**Book Proposal: 1. Description: Women as Academic Migrants: Power, Subjectivity, and Agency**

This book is about women who decided to leave their country of origin in Europe and pursue their academic and scientific careers in the United States of America (in short, the United States). Although most of them initially aim to return to their country of origin, many end up staying to pursue their careers in the United States, thus turning into “scientific migrants” with no intent to return. What made these highly educated women pack their suitcases and take that path? What is their story? What are their struggles once they arrive in the United States? Why are they not returning to their country of origin?

European women become scientific migrants because it is difficult, if not impossible, for them to pursue a career in the sciences in their country of origin. Rather than stories of self-fulfillment and mobility, one encounters stories of societal classed, gendered, and raced power structures that made these women, often alone, leave their countries of origin to pursue their scientific careers in the United States. Once they arrived in the United States, their struggles continued in their attempts to make it in academic and scientific contexts. I use the term “scientist” broadly, referring to a person who works inside and outside academia in the life and natural sciences, as well as in the humanities and social sciences.

Most works on scientific migration (headed under the title “brain drain or brain gain” or "high-skilled migration") are pursued from a gender, class, and race-blind perspective, which produced a dominant picture of the scientific migrant as male, affluent and white (for example, Akbarithabar et al. 2023, Karun Kishor Karki & Festus Moasun Karki and Moasun 2024). My book challenges such a picture by exploring the gender, as well, as the class and race dimensions on that subject. Some feminist research has recently foregrounded the neglected gender dimension in migration studies. However, such research mainly focuses on forced migration and the migration of low-wage female labor from emerging countries to wealthy countries (for example, Nelson 2022, Cuban 2022, Christou and Kofman 2023). In contrast, my book explores the migration of women with the potential for high-wage labor from a wealthy to another wealthy country.

My book draws on feminist political theory, in combination with an analysis of twenty qualitative interviews with female scientists and a quantitative study with one hundred female and male scientists from Austria who currently work in US academia and the sciences, to shed light upon an often neglected aspect of global capitalism—how “scientific mobility,” particularly of women, is not so much a free choice but the result of societal power structures that made these women pursue their careers abroad. While the empirical research is based on Austrian female (and male) scientists, I also draw comparative connections to other European countries to elaborate on whether forces for female scientific migration are similar or differ between countries and how this affects implications and outcomes. Finally, whereas most research on scientific migration is based on quantitative research and non-theoretical perspectives, which erase the voices of scientific migrants, this book also explores the qualitative dimension of this subject and combines such analysis with insights from feminist political thought. As a result, it brings a theoretical perspective and the voices of female scientific migrants back on stage.

While this book appeals to an audience in political theory, political science, sociology, and philosophy, it is also of interest in cross-disciplinary fields, such as women’s and gender studies and migration studies. Moreover, it is also of interest to a broader audience, particularly to policymakers in the sciences and academia, both in Europe and the United States. For European policymakers, this book contributes to finding out why they are losing particularly women with a high potential to the United States and what they can do to keep them or ease their return; for the United States, this book assists in exploring what the particular struggles of female international scholars are, and what it can do to better support these women in their careers in the sciences and their daily lives.

The book comprises five chapters, excluding an introduction and conclusion, with a maximum word count of 80,000. I conducted and transcribed the interviews, and a quantitative analysis.

**2. Chapter Outline:**

***Introduction***

This chapter provides a literature review, what my book contributes to the existing literature, an introduction to the major themes discussed in the book, and a detailed chapter outline.

***Chapter One*: “Leaving”**

This chapter explores the reasons why European women, often alone, leave their country of origin to pursue their careers in the United States. Rather than "free choice," a combination of forces make these women leave their country of origin—including gendered, classed, and raced societal and work power structures that make it difficult for women to obtain a career-advancing position in the sciences and the expectation of having to go abroad for some time (particularly to the United States) to pursue an academic career. The chapter also explores the structures that assisted or aimed to hinder the departure of these women, including the role that reactions of family, friends, and colleagues played in their decision to leave. The thesis is that female scientists initially have a clear intention to return to their country of origin, which gets later frustrated, as the same power structures that made them leave their country of origin make it difficult or impossible for them to return. It combines the voices of female scientists with insights from critical and feminist thought to explain the classed, gendered, and raced power structures that contribute to these women’s venturing abroad.

***Chapter Two*: “Challenging Dislocations”**

This chapter explores European female scientists’ initial struggles in the United States and the raced, classed, and gendered power structures they faced abroad. It discusses the dislocations these women face in their new living and work environment, such as the struggle to study or work in a foreign language, biases towards their accent that marks them as foreigners, the feelings of non-belonging, the loss of the support of colleagues from their country of origin, the pain of separation from friends and family, and the insecurity of their legal status. This chapter also explores how these women cope with such dislocations by, for example, establishing new personal and professional contacts in their host country and continuing to foster their transnational ties with scientific contacts, family, and friends in their country of origin. This chapter combines the insights from the qualitative interviews with literature from feminist migration studies on female migrant labor, which it expands upon by illuminating the specific situation of female scientific migrants.

***Chapter Three:*  “Living In-Between Worlds”**

This chapter explores European female scientists' struggles in the middle stages of their attempts to establish themselves as scientists in their host country. As highly educated, mostly white women from Europe working in scientific and academic contexts, they have a class privilege vis-à-vis their female labor migrants from emerging countries in the United States, who face exploitation and racial discrimination. However, they face marginalization at the intersection of being foreign and female scholars in US academia. In addition, they face the rising anti-immigrant sentiments in the Trump era in their daily (work) lives. At the same time, they experience some advantages of “living-in-between worlds,” such as escaping societal standards for women in their home country and, at the same time, as foreigners, escaping such standards in their host country—e.g., the expectation to marry and have children at a certain age. This chapter draws on and expands intersectionality theory by adding an international dimension and feminist thinkers exploring the living in between worlds.

***Chapter Four:* “Becoming a Scientific Migrant”**

This chapter explores the later stages of European female scientists’ stay abroad. It analyzes why most of them, who initially intended to return to their country of origin, do not return after all. Again, rather than “free choice,” societal forces and raced, classed, and gendered power structures contribute to such decisions, including the lack of acknowledgment of their expertise gained in the United States in the European sciences, the weakening of ties to scientific contacts over time (or not having such ties, to begin with) which remain necessary to obtain a position in Europe, the absence of an attractive scientific “job market” in Europe, with scientific jobs becoming rarer and rarer, and based on limited contracts and there being underpaid and hierarchical, male-dominated work structures in the European sciences. Although some female scientists would like to return because of the higher quality of life in Europe, they perceive more attractive avenues for establishing themselves in the United States and have stronger professional ties in their host country, contributing that they are turning into female scientific migrants.

***Chapter Five*: “What Needs to Change”**

Based on the elaborations of my previous chapters, this chapter discusses what needs to change in the European and the US American scientific contexts for female scholars to succeed in the sciences in both their home country and abroad. For example, European policymakers need to address and redress hierarchical, male-dominated work structures in the sciences that hinder the advancement of women, as well as provide attractive job opportunities for women to make female scientists stay or lure them back. For example, policymakers in the United States need to address and redress the intersection of raced, classed, and gendered power dynamics in the sciences and academia, and the growing anti-immigrant sentiments in the Trump era on the daily (work) lives of foreign female scientists to allow them to succeed.

**Background:** This book culminates my interest in women in the sciences, which started with an earlier book titled *Working-Class Women in Elite Academia* (2004, Peter Lang Publisher). In that book, I outline the classed, raced, and gendered dimensions of power that lead to the marginalization of women who identify their class origins as working-class in US academia. My proposed book adds an international dimension to my work on women in academia. Also, I am a female scientific migrant, which allows me to understand the research material better. In addition, most of my scholarship and teaching have analyzed the raced, classed, and gendered dimensions of power. For example, in *Contesting the Far Right* (Columbia University Press, 2024), I theorize how the far right in the USA and Austria establishes and maintains power over its followers. In *The Politics of Repressed Guilt* (2018, Edinburgh University Press), I theorize totalitarian power; in *Power and Feminist Agency in Capitalism* (2017, Oxford University Press), I theorize classed, raced, and gendered power structures in capitalist societies and how we can challenge such power. Currently, I am also completing a book on the concept of power for the signature *A Very Short Introduction* book series of Oxford University Press. In addition, I have numerous journal articles and chapters in edited volumes that further theorize the concept of power (see my CV).

**3. Market Analysis:**

1) Czaika, Mathias (ed.), *High-skilled migration: drivers and policies* (2018, Oxford University Press).

This book foregrounds research on the role and effectiveness of policies to attract or retain "high-skilled workers," which is marginal in migration studies that focus mainly on the migration of laborers. They show that the migration of high-skilled labor is not only the result of the migrants aiming at higher wages but also other factors, including attractive physical and cultural environments. Of the seventeen contributions, only one is about the "high-skilled migration" of women (by Anna Boucher), which exposes the marginality of research on this subject. Boucher shows us how immigration policies affect men and women differently because of their different life course factors (such as childbirth). In contrast, my book focuses entirely on the high-skilled migration of women. While all of the contributions approach the subject from an economic empirical (primarily quantitative) and policy perspective, my book engages a multi-methodological approach combining feminist political theory and qualitative and quantitative research. Finally, while all of the contributions are from a non-feminist perspective (except Boucher), my book employs such a perspective, which foregrounds the voices of female scientific migrants.

2) Sondra Cuban, *Mapping Southern routes of migrant women: a case study of Chile* (2022, Routledge).

This book explores the migration of female migrants who work in domestic or care labor within the Global South, who make up a large proportion of migrants within Latin America. Such study is rare in migration studies that focus mainly on the migration of women from emerging to wealthy countries. The book exposes the discrimination these women face, particularly in Chile, that leaves them feeling invisible, unsettled, and immobile. The book also shows that despite these challenges, the migrant women expressed their agency through the support networks they created among their compatriots and transnational families. Like my book, this book exposes the discrimination female migrants face in their host countries while also exploring their capacity for agency. However, while this book examines low-wage female labor migration (like most work on female labor migration) within the Global South, my book explores the migration of women with the potential for high-wage labor from a wealthy nation to another wealthy one.

3) Kalia Brooks Nelson (ed.), *Women and Migration(s) II* (2022, Open Books Publisher).

In this book, artists and writers explain the lived experiences of female migrations from an intersectional perspective. They write about topics such as home, loss, and belonging. The book captures migratory events from women’s perspectives, covering refugees and enslaved people. While the stories mainly express women's migratory experiences of trauma and fear, they also express the strength and perseverance of female migrants surviving disorientation, disenfranchisement, and dislocation. Like my book, this book shows how female migrants are subjected to multiple vectors of power while resisting such power structures. However, while this book focuses on the forced migration of women, my book focuses on the migration of European female scientists to the USA to pursue their scientific careers. Like this book, my book foregrounds the voices of female migrants from a humanities perspective. In addition, my book also offers a more structured analysis of female scientific migration, combining the insights of feminist political theory, as well as qualitative and quantitative research.

4) Anna Triandafyllidou and Irina Isaakyan (eds.), *High skill migration and recession: gendered* perspectives (2016, Palgrave).

This book examines the impact of the Eurozone crisis on highly educated female migrants within Europe and to European nations (from England and the USA). Although more highly educated women than men migrated during the crisis, European policies have yet to respond to their needs. As a result, such women faced more "deskilling" than men. They found either no jobs or jobs in sectors that did not reflect their education and skills, and they only found jobs in insecure, low-salaried positions and positions with dangerous work conditions. While this book examines highly skilled female migrants within Europe and to Europe, my book explores the migration of highly qualified women from Europe to the USA. While this book foremost examines medical staff and engineers, my book focuses on female scientific migrants. While this book foregrounds how female high-skilled migrants experienced deskilling and placement in menial jobs, my book examines the struggles of female scientific migrants who find jobs in professional positions. In addition, while the contributors approach the subject based on empirical approaches, I also approach this subject from a (feminist) political theory lens.

5) Melina Duarte, Katrin Losleben, Kjersti Fjørtoft, *Gender Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Academia*: *A Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Transformation* (2023, Routledge).

This book provides a conceptual framework to foster practices that engender diversity, equity, and inclusion, mainly in US American academia. Each chapter focuses on one concept (primarily the concept of motherhood) to understand and implement organizational changes and counteract disadvantages faced by women and by the LGBTQ+ community in academia. The book also discusses concepts directed toward solutions, such as affirmative action and feminist pedagogies. The chapters mainly focus on the experiences of US Americans. Only one chapter (Chapter 12 by Emsie Arnoldi and Rachelle Bosua) addresses the experiences of migrant women in Australia, which underscores the marginality of research on this subject and the importance of my book. While this chapter employs the storytelling of the authors, my book provides systematic research on female scientific migrants based on a muti-methodological approach. My book also underlines that only a conceptual framework that foregrounds the challenges of female scientific migrants can engender much-needed changes in (US) academia.

6) Ute Frevert , Ernst Osterkamp and Günter Stock (eds.): *Women in European Academies: From Patronae Scientiarum* to *Path-Breakers* (2021, De Gruyter).

The volume examines the lives and achievements of women who played determining roles in European academies' history and the development of modern sciences in Europe. Such women influenced the establishment of academies or were pioneering scientists who significantly contributed to the development of sciences. Their stories provide testimonies on the systemic barriers female scientists were facing. While this book foregrounds the contributions and barriers European women faced in the European sciences, my book foregrounds how such barriers led to European women leaving Europe and pursuing their scientific careers abroad and making scientific contributions in an international context, which this book does not elaborate on. While this book analyzes biographical portraits of European female scientists, my book foregrounds the voices of female scientific migrants derived from qualitative interviews and quantitative data, which I then analyze with the assistance of feminist political theory.