Guest Editors' Introduction:
Migration, Vulnerability and Violence

Monish Bhatia
Birkbeck, University of London, United Kingdom
Gemma Lousley
Birkbeck, University of London, United Kingdom
Sarah Turnbull
University of Waterloo, Canada

People migrate for a variety of reasons which are often categorised as voluntary or forced, involving complex combinations of choices and threats. Forced migration includes refugee flows, people seeking asylum and those who are internally displaced – the majority of whom are fleeing persecution (related to political affiliation, race, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexuality), wars, armed conflict, climate change and other situations related to insecurity and poverty. Individuals travel from their countries of origin, crossing borders and transiting through various nation states, in search of stability and security. Throughout their journeys they may be exposed to violence, brutality by state authorities and various forms of exploitation (e.g., see Calais Writers 2017; Craig et al. 2015; Koca 2016; Crawley et al. 2017). Exposure to violence and exploitation often continues even after reaching the destination countries as migrants face multiple and escalating harms as a consequence of detrimental policies and practices, political rhetoric and anti-immigrant and xeno-racist sentiments in the host societies (Bhatia 2020; Boochani 2018; Canning 2020).

Migrants deemed as 'unwanted' are dehumanised and vilified and constructed as inherently criminogenic and as 'risks' that need to be managed and controlled (Malloch and Stanley 2005). This framing pushes them into the arena of crime control and (national) security and creates invisibility. Indeed, the past two decades has seen a proliferation of external, internal and everyday borders, and the growing use of deterrence and security-based approaches to solve the 'migration problem'. There is ample evidence that suggests that punitive border, asylum and migration control measures do not work (for instance, see Andersson 2015). While situations across the world continue to deteriorate, secure channels to reach safety (or to regularise and obtain a 'legal' status) has become ever scarce due to the tough security-oriented stance taken by governments – which ends up creating a displacement effect – pushing migrants to take risks and exposing them to dangerous situations.

The contributions to this special issue tackle some of the pressing, contemporary issues across the migration landscape. Paying attention to stratifying factors including race, gender and class, the six articles that make up this special issue critically analyse migrant vulnerability as well as resilience and resistance. Adopting different theoretical and methodological approaches, they engage with a variety of contexts and geographical sites (Portugal, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom [UK]). The collection cuts across various disciplines but retains a strong commitment to uncovering the violence of denial, exclusion and deprivation while at the same time making visible migrant struggles and lived experiences.

In the article that opens this special issue, Francesca Esposito, Raquel Matos and Mary Bosworth examine the experiences of women confined in a Portuguese migrant detention centre. Drawing on empirical data collected at the centre, the authors consider how constructions of gender in its intersection with race, ethnicity, sexuality and coloniality shape, and are shaped by, both migration and detention. The authors show how participants' agentic engagement with gendered, racialised and heteronormative subject positions enable them to make sense of, and navigate, their everyday experiences of confinement and frame their hopes for the future. As Esposito, Matos and Bosworth conclude, 'that gender and sexualised norms and ideals—assumed, negotiated and reconfigured by women—play a crucial, albeit paradoxical, role in the complex nature of life in detention (p. 16). Importantly, the article advances understandings of immigration detention through its focus on the gendered nature of detention, while attending critically to issues of power and resistance in diverse women's lived experiences. It also underscores the importance of colonial legacies and postcolonial presents as embedded and productive aspects of Portugal's migration control system.

José Brandariz and Cristina Fernández-Bessa's article explores two recent changes to what they term the 'EU borderscape', thereby highlighting how the sorting roles of borders and migration law are complex and dynamic. In particular, the authors demonstrate how 'hierarchies of otherness and vulnerability' (p. 22) related to various 'legal'/regular and 'illegal'/irregular statuses can shift without the existing legal provisions being altered. Brandariz and Fernández-Bessa use Spain as a case study to examine key policy changes in response to the so-called European 'migration crisis' of 2015. The first change is the 'emergence of the right of asylum' (p. 23). The authors discuss how several EU member states, including Spain, lacked established asylum systems prior to the 'crisis', arguing that 'political refuge was an irrelevant (or little known) mobility management category in the majority of EU nations just five years ago' (p. 25). The second change to the EU borderscape relates to the trend of increased deportations of EU and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) nationals. Brandariz and Fernández-Bessa show how the forced removal of these nationals, which was previously regulated as an exceptional measure in EU law, is becoming increasingly normalised among EU members states such as Spain. This shift, they argue, 'lays bare that the EU citizenship rights framework is weaker than assumed' (p. 29). Brandariz and Fernández-Bessa conclude that these two transformations of the EU borderscape have important implications for processes of inclusion and exclusion, particularly in relation to the rising xeno-racism that is pervading Europe.

In her article, Glenda Santana de Andrade turns our attention to Syrian refugees in urban spaces in Turkey, their survival strategies to cope with exile, and the ways in which their experiences are shaped by the intersection of race, class and gender relations. Dominant discourses often present refugees as a threat or passive and voiceless victims; this article instead deconstructs such representations. In the absence of aid, Syrians in Turkey actively find work to gain some degree of independence and form social bonds. However, since there are numerous restrictions placed on official work permits, many end up in the shadow economy and experience varying degrees of exploitation and downgrading of skills and social and cultural capital. In some instances, families are forced to send children to work, whereas Syrians with economic capital have created their own businesses and tend to hire fellow nationals, which can be seen as a collective strategy for survival. The article explains the difficult circumstances that Kurdish people from Syria face and how they risk becoming targeted twice – for being a refugee and a Kurd in Turkey – and how this affects their chances of obtaining a permit to work. Focusing on gender relations, the author draws on the narratives and experiences of women joining the labour market and giving up traditional roles. The literature on refugees in non-camp urban spaces is limited, and Santana de Andrade makes an important intervention.

Roda Madziva's article presents a case study of Christians from the Muslim world seeking asylum in the UK. Drawing on rich ethnographic research, the paper sheds light on the religious discrimination experienced by people seeking asylum in the context of the Conservative government's 'hostile environment' agenda. Madziva deploys Miranda Fricker's philosophical work on epistemic injustice to understand the asylum adjudication system. She argues that Pakistani Muslims suffer from structural identity prejudice in two ways:

'because of their country of origin, immigration officials invariably assumed them to be Muslims—and, hence, potential terrorists. Consequently, their claims of being Christians were systematically doubted, with those bearing biblical or English names frequently subjected to increased scrutiny' (p. 52). The article goes on to highlight people's treatment by the system, for instance, how immigration officials often asked 'quiz-like' questions, and how minor inconsistencies are often taken by adjudicators as evidence of the applicant's lack of credibility and thus the disingenuous nature of their asylum claim. Evidence of persecution is also rejected due to the general 'refusal mind set' or the culture of disbelief infecting the system, what Madziva calls a 'testimonial injustice' (p. 48). The paper adds to the growing calls for adjudicators to engage in a more critical and self-reflexive adjudication process, rather than basing their decisions to grant asylum upon a set of tacit assumptions, while rejecting the stories and lived experiences that people seeking asylum put across to evidence their persecution.

Similarly, Amy Cortvriend focuses on the UK and draws on the narratives and experiences of people seeking asylum and explains the ways in which instability and uncertainty caused by the hostile environment(s) results in mental distress and psychological harms. The article uncovers asylum policies and practices and their negative impact on individuals. For instance, asylum claimants are left suffering in limbo for months (if not years), excluded from the labour market, removed from the mainstream welfare provisions, placed in sub-standard housing and some even rendered destitute. All of this exacerbates their vulnerability. At the same time, it explains the coping strategies amongst individuals; thereby, moving away from the constructions of people seeking asylum as passive subjects. Cortvriend highlights the importance of social networks and how shared experiences encourage asylum seeking men to form friendships and bonds with each other. Such friendships not only assist in coping from the stress of asylum system, but they also form a resistance to exclusionary and marginalising policies. The article highlights the role of refugee charity organisations in supporting asylum applicants, which minimises distress and fosters coping.

In the final article of the collection, Maja Korac examines the representation of migration from the so-called Global South in terms of 'risk', 'crisis' and 'fear', which then translates into xenophobic, racialised and gendered processes of othering. The author draws intellectual inspiration from Anibal Quijano who suggests that the 'coloniality of power' and 'colonial power matrix' affects all dimensions of social existence and continues to structure the world. The current racialised and gendered politics of fear is constructed and rooted within this framing. By examining reports as well as media coverage of events in Cologne, Germany, on New Year's Eve in 2015, the article explores how notions of racialised security leads to a racialised masculinity of the 'Other', and shows that the construction of migrant (Muslim) men as misogynistic and violent is shaped by gendered interpretation of cultural and religious differences and creates internal and everyday bordering practices.

Xeno-racism has led to the creation of hostile environment(s) by various governments and have resulted in the 'Othering' of migrants. The articles in this special issue are interdisciplinary and together they expose and challenge the state policies, practices and constructions of migrants, and consequent violence they produce.

Acknowledgements

Correspondence: Monish Bhatia, Lecturer in Criminology, School of Law, Birkbeck College, London WC1E 7HX, United Kingdom. Email: m.bhatia@bbk.ac.uk

References

Andersson R (2016) Europe's failed 'fight' against irregular migration: Ethnographic notes on a counterproductive industry. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42(7): 1055-1075. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1139446

Bhatia M (2020) The permission to be cruel: Street level bureaucrats and harms against people seeking asylum. *Critical Criminology* 28(2).

Boochani B. (2018) *No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison*. Australia: Picador.

Brandariz JA and Fernández-Bessa C (2020) A changing and multi-scalar EU borderscape: The expansion of asylum and the normalisation of the deportation of EU and EFTA citizens. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 9(3): 21-33. https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.v9i3.1587

Calais Writers. (Eds.) (2017) *Voices from the 'Jungle': Stories from the Calais Refugee Camp*. London: Pluto Press.

Canning V (2020) Corrosive control: State-corporate and gendered harm in bordered Britain. *Critical Criminology* 28(2)

Cortvriend A (2020) Coping with vulnerability: The limbo created by the UK asylum system**.** *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 9(3): 61-74. https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.v9i3.1586

Craig G, Waite L, Lewis H and Skrivankova K (Eds) (2015). *Vulnerability, Exploitation and Migrants: Insecure Work in a Globalised economy*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Crawley H, Duvell F, Jones K, McMahon S, and Sigona N (2016) *Destination Europe?: Understanding the Dynamics and Drivers of Mediterranean Migration in 2015*. Coventry: Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University.

Esposito F, Matos R and Bosworth M (2020) Gender, vulnerability and everyday resistance in immigration detention: Lived experiences of detained migrant women in Portugal *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 9(3): 5-20. https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.v9i3.1588

Koca B T (2016) Syrian refugees in Turkey: From "guests" to "enemies"? *New Perspectives on Turkey* 54: 55-75. https://doi.org/10.1017/npt.2016.4

Korac M (2020) Gendered and racialised border security: Displaced people and the politics of fear. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 9(3): 75-86. https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.v9i3.1590

Madziva R (2020) Bordering through religion: A case study of Christians from the Muslim majority world seeking asylum in the UK. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 9(3): 47-60. https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.v9i3.1591

Malloch M S and Stanley E (2005) The detention of asylum seekers in the UK: Representing risk, managing the dangerous. *Punishment & Society* 7(1): 53-71. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1462474505048133

Santana de Andrade G (2020) Beyond vulnerability: Syrian refugees in urban spaces in Turkey. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 9(3): 34-46. https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.v9i3.1589