*Gender and migration: Feminist interventions.* Ingrid palmary, Erica Burman, Khatidja Chantler and Peace Kiguwa, eds., 2010 London: Zed Books 245 pp., ISBN9781848134119, £18.99/$34.95

This edited volume on gender and migration offers a wide range of interesting and thought provoking case studies, from analyses of trafficking and anti-racist policies, gender-related persecution and asylum, migrant women in South-Africa, to post-disaster shelters in Venezuela and ‘impossible’ relationships for migrant men in Greece. The contributions are organised in three main sections: ‘Visibility and Vulnerability’, ‘Asylum’ and ‘Depoliticising Migration’. The book’s introduction and the introductions to each section usefully indicate how the contributions are analytically and thematically linked together. ‘Asylum’ stands out as the most clearly integrated and coherent section. With regard to the other sections, the link between the different chapters seems more tenuous.

*Gender and Migration* contains several clearly written and well-argued analyses, offering new insights that are highly relevant for both feminist theory and migration research. Middleton’s assessment of the South African asylum system carefully outlines the mechanisms through which asylum claims made on the basis of gender-based persecution are frequently undermined. Cases involving domestic violence, forced marriage and sexual orientation are often dismissed because these issues are seen as too personal or too commonplace to qualify as persecution (p. 73). The editors argue that ‘[c]hallenging the assumed distinctness between the political and the domestic, the state and the family is a longstanding but still necessary feminist intervention’ (p. 4) and Middleton’s analysis supports this argument convincingly as she makes innovative use of feminists’ critique of the public/private dichotomy.

Another well-argued contribution is ‘The problem of trafficking’ by Gould. In this chapter, the author describes and problematises the ‘polarised and highly emotive’ discourse on human trafficking (p. 32). She presents an enlightening discussion about the struggle over the definition of trafficking, identifies an alarming lack of documentation underlying the high estimates of trafficked persons frequently presented in reports and research about human trafficking and historicises the trafficking discourse. The chapter adds valuable insights and avoids contributing to further polarisation of the issues.

However, not all contributions are equally convincing and this is related to the way of doing discourse analysis. In the introduction, the editors explain their commitment to ‘use discourse analysis as the basis of critique and engagement’ (p. 7) and for the most, the authors’ critical assessment of the issues under scrutiny seem important and well justified. Neverthelless, some contributions could have benefitted from focusing less on political commitment and criticism and rather develop a more coherent and original analytical argument (for example Zavos’ chapter about anti-racist politics and Ismail’s chapter about domestic violence and Pakistani women).

A diversity of qualitative methods are represented in this volume, including interviews, text analysis and participant observation. Kihato’s study, where narrated visual diaries and group discussions are analysed, stands out as particularly interesting and innovative with regard to methods and methodological enquiry. Psaroudakis’ research on ‘impossible’ relationships for migrant men in Greece, based on an analysis of a conversation about a movie, also deserves credit for its innovative use of methods. However, as the author herself notes, the contribution is more a ‘commentary’ (p. 211) than the in-dept investigation the topic deserves. Burman offers a detailed analysis of a ‘relatively small amount of text’ through which she explores ‘state bureaucratic discourses around asylum practices’ (p. 119). The discourse analysis is transparent and rigorous. Although the same level of detail cannot be expected from analyses of larger texts, some of the other discourses analyses in the volume ( such as chapter 2, 7 and 11) could have benefitted from a firmer grounding of the analysis in the text as in Burman’s chapter. In some cases, it is unclear what material the author analyses or why (for example in Chantler’s chapter about asylum-seeking in the UK), and some chapters (for example Mora’s chapter about shelters and relief programmes for victims of a natural disaster) could have benefitted from a more stringent analysis, as otherwise interesting lines of argumentation may seem unconvincing when it is somewhat unclear to the reader what evidence the argument rests on.

All in all, the volumeis interesting and worth reading. As with any books, there are topics not discussed that could have been addressed. While asylum and irregular migration is extensively covered, other important categories of migrants, such as family migration or labour migration, are not much discussed. As there is a considerable scholarship analysing the gendered aspect of family migration (see for example van Walsum and Spijkerboer 2007; Williams 2010), integrating this literature could have contributed to the overall analysis.

VAN WALSUM, S. & SPIJKERBOER, T. (2007) *Women and immigration law: new variations on classical feminist themes.* (Abingdon, Routledge-Cavendish).

WILLIAMS, L. (2010) *Global marriage: cross-border marriage migration in global context.* New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

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