "migrants" and "refugees" (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). Similarly, scholars have problematised and questioned how "forced" migration is distinguished from "voluntary" migration (Betts, 2013; Long, 2013; Zetter, 2007). It has been argued that such distinctions are overly simplistic and do not

reflect how migration processes actually work (Collyer & de Haas, 2012; Koser & Martin, 2011). Others have emphasised the complexity of migration processes and argued that migration scholarship needs to move beyond transnational studies (Faist et al., 2013; Levitt & Schiller, 2004) in ways that explicitly address global power asymmetries, including those whose origins can be traced back to colonisation (Amelina, 2022). The important point here is that where the boundaries are drawn between categories determines what content is subsumed under these categories, and thus has the epistemic effect of shaping understandings of migration processes and outcomes (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). This has concomitant ethical ramifications due to how these categories are operationalised in migration governance, and in particular, in distinguishing different groups of migrants from one other.

A core concern in these debates is that politically determined categories and concepts are transformed into the analytical categories adopted in migration research practice. Such categories are drawn into research practice through a range of means, including the requirements of research funding (Amelina, 2022) and as part of the researchers' aspirations for policy relevance (Bakewell, 2008). As one of the authors has argued previously, in adopting dominant policy categories for scholarly analysis, migration scholars allow those categories to shape academic knowledge production on the topic of migration, and in so doing import the politics that underlie the creation and upholding of these categories (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). Moreover, drawing on these dominant categories as the basis for analysis comes at a cost both epistemically and ethically, as it sets undue limitations on the understanding of the complexities of migration processes, and potentially makes the scholar complicit in political processes in which migrants have had their rights undermined and continuously been stigmatised and vilified. Thus, the categories adopted for the purposes of migration research are of both epistemic and ethical significance, as dominant policy categories fail to properly capture the complex relationships necessary to understand the complexities of migration processes, while at the same time reinforcing and upholding unjust and harmful migration governance regimes and discourses. The separation of "migration studies" from "refugee studies" and "forced migration studies" provides a further illustration of the ways in which categorical separation shapes the organisation of migration research (Hathaway, 2007; Hayden, 2006; Scholten et al., 2022).

The second component of Amelina's (2022) challenge is closely related to the first, and centres on the idea that the knowledge produced in academic migration research, particularly that produced in the Global North, adopts the viewpoints of the institutions governing migration in the countries of

the Global North, and particularly of Global North nation states (Grosfoguel et al., 2015). Arguments that studies of migration closely relate and parallel the interests of states and powerful actors in the Global North are commonplace in migration studies. Bakewell (2008), for example, has argued that the emphasis on the need for academic research to be policy relevant has encouraged migration researchers to adopt the categories, concepts and priorities of policymakers and practitioners as the initial frame of reference when identifying areas of study and formulating research questions. In doing so, the worldview of policymakers and practitioners is privileged in the development of new research areas and projects, which has the epistemic effect of constraining the research questions pursued, the areas and topics studied, the methodologies adopted, and the analysis conducted. This, Bakewell (2008) argues, has led to certain groups of migrants being rendered invisible in both research and policy. Bakewell (2008) calls for migration scholars to break away from the emphasis on policy relevance, and instead challenge core assumptions that shape migration research and policymaking.

Similar arguments are made by Schinkel (2018), who argues that the categories, questions and modes of analysis of social science cannot be separated from those of the state, and that much research into immigrant integration in Western Europe comes out of particular entanglements between academic social scientists and state institutions (Schinkel, 2018). These connections have also been highlighted by Pisarevskaya et al. (2020), who trace the predominance of particular research themes and questions within the field. The authors argue that "classical questions", such as research into the challenges of integration of migrants in Europe and North America, and questions pertaining to how to manage and govern migration within and to Europe and North America, are examples of how the dominant themes of the field privilege and adopt the categories, concepts and priorities of dominant actors and institutions in the Global North. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2020) similarly argues that migration research has predominately consisted of studies of migration from the Global South to the Global North, despite the fact that most internal and cross-border migration takes place in the Global South. Adding further weight to these concerns is Amelina's (2022) observation that even scholars who seek to challenge these dominant narratives run the risk of equating categories of political practice with those of scientific analysis, and thus unintentionally reproduce those same narratives.

The third component of the "representation challenge", and one which is rejected by both decolonial theorists and feminist epistemologists, is that of zero-point epistemology, in other words, universalist conceptions of knowledge centred around disembodied, dislocated "neutral" subjects (Mitova,

2020). Feminist epistemologists such as Alcoff and Potter (2013), post- and decolonial scholars (Grosfoguel, 2013; Spivak, 1988) among many others, reject the notion that the knower's social and geohistorical situatedness is epistemically irrelevant, arguing that one's situatedness has epistemic implications, and that a core part of a person's situatedness as a knower is his or her positionality. The knower's positionality has implications for how the knower fares in the "power games" which determine who is credited with knowledge and who is not (Mitova, 2020). Further, an individual's positionality can have implications for the focus of his or her intellectual pursuits and interests (Mitova, 2020). Decolonial theorists such as Grosfoguel (2013) and Mignolo (2009) similarly reject zero-point epistemology, emphasising instead the epistemological importance of an individual's geohistorical situatedness.

Recent critiques, such as that of De Genova et al. (2021) challenge research in the field of migration that claims to be "neutral". As a corrective, they propose migration research underpinned by feminist epistemology that reflects both differing collective standpoints, and individual positionalities. Grosfoguel et al. (2015) have argued that migration studies reproduce Global North-centric social science views of the world. They are particularly critical of migration scholarship that purports to be universal, and that attaches itself to traditional scientific values such as neutrality and objectivity, arguing that these are a myth, particularly in the social sciences. Instead, they emphasise how everyone speaks from differing locations of gender, class, race, and sex in the hierarchies of the world. To these categories they add the notion of coloniality, arguing that colonial legacies shape not only migration but also scholarship on migration. Grosfoguel (2003), following Quijano (2000), argues that knowledge production, including migration (Grosfoguel et al., 2015), is divided by the "coloniality of power" into colonising and colonised epistemic positions, and thus not detached from colonial domination. They argue that research in migration studies has generally spoken from a non-neutral location within the colonial divide and has largely reproduced colonial epistemologies.

The final two components of the representation problem tie existing critiques of migration scholarship to feminist epistemology, and to decolonial theory. While the links between colonialism and migration run deep (see Fynn Bruey and Crawley, this volume), migration research has often obscured these connections through a focus on the present and an emphasis on individualistic and economic explanations (Collins, 2022; Mayblin & Turner, 2020). Collins (2022) argues that the occlusion of colonialism in migration studies has not only supported oppressive border and migration regimes, but also ignored the epistemic coloniality of migration studies. He further

argues that addressing the complicity in the production of colonial knowledges in migration studies requires that critical attention be paid to relations of power, race, class, gender and sexuality in the exercising of mobility, as well as critical reflection on development and migration discourses as governance techniques. As Bhambra (2017) suggests, this epistemic coloniality, and particularly the limited attention paid to the colonial histories of migration patterns and governance, has shaped migration studies and provided the basis for narrow and parochial understandings of migration and responsibilities towards migrants. At the same time, migration researchers have arguably been complicit in advancing current forms of migration management through the production of knowledge of positions some, predominantly non-white, migrants as being in need of governing (Schinkel, 2019). To this extent, migration research can be seen as part in the perpetuation of epistemic injustice.

Migration Research, Epistemic Injustice and Epistemic Oppression

The idea that knowing, producing new knowledge and sharing knowledge are all social activities is widely acknowledged, and has been forcefully argued for by standpoint-theorists (Harding, 2009; Hartsock, 1983; Hill Collins, 1990), social epistemologists (Craig, 1990; Goldman, 1999) and philosophers of science (Kitcher, 1990; Koskinen & Rolin, 2019) among others. The recognition that epistemic life is social, that epistemic systems are built from and by social processes, and that certain individuals and groups may be excluded to varying degrees within this sociality and from these processes (Dotson, 2012, 2014), is a core notion in the theorisation of epistemic injustice and epistemic oppression. Theorists of epistemic injustice argue that some such exclusions not only cause epistemic harms—such as a loss of knowledge or infringements on epistemic agency—but also constitute moral wrongs (Fricker, 2007), thus, tying ethical considerations to epistemological concerns. Epistemic injustice is understood broadly as any unjust epistemic relation which disadvantages someone in their capacity as knower (Fricker, 2007). Epistemic injustice can take a range of forms (Pohlhaus, 2017), including within the sphere of academic research and its governance (Grasswick, 2017).

Closely related to the concept of epistemic injustice are the concepts of epistemic oppression, epistemic exclusion and epistemic agency. Epistemic oppression refers to epistemic exclusions afforded to certain positions and

communities that in turn produce deficiencies in social knowledge and within shared epistemic and hermeneutical resources leading, in turn, to deficiencies in social knowledge and shared epistemic resources (Dotson, 2012). Epistemic exclusions are infringements on the epistemic agency of knowers that reduce their ability to participate in a given epistemic community (Dotson, 2012). Finally, epistemic agency refers to the ability to utilise persuasively shared epistemic resources within a given epistemic community, in order for the knower to participate in knowledge production and, if required, the revision of those same resources. Each of these concepts picks out dimensions of how social factors and relations of power shape epistemic lives and epistemic practices.

Many of the critiques of migration research outlined in the previous section explicitly pertain to socio-epistemological practices of undue exclusion and marginalisation, while at the same highlighting the ethical consequences of those same processes. However, despite the socio-epistemic focus of these critiques, the topic of epistemic injustice and oppression in migration research remains underexplored. Rather than examining the practices involved in their own research, scholars working on migration and epistemic injustice have instead focused on the epistemic injustices that migrants face in a range of different settings such as migration governance procedures (Hänel, 2021; Sertler, 2018; Wikström, 2014), health-care (Peled, 2018), in support programmes (Steen-Johnsen & Skreeland, 2023) and in education (Wee et al., 2023). The conceptual apparatus developed around the notions of epistemic injustice and epistemic oppression is yet to be used to explore and theorise issues in migration research processes themselves. This sets the field apart from other closely related disciplines such as development studies (Cummings et al., 2023; Koch, 2020)[1] and poverty research (Dübgen, 2020) where the conceptual apparatus developed around these two concepts has been successfully leveraged to theorise both extant ethical and epistemic issues and concrete paths to improvement.

The studies of epistemic injustice and oppression in these closely related fields offer a starting point for thinking about the intersection of existing critiques of academic migration research and matters of epistemic (in)justice. In this section, we draw on examples of critiques of migration scholarship from migration scholars that can fruitfully thought of as matters of epistemic injustice and oppression, even if those concepts are not being employed by

[1] The Journal of Human Development and Capabilities dedicated a whole special issue in 2022 to the issue of epistemic (in)justice called "An Epistemological Break: Redefining participatory research in capabilitarian", which was guest edited by Melanie Walker, Alejandra Boni, Carmen Martinez-Vargas and Melis Cin. See: https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cjhd20/23/1.

the critics themselves. In so doing, we aim not only to ground these critiques on a solid normative foundation, but also deepen the analysis in a way that helps us to identify exactly what is at stake, both ethically and epistemically.

Eurocentrism in Migration Studies

Epistemic oppression can take many different forms. As noted above, a core expression of epistemic oppression is the systematic marginalisation and exclusion of particular groups of knowers, as well as certain sets of epistemic resources (Dotson, 2012, 2014). Eurocentric academic fields are characterised by such undue exclusions, and in the case of the migration studies, these undue exclusions are reflected in the emphasis placed on the epistemic resources, and priorities of dominantly situated actors and institutions in the Global North.

Many contemporary critiques of migration studies, including several of those discussed above, can easily be translated into the language of epistemic injustice and oppression. The eurocentrism of migration studies is widely acknowledged (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020, also this volume), and many of the existing critiques of migration studies explicitly target the eurocentrism of the area. It has been argued that eurocentrism, for example, constitutes both a form of epistemic oppression (Posholi, 2020), and an epistemology of ignorance (Alcoff, 2017). Research that challenges the "classical" questions, topics and themes that migration studies typically privileges and adopts, including the categories, concepts and priorities of dominant actors in the Global North, are clearly critiques of eurocentrism.

The eurocentrism of migration studies manifests itself in a number of ways, including through the existence of knowledge gaps in areas that have historically not been prioritised, such as migration between the countries of the Global South, as contrasted with migration from the Global South to the countries of the Global North (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020, this volume). Knowledge gaps that are the product of the eurocentrism of academic migration research can be thought of as a distributive form of epistemic injustice, as they are cases in which epistemically valuable goods, such as information and research findings, are unfairly distributed. Further, undue epistemic marginalisations are reflected in the dominant epistemic and conceptual frameworks that are shared within particular epistemic communities. When the shared epistemic resources in an epistemic community become unserviceable or unsuited for making sense of or conveying the experiences of marginalised individuals and groups, those groups are unfairly disadvantaged both in terms of making sense of their experiences, and also in terms of participating in the

epistemic community at large (Dotson, 2012). Such gaps, or flaws in the shared epistemic resources have been identified by critical migration scholars. Such critics have argued that many of the core concepts in the field are far from universally applicable (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020, this volume) and lose their relevancy as one moves beyond the context of Western Europe and North America (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2020; Natter, 2018).

Epistemic Exploitation

The critique of eurocentrism is not the only critique that can be made sense of, or expanded upon, by drawing on the concepts of epistemic injustice and oppression. For example, a growing body of literature critiques the use and treatment of research and fieldwork assistants, particularly in the Global South, illustrating the ways in which such practices are often exploitative (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2019; Turner, 2010). Local research assistants are often subcontracted in international research collaborations to fulfil a range of important tasks in the research process. These core tasks commonly include planning field work, background literature reviews, data collection, translation, and transcriptions among other activities. In the critiques of the treatment of research and fieldwork assistants, a core argument is that while fieldwork and research assistants are doing significant epistemic labour, they are commonly rendered invisible and effectively silenced when it comes communicating the results of the research despite playing core epistemic roles in the research process (Jenkins, 2018; Molony & Hammett, 2007; Turner, 2010). Their work is often not appropriately recognised, nor are these individuals given appropriate credit for their epistemic labour (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2019). This is not only an issue in migration research, but rather spans a wide range of academic disciplines and has been argued to be a product of the increasing internationalisation of academic research (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2019).

The inadequate acknowledgement of research and fieldwork assistants can be understood as a form of epistemic exploitation (Berenstain, 2016). Epistemic exploitation, as theorised in feminist social epistemology, occurs when members of certain groups are required to systematically carry out epistemic labour to produce and transmit knowledge for the purposes and interests of the members of a dominantly situated group. The working relationships between research leads and research assistants critiqued by Sukarieh and Tannock (2019) and Turner (2010), for example, can be thought of as examples of epistemic exploitation. Epistemic exploitation is unjust in a number of ways. It is unjust in distributive terms, as credit for epistemic labour is

unfairly allocated to the exploiter, rather than the "silenced" research assistant. It is also unjust in the sense that certain individuals are treated as mere means to serve the interests of others, rather than being treated as equals. Grasswick (2017), as well as Koskinen and Rolin (2019), identify the treatment of differently situated participants in epistemic endeavours such as research collaborations as a domain in which epistemic injustices are commonly perpetuated. This includes the treatment of other academics, but also other stakeholders such as research participants, non-academic research collaborators and members of the communities in which the research is being conducted, reflecting the structural forces the shape these collaborations.

Wilful Hermeneutical Ignorance

While some of the critiques discussed in the previous section map almost perfectly onto existing concepts from the epistemic injustice and epistemic oppression literature, others do not. Nonetheless, these critiques share important similarities with core concepts found in feminist social epistemology and/or decolonial theory which makes it possible to draw on those concepts for further analysis. One such instance is Crawley and Skleparis' (2018) critique of the adoption of policy categories outlined above, and which the authors argue, are based on simplistic binaries and linear understandings of migration processes and experiences which are epistemically flawed and ethically dubious. The epistemic and ethical thrust at the heart of Crawley and Skleparis' (2018) criticism shares important similarities with the notion of wilful hermeneutical ignorance. Using her conception of wilful hermeneutical ignorance, Pohlhaus (2012) picks out instances in which epistemic agents actively choose to utilise epistemic resources that are flawed or structurally prejudiced, despite alternative sets of hermeneutical resources that could be utilised being readily available to them. This seems to be the case in the instances of policy categories being adopted migration research criticised by Crawley and Skleparis (2018). These categories or sets of epistemic resources are flawed, particularly in terms of being unable to appropriately account for the complexity of the lived experiences of migrants. These flaws are acknowledged in the wider literature (see Bakewell, 2011; Collyer & de Haas, 2012; Gupte & Mehta, 2007; Koser & Martin, 2011; Scherschel, 2011; Zetter, 2007). Nonetheless, these sets of epistemic resources continue to be adopted in academic research, with concomitant negative epistemic effects.

Wilful hermeneutical ignorance is a form of epistemic injustice that includes both an agential and a structural dimension. For example, the concept of wilful hermeneutical ignorance is helpful in analysing the issues

criticised by Crawley and Skleparis (2018), as it allows for the identification of both structural and agential wrongs. There are structural reasons why various sets of epistemic resources become dominant, but the epistemic agent also plays an active role in choosing to adopt these epistemic resources despite the abundant evidence of their flaws. Using the concept of wilful hermeneutical ignorance developed by Pohlhaus (2012) to think about such cases, draws attention to the structural factors which lead to the use of epistemically flawed resources, despite the existence of more epistemically sound alternatives. Further, as Crawley and Skleparis (2018) emphasise, this is not simply a question of semantics: categories such as "refugee" and "migrant" have consequences for people's lives, entitling some protection and rights while simultaneously denying others the same rights and protection.

These examples illustrate how at least some of the socio-epistemological critiques that migration scholars levy against their own field can be understood and analysed using the normative framework of epistemic injustice. In response to the existing inequities and epistemic oppression of contemporary poverty research, Dübgen (2020) calls for a redistribution of the outcomes of academic research, as well as sweeping changes to the dominant modes of knowledge production in the discipline. She argues that this would entail fundamentally rearranging the ways in which research is designed, conducted and implemented, as well as reconsidering the epistemic norms that govern and authenticate the knowledge producing endeavours of poverty researchers. Most importantly, she calls for an end to undue, and structural marginalisation of epistemic agents involved in academic knowledge production on poverty.

Addressing the Eurocentrism of Migration Research

In this section we turn our attention to the ways in which some of the issues identified in this chapter might be addressed. We have chosen to focus on how the eurocentrism of migration scholarship might be addressed, given that it has been identified as a significant issue in migration studies with concomitant epistemic and ethical consequences. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2020, this volume) outlines three ways in which migration researchers have tried to redress the eurocentrism of their field: firstly, by examining the applicability of classical concepts and frameworks in the Global South; secondly, by addressing the "gaps" in previous research by studying migration in the Global South and South–South migration; and finally, by engaging critically

with the geopolitics of knowledge production. These approaches are often employed simultaneously.

Scholars adopting the first approach acknowledge that most concepts are not universal. These approaches commonly draw on research in countries outside of the Global North to explore and interrogate concepts and policies originally developed based on the perspectives of the Global North. An example of scholarship that engages in such examination is that of Natter (2018) who challenges the theoretical usefulness of essentialist, dichotomous categories such as Western/non-Western or democratic/autocratic, calling for a more nuanced theorising of migration policymaking that goes beyond simplistic dichotomies and instead centres structures, functions and practices. Other examples include scholars who offer critiques of the concepts of "transit migration" and transit states (Missbach & Hoffstaedter, 2020; Velasco, 2020), or concepts such as innovation and self-sufficiency (Wurtz & Wilkinson, 2020).

This first approach shares important similarities with what has been theorised as the negative programme of epistemic decolonisation, which entails eliminating undue and unreflective Western influences on knowledge supplies and production (Mitova, 2020). A core part of the negative programme consists of critically questioning the basic assumptions, theories, methodologies, categories and aims of eurocentric scholarship in order to expose undue colonial influences on existing sets of epistemic resources and knowledge production processes (Nyamnjoh, 2019). Such critical interrogation is an important part of creating a more just research environment. However, as Mitova (2020) forcefully argues, a "negative programme" on its own is not enough to advance knowledge, nor to correct the flaws of the existing sets of epistemic resources. For the existing epistemic resources to be improved, the negative programme needs to be accompanied by a positive programme that adds to or changes the existing epistemic resources in fruitful ways. Thus, there is good reason to be sceptical of the efficacy of approaches that only include a "negative programme" to appropriately address the issue of eurocentrism in migration research.

In contrast, the second approach is one that includes a "positive" programme, which attempts to "fill" the "gaps" in migration research and policy resulting from the eurocentrism of the field. This, proponents argue, is achieved by promoting and funding studies into topics and areas that have been previously understudied. One example of this is recent research into the topic of South–South migration (Crush & Chikanda, 2018; Nawyn, 2016a, 2016b), which was long neglected in comparison to the study of migration from the Global South to the Global North (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2020,

this volume). It is also reflected in the work of the Migration for Development and Equality (MIDEQ) Hub.[2] Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Daley (2018) argue that filling existing knowledge gaps can function as a corrective to the historical imbalance in migration research and Global North discourses about migration, giving the approach its justification. However, they caution that the interest that policymakers and politicians in Europe and North America have shown in South–South migration raises concern that northern actors might instrumentalise and co-opt southern dynamics and people to achieve the aims of Global North states and institutions (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Daley, 2018).

Further, the enactment of this approach is not without its own pitfalls. As Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2020) argues, just filling gaps is not enough for this approach to be appropriately corrective. Rather, attention must be paid to questions such as: who is producing new knowledge, when and where are they doing so, how are they doing so and why? Further, important socio-epistemic questions pertaining to whom and what knowledge is allowed to be part of these processes, and on what terms, are equally important. This clearly parallels the emphasis on the epistemic importance of positionality and geohistorical situatedness in the writings of both feminist and decolonial scholars. The normative principle at the heart of many "positive" decolonial programmes, namely, to proactively draw on marginalised sets of epistemic resources to advance knowledge across various domains, would serve well as guidance for these approaches to be able to serve the corrective function they aspire to. Adhering to this principle would ensure that the attempts to fill these "gaps" are not also based on the same eurocentric epistemologies that these approaches are aspiring to address. Additionally, these first two approaches would do well to complement each other as part of an encompassing approach consisting of both a critical dimension, and a gap filling dimension. However, such an approach would have to be appropriately reflective of socio-epistemic matters to avoid the pitfalls discussed in this section, as well as to avoid reproducing the eurocentrism of migration studies.

The third approach of engaging critically with the geopolitics of knowledge production appears the most promising, as it combines both a "negative"

[2] The Migration for Development and Equality (MIDEQ) Hub unpacks the complex and multi-dimensional relationships between migration and inequality in the context of the Global South. MIDEQ aims to transform the understanding of the relationship between migration, inequality, and development by decentring the production of knowledge about migration and its consequences away from the Global North towards the Global South. MIDEQ mobilises resources for partners in the Global South to define their own research questions and generate their own knowledge, producing robust, comparative, widely accessible evidence on South–South migration, inequality, and development; and engaging national and regional partners on key policy issues. More at www.mideq.org

programme and a "positive" programme. Proponents of this approach argue that addressing eurocentrism requires critical engagement with the geopolitics of knowledge production on migration, and decentring the production of knowledge away from centres of power in the Global North (Achiume, 2019; Grosfoguel et al., 2015; Pailey, 2020). Mitova (2020) has argued that epistemic decentring consists of a "negative" and a "positive" dimension. On this account, the "negative" dimension of re-centring consists of rejecting zero-point epistemology, and instead taking seriously the role of positionality, and geohistorical and social situatedness in epistemic endeavours, while the second dimension consists of correcting distorted relationships of power, and particularly those that stem from social and racial hierarchisation and restoring epistemic authority and freedom to marginalised knowers, thus facilitating a more epistemically just production and exchange of knowledge on migration.

The call to decentre knowledge production has gained increasing uptake in the scholarship on migration (Pastore, 2022; Triandafyllidou, 2022; Zardo & Wolff, 2022), with a growing number of migration scholars calling for post- and decolonial approaches as alternatives to more traditional approaches (Collins, 2022; Vanyoro, 2019, this volume). Collins (2022) argues that approaches inspired by post- and decolonial scholarship make possible critical migration scholarship that could unravel the epistemic coloniality that shapes both migration scholarship and migration governance. In order to do so, Collins (2022) emphasises the importance of both challenging undue epistemic exclusions and engaging with marginalised knowers and their knowledge. As Vanyoro (2019) argue, doing so would entail reshaping not only the processes of producing new knowledge, but also how knowledge is circulated and reproduced both in research and education. Others have called for scholars in migration studies to take seriously and incorporate the critical decolonial epistemologies of migrants and the marginalised into their knowledge production, while also cautioning against essentialist thinking and the "naïve, populist celebration" of the knowledge of oppressed groups (Grosfoguel et al., 2015).

This approach is the most promising of the three approaches discussed in this section. It includes a substantial "negative programme" of interrogating and challenging the geopolitics of migration scholarship, while at the same time emphasising an epistemically inclusive, albeit critical programme for reshaping migration scholarship. But even this approach is not without its limitations. It is important remember that many of the issues that are the subject of critique within migration studies stem from structural sources. This means that efforts to address them may well lie beyond the remit of the

members of a single discipline or research area. As Anderson (2012) emphasises, structural problems need structural solutions, and eurocentrism cannot be addressed without structural change.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have taken stock of existing critiques of contemporary migration research and brought these debates into contact with ongoing debates among decolonial scholars and in feminist social epistemology. We have illustrated how some ethical and epistemic concerns voiced by migration scholars in regard to the socio-epistemic functioning of their field can be understood using the conceptual apparatus that has been developed around the notions of epistemic injustice and oppression. In so doing, we hope to have illustrated the relevance and usefulness of both feminist social epistemology and of decolonial theory for theorising the socio-epistemic challenges that migration scholars face. The conceptual framework of epistemic injustice and oppression not only offers clarity in what is at stake within migration studies both ethically and epistemically, but also elucidates moral and epistemic reasons for why these issues should be addressed. This framework both calls attention to issues of undue epistemic marginalisation, and centres these issues as a core concern as migration scholars critically reflect upon the knowledge production, and dissemination practices of their field.

So how can these concerns be addressed? The work of the MIDEQ Hub shows that the applicability of classical concepts and frameworks in the Global South needs to be addressed not just by migration scholars in the Global North but by scholars originating from, and working in, the Global South who have deep familiarity with the political, social and linguistic contexts within which migration takes places. Research on migration in the Global South and on South–South migration should not just be about "gap filling", but rather should be fundamentally concerned with the ways in which new epistemic resources are created and the conditions under which epistemic resources are shared. Epistemic justice is about allowing or enabling marginalised researchers to think about and analyse their experiences in ways that value and appropriately recognise those experiences, and particularly so when these clash with the perspectives of the dominantly situated and hegemonic discourses. Anything else would simply represent a continuation of undue epistemic marginalisation.

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