Gender Knowledge in Economic Migration Theories and in Migration Practices[1]

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ABSTRACT

The paper critically reviews the origins of migration studies and some of the most important economic migration theories in order to shed light on the role gender played in the evolution of migration studies. It can be shown that, with the exception of anthropology, until the late 20th century, migration studies did either not deal with gender differences or explicitly negate them. Yet, implicitly, they assumed the male migrant as the 'normal migrant'. This finding is supported by the more in depth analysis of two neoclassical models of migration, the Roy-Borjas selection model and the Mincer family migration model. The different dimensions of gender knowledge in these theories are delineated. Different migration patterns of men and women are considered as a result of the assumed fundamental difference between the genders, not of segmented labour markets and a gendered division of labour. Having diagnosed a rather traditional understanding of gender roles in migration studies, the paper relates this knowledge to migration practices. The authors contend rather mixed findings, ranging from stabilizing effects of migration practices on traditional gender orders and knowledge systems to practices which challenge those knowledge systems.

Keywords: Migration, gender, economics, knowledge systems

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Introduction

For a long time, feminists have criticized Western science as a distinctly masculine enterprise. Indeed, as Ann Tickner (2006: 387) put it: "Feminist scholarship has emerged from a deep scepticism about knowledge that, even though it claims to be universal and objective, is not." This already indicates that analyzing the order of knowledge itself and gender as a category of that order promises interesting results, which go beyond the narrow focus on the utilization of knowledge in most studies on knowledge and politics. Indeed, feminist research on science and knowledge no longer concentrates exclusively on the instrumentalization of gendered stereotypes in academia – like the traditional sociology of knowledge, which also considered the content of knowledge as "sacrosanct" (Braun/Stephan 2005: 31). Instead, thanks to the anti-positivist turn of the 1960s, feminists have moved the content of these gender stereotypes to the centre of the debate. Christina von Braun and Inge Stephan (ibid.) consider this the common denominator of contemporary studies on gender and science.

Against this background, we will browse the field of migration studies and migration practices for their explicit and implicit gender knowledge. In other words, we will investigate the specific ways, in which the scholarly community and dominant theories in the field perceive, evaluate, reason and either legitimize and accept or challenge gender differences and gender relations. And we will discuss whether this gender knowledge reflects and/ or is reflected in the lived experiences of migrants. For that purpose we start with an analysis of some of the core economic theories of migration, which will show that the academic reasoning about migration is far from gender neutral or gender sensitive, but is instead informed by a rather traditional understanding of gender roles. This is supported by a brief survey of the evolution of migration studies which includes other disciplines besides economics. Here, the implicit norm of the migrant as male has only recently been questioned and contrasted with gender-sensitive interpretations. But how does this rather traditional gender knowledge in migration studies relate to migrant practices? The enormous body of literature on gender and migration shows that there is no clear answer to this question – migration practices can stabilize as well as destabilize traditional gender knowledges. We thus conclude that while it seems unlikely that the majority of migrants of both genders challenges existing gender orders, incremental changes and creative appropriations nevertheless adumbrate contingencies.

The remainder of our contribution is structured as follows: We start with developing our conceptual framework of gender knowledge. The subsequent sections take a closer look at economic migration theories and scours two neoclassical models for their explicit and implicit gender knowledge – Jacob Mincer's model of family migration and the Roy-Borjas selection model. The middle part of our paper then provides a brief survey of the history of migration studies, the role gender played in their evolution and of the varying degrees of openness towards gender issues in the different disciplines. In the final section, we raise the question whether migrant practices challenge the more traditional gender knowledge identified in migration studies. We conclude the paper by summarizing our findings, reflecting upon our research approach and sketching perspectives for further research.

Conceptual framework: explicit and implicit gender knowledge

To analyze the gendered assumptions of migration studies and practices, we draw on the concept of 'gender knowledge' ("Geschlechterwissen") introduced by German social scientists Irene Dölling and Sünne Andresen (Dölling 2005; Andresen/Dölling 2005). Their central assumption is that every form of knowledge – be it everyday knowledge or the one produced in academia – is based upon a specific knowledge about gender. As knowledge is plural, different knowledges about gender, some of them contradictory, co-exist in society. These different forms of gender knowledge can become strategic resources in struggles about practices and the construction of reality (Andresen/Dölling 2005: 175; Dölling 2005: 50).

But what exactly is gender knowledge? Dölling and Andresen (2005: 175) distinguish two dimensions of the term: firstly, "the different types of collective knowledge, which exist in society about the difference between the sexes, the reasoning about its 'self-evidence' and evidence, the dominant normative concepts about the 'correct' relations and divisions of labour between men and women" (own translation). Secondly, gender knowledge encompasses individually appropriated forms of knowledge (ibid.; see also Dölling 2005: 50). Collective gender knowledge can itself be further differentiated into, first, everyday knowledge, which is dominated by cultural stereotypes and is rather tacit and unconscious, second, expert knowledge generated by institutions like religion, academia, or law and, third, popularized knowledge dispersed through the media, political parties, social movements etc., which is an important link between everyday and expert knowledge. In all three forms,

gender knowledge can reaffirm a hierarchical gender order, openly question it or range somewhere in between these two poles.

The differentiation into everyday, expert and popularized knowledge already suggests that gender knowledge can be either implicit – an incorporated knowledge that is not known – or well reflected and explicitly referred to in discourse. With reference to gender mainstreaming, German sociologist Angelika Wetterer (2003) has illustrated that there can be a mismatch between both: Mushrooming gender-sensitive documents, declarations and actions, which reflect a more progressive discursive gender knowledge, often clash with the practice of individuals and institutions, which often reflect a more traditional incorporated gender knowledge. This shows that even if gender knowledge based on gender equality is integrated into policy documents or implementation plans, this does not necessarily lead to its sustainable implementation as long as it is not incorporated into the everyday actions of individuals and institutions.

Relating the concept of gender knowledge to the field of migration we assume that migratory practice and the knowledge about causes and patterns of migration are based on explicit and/ or implicit assumptions about gender. For analytical purposes, we will focus on three questions to trace these gendered assumptions: First, are gender differences in migration acknowledged and if so, how are they described? Second, are these differences explained and if so, how? And, finally, what relevance is generally ascribed to gender in migration processes? In answering these questions, we aim to contribute to the analysis of the often invisible gendered codes of knowledge orders (cf. Braun/Stephan 2005) and the gendered forms of knowledge entering governance processes.

The relevance of economics in migration studies and policies

Starting an article about gender and migration with an in-depth analysis of two neoclassical economic models of migration might come a bit as a surprise. Why bother with a field that is apparently so resilient to change that the feminist challenge to it "has barely caused a ripple within the increasingly conservative core of the profession" as Marianne A. Ferber and Julie A. Nelson (2003: 29) conclude in their documentation of the impact of a decade of feminist economics? This question is even more pressing as there is no unambiguous evidence about the relevance of migration economics for migration studies and policies. On the one hand, the

discussion about a conference and special journal issue with the aim of reviewing "recent innovations in the field, both in theory and empirical research" (Portes/DeWind 2004: 828) indicates that economics is rather contested in migration research: Due to "the significant gap in theorizing and research styles between economics and other social sciences; the major challenge in organizing a meaningful dialogue […]; and the relative abundance of volumes written by economists on the origins and 'cost/benefit' ratios of immigration", economists were purposefully excluded (Portes/DeWind 2004: 829). On the other hand, economics seems to guide a lot of quantitative research conducted in the field, serves as a common point of reference in other disciplines of migration studies and has a major impact on everyday assumptions about why people migrate, for example, through the theorem of wage differentials.

As far as migration policy is concerned, the evidence is equally contradictory. While we have not come across studies on the influence of economic theories on migration policies, according to Caroline B. Brettel and James F. Hollifield (2000a: 6) "economists (and economic demographers) are often called upon (by those who formulate policy) to assess the fiscal and human capital costs and benefits of immigration." Urzúa (2000: 428) goes as far to argue that neoclassical economics is the dominant conceptual framework underlying migration policies. More specifically Massey, Durand and Malone (2005: 22) argue that the US immigration policy of the 1980s and 90s – border policing as a means to raise mobility costs and the exclusion of immigrants from public services as an attempt to reduce benefits – was inspired by simple cost-benefit approaches. Debates surrounding the EU's Eastern enlargement constitute another case in point: Like prior to the Union's Southern enlargement in the 1980s, economic models predicted a significant increase in immigration and were used to justify temporary restrictions to the free movement of labour in the enlarged EU. While predicted flows have not yet materialized, the same models are used to estimate migration flows from Turkey in case of an accession (Düvell 2006: 91). More generally, the observation that economic criteria gain in importance for worldwide immigration policies alongside issues of national security and border control (e.g. Dodson/Crush 2004; McLaren/Dyck 2004) speaks to a growing influence of migration economics on the governance of migration. On the other hand, the strong standing of security issues in and the restrictive character of many migration policies suggest that economic rationales are not the only, and probably not even the dominant logic in this policy field. Furthermore, more general studies on the role of expert knowledge in current migration policies suggest a primacy of politics in the politics-

science-nexus: While science – and with it migration economics – can be an important currency in migration policy making, politics and the media tend to only selectively draw on the respective arguments to back up their claims and are cautious about relying too much on academia, which may be "reinforced by a general decline in the belief in scientific knowledge as a tool for rational problem-solving" (Timmermans/Scholten 2006: 1116; see also Boswell 2008, forthcoming).

Despite these ambiguities, we consider it worthwhile analyzing the gendered foundations of neoclassical theories of migration. One reason is the enormous influence of neoclassical economics in the current debate about migration and development. The mushrooming reports by institutions such as the World Bank, the OECD or IOM draw heavily on the neoclassical framework for predictions about flows, costs and benefits of migration, even though some integrate other insights and most are silent on their theoretical underpinnings (e.g. IOM 2005, particularly section 2; World Bank 2006, particularly chap. 2-3; OECD 2007). This influence of economics is, first, reflected in the frequent use of formal, idealized models and econometric techniques, particularly in the studies that provide the empirical basis for the reports. Another indicator is the continuous reference to the idea that regional wage differentials drive migration. Take the following statement from the IOM's World Migration report 2005 about the driving forces of migration as a representative example: "once per capita income differentials are reduced to about 4:1 or 5:1 […], the anticipation of continued economic improvement would keep most persons […] at home" (IOM 2005: 186). Finally, the commitment to the theorem of wage differentials hints at the adherence to three features, which Christina Boswell (2008: 552) has identified as the core of the economic literature on migration: a) methodological individualism, that is the belief that social phenomena can be explained through individual preferences and behavior; b) a utilitarian ontology of the self, which assumes that individuals seek to maximize their utility; and c) a uniform concept of rationality. And indeed, while explicit statements such as "migrants make their own rational cost-benefit calculations" (IOM 2005: 18) are rare, the mainstream contribution to the debate about migration and development leaves little room for non-generalizable conceptions of utility contingent on particular social settings. This goes hand in hand with a striking amnesia of former research on the relevance of structural constraints and institutions in migration processes – an amnesia, which Hein de Haas (2007: 69) has interpreted as "the deductive echo of a general paradigm shift in research and policy away from dependency and state-centric to neo-classical and neoliberal views" in the social sciences.

Yet, the influence of economics on this debate is not the only reason for conducting an analysis of the gendered foundations of neoclassical theories of migration. In addition, we follow the insights of economic historians and poststructuralist feminist economists that neoclassical economics functions as a hegemonic discourse. Its hegemonic power is not derived from the fact that it aptly describes 'reality', but because, over the centuries, the theory managed to construct its subject – the economy and the subjects acting in it – according to its basic rationales (Manstetten 2002: 120; Habermann 2008). Its central figure, homo economicus, serves as a hegemonic ideal, which prescribes a certain rationale of behavior that has been more and more internalized by individuals (Habermann 2008). From that perspective, throwing some light on this rationale is a worthy endeavor even though economics is contested within migration studies and there is no one-to-one translation of economic models into policies. Furthermore, we consider the analysis of the gendered foundations of migration theories as an important step in further overcoming the 'add women and stir'-approach in the field. While it has been rightly argued that, since the 1990s, much of the scholarship has gone beyond that approach and developed gender as a central category in migration processes (Curran/Shafer/Donato/Garip 2006), the fact that this has mainly left theories of migration unchallenged hints at the difficulties in conceptualizing migration as a gendered process (for valuable exceptions see Katz 1999; Kofman et al. 2000: 21ff.; Boyd/Grieco 2003). Finally, we consider a gendered analysis of neoclassical migration theories as an important contribution to overcoming the lack of dialogue between feminist and mainstream researchers in the field.

Should I stay or should I go? – Economic theories of migration

Economic theories of migration differ according to paradigms (Marxism, neoclassical and institutional economics), levels of analysis (micro or macro) and to the issues they address: Why do immigrants come? Which persons are most likely to move? How do they fare at destination? How does immigration affect receiving countries? And finally, how does emigration affect sending societies? Within that broad field, we will focus on neoclassical approaches, and more specifically on 'who and why models', which are particularly relevant as they underpin the rest of migration economics (Clark/Hatton/Williamson 2004: 1).

The neoclassical macro-theory of migration dates back to John R. Hicks' *Theory of Wages* (1932), according to which migration is determined by geographic differences in economic

opportunities. Above all it is wage differentials due to different endowments of labour relative to capital, which trigger mobility from places where labour is abundant and earnings are low to labour-scarce and high-wage destinations. In other words: "Workers respond to regional differences in economic outcomes by voting with their feet" (Borjas 2000: 1). The reason for this behavior is given by the microeconomic human capital approach, which was first outlined by Larry A. Sjaastad (1962) and given its classic form by Michael P. Todaro (1969). The Todaro-model claims that individuals make a rational decision to migrate when a cost-benefit calculation leads them to expect that future payoffs[2] from the movement exceed its costs[3]. Since the present costs have to pay off in the future, migration is interpreted as a human capital investment.

This basic theorizing of migration has been refined, extended and tested through numerous authors (for a selection of milestone articles see Zimmermann/Bauer 2002). A leading figure in this process has been Harvard economist George J. Borjas. His selection model (Borjas 1987, 1991) is one of the most important benchmarks in the field and perfectly suitable to exemplify neoclassical accounts of individual migration. The model deals with the question of which workers tend to engage in migration processes – the more or the least skilled – and was developed in the context of seemingly deteriorating labour market performances and declining skills of US immigrants in the 1980s. Up to then, the standard proposition within neoclassical economics was that, irrespective of country of origin, immigrants as a self-selected group were "more able and more highly motivated" than their fellow citizens (Chiswick 1978: 900). Yet, Borjas argues that the skill composition of migration flows depends on regional differences in the rewards to skills, because "[w]orkers 'selling' their skills behave just like firms selling their product. Both, workers and goods flow to those markets where they can get the highest price" (Borjas 1996: 298). Taking income inequality as a proxy for returns to skill, Borjas hypothesizes that the skill composition of migration flows depends on migrants' position in the home-country wage distribution and on the ratio of variances in the income distribution of home and host society. Workers with above-

[2] Apart from wage advantages, non-monetary factors are also considered important migration benefits – at least in empirical studies. They include political (e.g. civil liberties, political rights, stability, security), socio-cultural (e.g. love, social integration, educational opportunities) and ecological gains (e.g. environment, climate, health). However, due to problems of empirical measurement, there is a certain hesitation among economists to include these factors (Fischer/Martin/Straubhaar 1997: 57f.).

[3] Within theory, the costs of moving more often than not equal transportation costs with distance used as a proxy. Empirical studies include income losses due to potential unemployment in the host society, psychic costs, adjustment costs for job training or learning a new language as well as the costs of gaining information about feasible destinations. Costs resulting from emigration and immigration barriers have also been included.

average skills will move from countries with a more egalitarian income distribution to places with more income inequality while unskilled workers will prefer countries with a more equal income distribution where payoff to skill is lower.

While this approach has also been applied to family migration (Borjas/Bronars 1991), until today, the standard neoclassical family relocation model is Jacob Mincer's application of the New Home or Household Economics[4] to migration. It is particularly noteworthy as a first attempt within neoclassical economics to address patterns of gender-specific migration within households, but is deeply rooted in a mode of thinking, which has met with fierce criticism from the side of feminist economists for the naturalization, rationalization and legitimization of white, middle-class, Fordist and patriarchal family arrangements (e.g. Ferner/Birnbaum 1977; Bergmann 1995). At the heart of Mincer's model is the assumption "that net family gain rather than net personal gain […] motivates migration of households" (Mincer 1978: 750). Couples move or stay in order to maximize the sum of their incomes, not individual wellbeing. This may imply forgoing opportunities, which would be optimal from a personal calculation. So, whilst for "tied movers" engaging in family migration implies sacrificing private gains, "tied stayers" would personally gain from geographic relocation, but decide against it for the sake of maximizing family welfare. Mincer assumes that women are more likely than men to be the tied partner as, empirically, their labour force participation is discontinuous and they earn less. This is why "husbands' gains (or losses) from migration usually exceed the losses (or gains) of the wife" (ibid.: 754). Yet, forgone opportunities are recompensed within the household, so that, overall, the family migrates if the future gains of one spouse exceed the other spouse's losses (net of migration costs).

Neoclassical accounts of migration have repeatedly been criticized from outside of economics for being gender-blind or overtly sexist (Katz 1999; Kofman et al. 2000: 21ff.; Boyd/Grieco 2003). More recently, economists have also acknowledged the necessity to incorporate gender into economic migration theories (Pfeiffer et al. 2007). We will in the following analyze the models of Mincer and Borjas through the lens of the analytical framework of gender knowledge developed earlier to exemplify that while neoclassical

[4] The New Home Economics is a research program that developed out of the neoclassical tradition in the 1960s and focused on issues such as marriage, divorce, fertility, inner-household division of labour and the labour market participation of family members. It theorizes non-market exchanges such as the decision to marry or to have children as the utility-maximizing choice of individuals and families respectively. The program is closely associated with Nobel Prize winner Gary Becker.

approaches to migration have a thin comprehension of gender as a relevant factor in migration processes, they implicitly assume the male as the prototypical migrant.

Naturally born tied movers? – Explicit gender knowledge in the models

What gender knowledge do the models by Mincer and Borjas reveal? Do they consider gender differences and if so, how are they presented and explained? What relevance is ascribed to gender as a social structure? Starting with Borjas' model, the answer is straightforward: It is crafted in carefully gender-neutral terms and does thus reveal no explicit gender knowledge. On the contrary, Mincer's approach rests on the explicit and empirically derived assumption that men's labour market power exceeds that of their female partners, which does lead to gender differentiated migration-patterns. Due to their higher wages, men gain and lose more from migration, which is why they tend to be the independent mover (or stayer), while dependent partners (movers and stayers) are disproportionately female. So, according to the Mincer model, gender differences do matter in relocation processes – at least indirectly via the labour market.

While Mincer does not explain these gender differences in his 1978 text, his argument must be seen in the context of the New Home Economics of the 1960s and 1970s. Here, authors like Gary Becker argued that the household's gender division of labour and gender wage gaps were the result of a comparative advantage of women in domestic labour, which was "partly due to the gains from specialized investments, […] [and] partly due to intrinsic [i.e. biological] differences between the sexes" (Becker 1998: 37). Similarly, Mincer and Solomon Polachek (1974) argued that due to genetic endowments, women expected discontinuous labour market participation and hence chose to under-invest in human capital, which, in turn, lowered their productivity and wages. Within the New Home Economics, women's lower earnings are thus fully attributed to their decisions on the basis of brute biological imperatives. Mincer makes a similar argument about the relationship between migration and gender segregation in the labour market:

> The expectation of becoming a tied spouse, which characterized most women until very recently, may have had some influence on women's initial occupational choices. The preference for occupations which are most easily transferable geographically may have contributed in part to the concentration of women in such traditional occupations as teaching, nursing, and secretarial work.
> (Mincer 1978: 756)

Here, gender segregation in the labour market is taken as an exogenous variable to explain women's status as tied partners, while this status is taken as an exogenous variable to explain the continuity of a gender segregated labour market. A few lines later, the finding that migration reduces employment and earnings of women who move as tied movers while increasing those of their spouses is legitimized in terms of family welfare maximization:

> The adverse effects on the labor market experience of some married women may be seen as 'social oppression' from a private point of view. Such a view, however, fails to note that the behavior we analyzed is a product of family welfare maximization. This is Pareto-optimal, since private market losses can be internalized by the family, that is, compensated by a redistribution of gains.
> (Mincer 1978: 757)

Feminist economists, by contrast, have claimed that interpretations of that kind "are thinly disguised apologies for the existing social hierarchies" (Barker/Feiner 2004: 2) and have argued that economic inequalities are rooted "in social processes of inclusion, valorisation and representation" (ibid.) that constitute individuals differently and thus mediate their articulation into the economy. Masculinist immigration policies, which devalue feminized labour like the Canadian point system (Harzig 2003: 45) or which disregard the fact that women's labour is oftentimes less formalized than men's, which is why they are more likely to lack the required certified records of their work experience like the 2002 South African Immigration Act (Dodson/Crush 2004: 105), constitute a case in point. Gender role beliefs in the context of family migration are another example: As men's and women's household contributions are valued differently, men might be pushed into migration through the male breadwinner ideal. Women, on the other hand, often privilege their male partner's careers in relocation decisions – at times even to the detriment of family welfare (Bielby/Bielby 1992; Jürges 2006). Furthermore, critics of Mincer's approach have questioned the presumed consensual nature of the family decision process, the alleged inner-household redistribution of benefits and losses and the tendency to treat both men's and women's migration as determined by labour market opportunities while ignoring other motives (Bielby/Bielby 1992: 1244; Katz 1999: 558f.). In fact, studies on gender and migration show that while employment factors are indeed important for men's migration decisions, due to household

gender divisions of labour[5] and gender roles, women are more concerned about reproductive requirements (Willis/Yeoh 2000; Morokvasic 2003).

Let us summarize the points about the explicit gender knowledge: While Borjas' account does not explicitly draw on gendered assumptions, Mincer's does. However, even in his model, there is little awareness of gender as a powerful factor in migration processes. Neither gender role beliefs, nor gendered power relations nor discriminatory immigration policies affect the relocation decision of Mincer's couple. Where gender differences are considered in the labour market performances of men and women, they are taken for granted and legitimized in terms of biological inclination and welfare maximization.

The prototypical male migrant – the implicit gender knowledge in the models

A second look at the models' assumptions is indicative of the implicit gender knowledge at work in both texts. Let us first consider Mincer's presumptions about the family: His allegedly universal family consists of a man and a woman, who are so obviously married they are called "husband" and "wife". Between the lines, the model smoothly links the assumptions that a normal adult a) belongs to one of the major genders, b) forms a romantic and sexual relationship with someone from the other side which c) leads to the formation of a family conceptualized as d) inherently build around a heterosexual couple of this kind. It is therefore firmly rooted in a heteronormative gender knowledge (for this conceptualization of heteronormativity see Danby 2007: 30). The supposed inner workings of the family – altruism, pooling of resources and consensual decision-making – further underscore the notion of gender complementarity. The latter has not only been challenged by queer theory, but also by feminists, who have criticized the masking of gender-based power asymmetries, gender roles and responsibilities, all of which structure decision-making processes, household divisions of labour, resource allocations and, consequently, migration (Lawson 1998). That Mincer (1978: 766) is either unaware of or content with these mechanisms can be further illustrated by the fact that he explains women's withdrawal from the labour force after migration with "a temporary increase in family demand for nonmarket activity necessitated by setting up a new household in a new environment." It is obviously women's responsibility

[5] The 'gender division of labour' concept can be criticized as heterosexist as it assumes a male-female couple. While we do not want to universalize opposite-sex relationships, we still want to name the phenomenon that women who live with men undertake the bulk of unpaid domestic work and will therefore continue to use the concept.

to set up this new household while their male partners – the male breadwinners – are responsible to financially support the family.

Outside of the family context, where they act altruistically, the prototypical migrants in Borjas' and Mincer's theories act like the archetypical being of classical and neoclassical economics: economic man or homo economicus. Feminist economists have targeted this figure and the underlying axioms of narrow rationality, selfishness and social isolation for resting on a "subject position predicated on a particular identity – that of propertied men of European ancestry" while claiming universal human nature (Barker/Kuiper 2003: 9). They have argued that this allegedly separate individual does not "spring from the ground like Hobbesian mushroom men" (Barker/Feiner 2004: 5), but is in fact dependent upon caring, and numerous other reproductive tasks that are still preponderantly performed by women. By presupposing these activities but rendering them invisible, economic man exposes himself as "not an abstract, unsexed consciousness, but a textual production of a male subject position" (Hewitson 1999: 4). The fact that neither Borjas nor Mincer waste a paragraph on the role of reproductive work in migration processes – the brunt of which is also still borne by women – indicates that they implicitly assume a man as their prototypical migrant. It comes as no surprise then that women's migration is relegated to the context of family migration.

This male-bias is further underlined by their notion of risk-neutrality and skill as well as the assumed universal preference for higher wages. In light of laws and customs that restrict or even prohibit women's control of money and their access to paid employment, the latter can indeed be reproached as a generalization of male experience. The same argument can be made about the assumption of risk-neutrality, which ignores the specific risks for female migrants due to limited access to legal protection in feminized labour market sectors and greater exposure to sexual harassment and violence (Piper 2003; Huang/Yeoh 2003). Finally, Borjas' understanding of skill testifies of a male-bias as it exclusively refers to the human capital produced in formal education and employment while coding abilities conveyed by parents and acquired in the household as natural endowments. Feminized reproductive skills of, for example, domestic workers, are thereby implicitly devalued. By the same token, the deskilling that occurs when norms, limited access to finances and family responsibilities curtail women's access to education and training, is deemed irrelevant. On the contrary, studies on gender and migration have shown that before and after migration, women are more

heavily affected by deskilling than their male counterparts and that this has to be considered in gender-sensitive accounts of migration (Man 2004; Kofman/Raghuram 2006: 294).

This leads on to another indicator of the implicit gender knowledge at work in the migration models by Mincer and Borjas – the assumed functioning of labour markets. Here, earnings adequately reflect workers' skills, which are perfectly transferable between different labour markets as "profit-maximizing employers are likely to value the same factors in any market economy" (Borjas 1987: 534). Thus, gender-wage gaps between migrants can only be attributed to different preferences and skills because "[m]ean earnings of migrants depend on the mean education of migrants […] and on the mean level of their unobserved characteristics" (Borjas 1991: 33). Through that lens, the fact that the bulk of female immigrants is clustered in sectors such as domestic labour, sex work, public health, food processing and service, cleaning or in labour intensive industries like textiles or microelectronics also comes down to women's affinity to these sectors. This points to an implicit gender knowledge that interprets and legitimizes existing labour market gender inequalities as a result of voluntary choice. Feminist economists, on the other side, have argued that labour markets are social institutions within which the supply and demand of labour are highly gendered and wages "serve as a means of establishing and reinforcing what men and women should be doing and how they should live" (Power/Mutari/Figart 2003: 74; see also Elson 1999). They have repeatedly stressed "the hegemonic capacity of patriarchal norms to define women's labour as not only 'cheap' but socially and economically worthless […] that makes a gendered labour force so crucial to the accumulation strategies of global capital" (Mills 2003: 43). Again, the models by Borjas and Mincer show no comprehension of these gendered processes, which also affect migration decisions and experiences.

To conclude the discussion about the implicit gender knowledge, it can be argued that Mincer's and Borjas' models reveal a very thin knowledge of gender as a social structure that constitutes individuals differently and sets the parameters for their migration. It can even be contended that their methodological individualism points to a gender knowledge that interprets and legitimizes existing gender inequalities in the labour market as a result of voluntary choice. And one could even go as far to argue that allegedly universal and gender-neutral categories like 'migrant' and 'skilled worker' carry a masculine connotation, which in turn suggests that women simply don't move, at least not independently (see table 1 for a summary of the gender knowledge analysis). Yet, this is not to claim that these concepts

adequately capture the migration patterns of men. Regarding Mincer's model, for example, it is obvious that gay men lurk as much in the category of the Other as do families who do not match his middle-class ideal of a male breadwinner with a wife who cares. Furthermore, the assumption of a perfect correlation of skills and earnings across countries is incompatible with the experience of many immigrant men who are marked as cheap labour and deskilled due to their ethnic or racial background or with the discrimination older people experience in the labour market. We would thus like to argue that the basic assumptions of neoclassical models of individual and family migration is linked to a certain type of masculinity – a white, young or middle-aged heterosexual and middle-class masculinity.

Table 1 Explicit and implicit gender knowledge in Borjas' and Mincer's migration models

	Are gender differences acknowledged and if so, which ones?	**Are gender differences explained and if so, how?**	**What relevance is generally ascribed to gender?**
Explicit gender knowledge: Borjas	–	–	–
Explicit gender knowledge: Mincer	weaker labour market attachment and lower wages of women compared to men lead to tied migration of women and independent migration of men	result of biological predisposition and voluntary choice	apart from gender-specific labour market participation, gender ≠ relevant
Implicit gender knowledge: Borjas	prototypical migrant = male, women do not migrate	result of voluntary choice	gender ≠ relevant
Implicit gender knowledge: Mincer	Heteronormativity (women & men are inherently different, but complementary); women = responsible for reproductive work; male breadwinner	result of biological predisposition & voluntary choice	apart from gender-specific labour market participation, gender ≠ relevant

Overall, the analysis of the explicit and implicit gender knowledge in Mincer's and Borjas' migration models shows that Patricia Pessar's (1999: 578) finding that, in the 1950s and 60s, neoclassical reasoning about migratory movements was heavily influenced by the role model of "'Western man' headed off to the cities where the benefits of modern life could be attained" has not gone out of date. Despite the feminist critique of neoclassical economics and empirical research, which clearly shows that migration is a more complex phenomenon than the assumed universal quest for higher wages, both models continue their career as

standard accounts of individual and family migration within economics. From a post-structuralist perspective, which takes economics serious as "a discourse, which actively produces its objects as well as its subjects of knowledge" (Hewitson 2001: 223), it can therefore be argued that both models participate in setting a certain type of masculinity as the norm while framing less privileged subject positions and the respective influences on migration patterns and experiences as deviant and somehow irrelevant.

Historical legacies: why women disappeared from migration studies

Even though today a plethora of empirical studies and theoretical contributions on gender and migration as well as on women and migration exists, gender has still not successfully been integrated into the mainstream of migration studies, 'women' are mostly added or relegated to chapters of 'family and household' and 'gender' is still equated with 'women'. An insightful example is the *International Migration Review* (IMR), the leading journal in the field. In 1984, Mirjana Morokvasic edited a special IMR-volume on "Women in Migration" in which she made research on female migration visible and criticized most migration theories for offering only very narrow explanations for the movement of women (Morokvasic 1984: 896ff.). Twenty years later a special IMR-issue on the "general" state of the art (Portes/DeWind 2004) did not even contain a piece on gender and migration, let alone papers which included the gender dimension, except for one anthropological contribution (Levitt/Schiller 2004). Moreover, the edited volume "Migration Theory. Talking Across Disciplines" (Brettell/Hollifield 2000b), a major reference for migration scholars, does not at all include gender issues, except for, again, the article on anthropology (Brettell 2000). In the following section we briefly move back in history to trace back the academic reasoning about migratory movements. This "suggests where, when, and by whom particular modes of thinking about migration earned the imprimatur of theory, and why work by female researchers on women or gender so rarely achieved that status" (Donato et al. 2006: 8). There are at least five reasons for it: The exclusion of women from academia, the development of hierarchies between research methods and disciplines, gender-biased data and historical sources, the resultant focus on men as sole research subjects and the assessment of women's migration as a-theoretical or simply not interesting.

Yet, migration studies started quite promisingly with regards to gender issues. In his "laws of migration", the founding father of migration theory Ernest G. Ravenstein (1885) stated that

women tended to migrate more than men, at least over short distances. However, subsequent studies did not test this law, but focused on the other laws Ravenstein discovered. The rapid feminization of trans-Atlantic migration at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, which clearly violated Ravenstein's finding of the short-distance character of female migration, generated equally little research (Donato et al. 2006: 8). On the contrary, women and gender issues were important in the studies on U.S. immigration and assimilation of immigrants in the first decades of the 20th century. A considerable amount of researchers were women, many of them sympathetic to the women's rights and suffrage movements, who applied qualitative and quantitative methods. In the important "Pittsburgh Survey" (1907-8), female researchers like Elizabeth Beardsley Butler participated also in order to guarantee that female workers and the immigrant communities from Eastern and Southern Europe were included in the survey, not least because women were outnumbering men in the sweatshops three to one (Donato et al. 2006: 8f.). While male researchers were able to establish themselves in university departments, most women researchers found employment in local governments, as administrators of social welfare or in public health (ibid.: 9). Already at that time, their research was evaluated differently: At the University of Chicago, where some of the groundbreaking early migration studies were conducted (such as *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America,* Thomas/Znaniecki 1958 [1918]), the knowledge produced by male scholars in the department of sociology was considered as theoretical, whereas the studies conducted in the more casework-oriented School of Social Service Administration (SSA) were not – despite the pioneering work of the SSA dean Edith Abbott on immigrants, female employment and criminality (ibid.). This tendency was further cemented through research funding, which went almost exclusively to male researchers with university appointments. After World War I, the Russel Sage Foundation and the Social Science Research Council denied funding for projects that they considered as being too closely associated with the reform movement (ibid.). Consequently, "the main theory shaping U.S. immigration research for the next half-century (e.g. assimilation theory) emerged from the brains and pens of a sociology department that had separated itself from women researchers in the settlement houses [the SSA] and in the new applied field of social work" (ibid.). This brief excursion into the history of US migration studies is a telling example of the well-known exclusion of women researchers and gender issues from science and academia.

Another important factor in the devaluation of gender issues in migration studies was the development of hierarchies between research methods, so called 'hard' and 'soft' ones. The

debate was dominated by positivist and quantitative scholars who asked "what characterizes a theory?" (prediction, explanation, interpretation) and "which methods are most likely to advance theory?" (replicable, quantitative, qualitative, rigorous, eclectic). Research on women and gender relations tends to be more relational and non-positivist, which is why it had and still has a difficult time in migration studies and other disciplines (Donato et al. 2006: 11). However, qualitative methods, and in particular ethnographic ones, are not only chosen by feminist migration scholars. In his grand Mexican Migration Project, Doug Massey examines why census data, surveys or apprehension and deportation statistics only provide very imperfect data on questions about undocumented migration or informal money transfers. Instead, he proposes the methodology of "ethnosurveys" including interviews with individual migrants, families and communities of origin and data gathering in these communities (Portes/DeWind 2004: 838; Massey 2004). In fact, historical data on migration are often gender-biased, as in cases where surveys were undertaken in order to register men bound for military service or in labour statistics which excluded the 'amoral' category of (mostly female, rural to urban migrant) sex workers (cf. the Habsburg monarchy: Hahn 2000: 79). In her survey of migration studies Patricia Pessar (1999: 54) quotes research, which purposefully only included men as subjects of research, for example, a 1975 book on migrant workers in Europe by John Berger and Jean Mohr: "Among the migrant workers in Europe there are probably two million women. Some work in factories, many work in domestic service. To write of their experiences adequately would require a book itself. We hope this will be done. Ours is limited to the experiences of the male migrant worker" (quoted in Pessar 1999: 54). Alejandro Portes' 1985 published study on Mexicans and Cubans in the United States is equally explicitly restricted to male heads of family, because otherwise it "would become excessively complex", however, those family heads were asked about their wives (quoted in Pessar 1999: 54). Instead of considering the complexity gender brings along in migration studies as a theoretical challenge, it was often argued that the experiences of male migrants were gender-neutral and the norm, thus making it unnecessary to include women or to ask gender-specific questions. Some authors worked with data on the movement of women indicating, for example, for the Habsburg Monarchy that an equal number of men and women migrated in the second half of the 19th century, but concluded that men were "naturally" more apt to leave their homeland and thus made women disappear from migration studies (Hahn 2000: 81). This invisibility of women in research on international migration has been 'discovered' only lately as it was not before the early 1980s that publications of pioneering scholars on gender and migration were perceived by the scholarly migration

community (e.g. Morokvasic 1984, Phizacklea 1983). An important political forum for the acknowledgement of the role of women in migration processes has been the 1990 UN expert group on "International Migration Policies and the Status of Female Migrations" (cf. UN 1995), which gathered the first global data on female migrants, which provide a basis for comparisons until today.

To sum up, this brief survey of the history of migration studies suggests that whereas the existence of gender differences is either not dealt with explicitly or negated, implicit gender knowledge assumes the male migrant as the 'normal migrant'. This seems to be a recurrent thread from early research on migration until the late 20th century and has only recently been questioned and contrasted with counter historical gender-sensitive interpretations.

Why are some disciplines more open towards gender issues than others?

Disciplines have their own gender orders and knowledges, some are more persistent to the inclusion of gender issues than others. Donato et al. consider the openness of "any given discipline to qualitative research and to methodological eclecticism [...] to be the key factor in drawing gender analysis from the margins into the disciplinary mainstream" (Donato et al. 2006: 22). Another important factor is the gender knowledge in which academic disciplines' foundational theories are embedded. In that sense, the openness of anthropological thinking towards the inclusion of the category gender (Brettell 2000; Donato et al. 2006: 4; Mahler/Pessar 2006) can at least partly be explained by the fact that the differentiation between men and women in society is regarded as a fundamental organizing principle of cultures and societies (Lévi-Strauss 1969; Donato et al. 2006: 10). Studies about the public-private divide in different cultural contexts as well as an immanent critique of the binary gender order led to important empirical studies and theoretical advancements, which were taken up in other disciplines. In contrast, for political science the impulse to deal with gender came from disciplines like anthropology or sociology or from the interdisciplinary engagement of scholars, such as in Ethnic Studies or Women's and Gender Studies (Donato et al. 2006: 16, 22; Piper 2006). As political science studies of migration mainly deal with issues of migration control, national security and immigrant incorporation (Hollifield 2000), gender issues were hardly felt necessary to include. On the contrary, migration economics also deals with the causes of migration.

The questions asked in the disciplines of migration studies differ (Brettell/Hollifield 2000a: 3) and so do the strategies to engender their respective approaches. Whereas the mainstream of political science can be referred to as 'gender blind', other disciplines appear to have the same outcomes irrespective of sex. Law and legal studies, for example, deal with the dichotomous, discrete factor „sex", taking the binary men-women-division as a social fact. This stands in contrast to contemporary feminist theory questioning such essentialism. "While subjective or performative gender identities may be fluid and contingent, those who study law usually focus on gender as a dichotomous sociolegal construction." (Calavita 2006: 106). For a long time, the discussions in feminist legal studies have evolved between two poles: Is "the legal subordination of women […] a matter of discriminatory treatment, and […] the solution […] equal rights" (ibid.: 107), or is law in partriarchal societies as such gender-biased (see for example MacKinnon 1989, Pateman 1988)? This fundamental debate is also reflected in the debate about migrant and ethnic minority women, for example, when it is recognized that law can be complicit in the subordination of women of colour.

Counter knowledge on the move? – Gender knowledge and migration practice

Having diagnosed a rather traditional understanding of gender roles in migration studies, which is also partly reflected in migration policies, time is ripe to relate this knowledge to migration practices. Does the identified traditional gender knowledge reflect (a relevant part of) realities and minds of migrants? Or are there contradictions? A helpful starting point is Mirjana Morokvasic's thought provoking article "Migration, Gender, Empowerment" (2007), which asks in how far migration practices challenge or stabilize gender orders. In fact, early research on female migrants assumed that despite their ascribed roles as dependents, migration processes had clear emancipatory effects on women. Yet, subsequent studies criticized this conclusion as being rooted more in a Northern-Western notion of superiority and orientalism ('oppressed women migrate out of patriarchal cultures') than in real migration processes. More recent reviews of the gender effects of migration report mixed outcomes (e.g. Donato et al. 2006, Chang/Ling 2000, Mahler/Pessar 2006, Morokvasic 2007).

Let us first turn to empirical evidence, which points to the stabilizing effects of migration practices on traditional gender orders and knowledge systems. Morokvasic (2007: 71, emphasis in original) argues that "international migrants albeit women and men in different ways, tend to *use* the traditional gender order and *rely* on it for their own purposes, if they

don't challenge or question it" (Morokvasic 2007: 71, emphasis in original). This means that most migrants do not question the dominant knowledge about their gender and about (correct) gender relations or even explicitly reproduce respective images of femininity and masculinity if they facilitate their migration. The migration of women into female 'niches' of the labour market such as domestic work, care services or sex work is a telling example. "These occupations are built on gendered assumptions of women's innate affinities to work in the reproductive sphere and hence not conducive to destabilizing the gender norms about the division of labour in the household, but rather reinforcing gender hierarchies" (ibid.: 92). When traditional gender orders seem to be at risk, for example, when women leave their family, they employ a range of strategies that make them appear adhering to norms of motherhood and family-life and widen their room for manoeuvre. A good example is the women worker going abroad to send remittances to her family. She may regard herself as a good mother who cares for her children by sacrificing herself (ibid.: 83f.); she may even consider herself as a 'better mother' than those who stay and do not enable their children education and health care through remittances. So, the conventional argument ('mother leaves children behind') is reversed and even employed against the poor non-migrant mothers. The norm of motherhood is thus changed, but not deconstructed. Leyla Keough's study of Moldovan women (Keough 2006) and Mirjana Morokvasic's research on post-socialist pendular migration (Morokvasic 2007) show that this argument fits to a "new moral economy" (Keough 2006). This order is "a new way of organizing and understanding the responsibilities, rights, and entitlements of workers, consumers, and citizens" (ibid.: 433) which is in line with neo-liberal rationales according to which everybody has to care for themselves and fits at the same time the persistent "ideal of a socialist good worker-mother superwoman" (Morokvasic 2007: 84). Or in the words of Leyla Keough: "neoliberalism greets postsocialist collapse" (Keough 2006: 437). This exemplifies how migrant women engage with traditional gender knowledge and try to adjust it to new circumstances.

According to such findings, it is unlikely that a majority of female migrants challenges traditional forms of gender knowledge and existing gender orders (Morokvasic 2007: 71). However, other empirical studies point to the use of non-confrontational "hidden transcripts" (Scott 1990) and spaces of resistance in the case of Vietnamese brides in Taiwan (Wang 2007) or to a pragmatic queering of Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong (Chang/Ling 2000). Vietnamese brides, who came to Taiwan through matching-agencies, for example, threaten to divorce and leave Taiwan (Wang 2007: 719f.). As this would mean that the

husband and his family lose the money paid for the matching-agency, their reputation in the neighbourhood and the women's reproductive work, this threat becomes a weapon in the women's hands. They also use governmental integration courses to exchange Vietnamese goods and information, even though the state tries to normalize them as good daughters-in-law (ibid.: 723). In their study on migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong, Chang and Ling noticed that migrant women, de-embedded from their traditional social space and gender roles, experienced a higher degree of freedom, while at the same time being confined to their ethnicity and genderedness. They cope with this dilemma by either adhering to conservative norms (e.g. Catholicism) or by giving new gender roles a try (e.g. „Tom Boyism" as a form of homo- or bi-sexuality). Chang and Ling conclude that the coping strategy depends on individual networks and resources. Agency is thus an arrangement with contradictory conditions (Chang/Ling 2000).

The heterogeneous empirical evidence shows that even if established gender orders and more traditional forms of gender knowledge are not openly challenged, incremental changes and moving mind sets can be at work, which may end up in more gender just gender orders and knowledges.

Conclusion

The excursion back to the origins of migration studies and the cursory view on some of the most important disciplines in the field revealed the role gender played in the evolution of migration studies and the different degrees of openness towards gender issues in the respective disciplines. It can be argued that, with the exception of anthropology, until the late 20th century, migration studies did either not deal with gender differences or explicitly negate them. Yet, implicitly, they assumed the male migrant as the 'normal migrant'. This finding was supported by the more in depth analysis of the two neoclassical models of migration. Here, explicit gender knowledge revealed that different migration patterns of men and women are considered as a result of the assumed fundamental difference between the genders. The models' implicit gender knowledge, is equally biased: Women are considered as dependents, following men or waiting for their return (the "left behind", cf. Toyota/Yeoh/Nguyen 2007). Women are put on the pole of tradition, while mobile men embody modernity (Brettell 2000: 109). This thought is compatible with modernization theory, thus not only academic disciplines such as economics, but also metaconcepts like

modernization theory are based on very fundamental gender knowledge, in this case due to its dichotomizations 'traditional – modern', 'female – male'.

The conceptual framework of gender knowledge allowed us to trace these different forms of knowledge in migration studies. In the sense that gendered knowledge is always produced and in constant need of reproduction, the very basic assumptions in and applications of migration theories are indicative of the ways, migration studies participate in constructing and reproducing certain gender orders. Yet, as has been argued in the sections about the relationship between migration theories, practices and policies, these theories and their underlying gender knowledge do not need to be unchallenged. Nonetheless, the linkage between theories, practices and policies needs further investigation, particularly the question how ideas, and more specifically ideas about existing and ideal gender orders, diffuse between theory, practice and policy.

From a social constructivist perspective, all theoretical approaches and empirical studies quoted above illustrate very well that femininity and gender are constructed in various ways and always in conjunction with other social stratifications as age, class, ethnicity or sexual orientation (see also Aufhauser 2000: 111-118). Demand and supply of female labour in 'typical' gendered sectors such as care or sex work are a result of these constructions processes. The main locations in which such images and gender knowledges are produced – and thus where they can be challenged – are the gender culture of the countries of origin and of destination, intermediaries such as recruitment agencies and informal migration networks, migration policies (visa categories, regulations for family unification etc.) – and last but not least migration studies and their theoretical foundations.

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