

Intersectionality and Translocational Class

This book is about the way in which subjective constructions of class can be brought to attention by employing an intersectional and translocational approach through analysing the routes that gender, culture and religion, locality and performativity co-constitute each other. Social class and classed experiences are the condition of many inequalities. They do not happen in a vacuum, but in intersection with other locations that in themselves create and adhere to difference and to the state of being and becoming. It is important to address class in the study of inequality, using Fanon's line of thinking on colonial encounter, i.e. in cases in which certain class positioning becomes a resource for pleasure and power (he talks about race and ethnicity), this becomes more dominant in the dynamics that create the Other. This chapter lays out the theoretical framework behind the analysis of migrant women's narratives of class. The first part of the chapter shows the inadequacy of applying classical theories of class to the analysis of migrants' accounts. The second part identifies the contributions in intersectionality and highlights the importance of studying class within 'the field of intersectionality studies' (Cho et al. 2013). The third part highlights the need to address subjective class in order to understand the nuanced experiences of hierarchical and relational class in the lives of migrants and how such absence of study of migrants has turned class into a priori and a redundant subject but the one that seriously limits migrants' chances of integration, citizenship and belonging.

This book is not a Marxist or a Weberian analysis of social class. It does not even offer a Bourdieusian approach to the study of class. The reason for this is that all these theories of class, status and distinction lack an attention to gender, race, belonging and, to a degree, space. In other words, they do not use intersectional thinking in approaching the issues around inequality or difference that could potentially give us a tool in our move towards a just future (Collins and Bilge 2016, p. 204). Although the term ‘intersectionality’ was coined relatively recently (Crenshaw 1989) and major theories of class were written long before this, inequalities on the basis of race, gender and class were evident in the work of Marx, Weber and Bourdieu, and some proponents of class theories have also pointed out the necessity for a renewed attention to class that takes into account other factors other than class (Crompton 1996; Devine and Savage 2005; Reay 1998). In the first section of this chapter, I will touch on these three theorists briefly in exploring how one can learn from each in analysing class.

2.1 CLASSIC LITERATURE OF CLASS AND THE QUESTION OF INTERSECTIONALITY

2.1.1 *Marxism and Class*

Relying on a ‘macro-social theory’, Marxism specifies the relationship between the structures of inequality (Devine and Savage 2005, p. 15). For Marx, material productive forces are the impetus in the development of social order. On the basis of this view, Marx believes that classes are the fundamental organisational structure of society (Marx and Engels [1888] 1967). Marx argues that societies are divided into two opposing classes. In the *Communist Manifesto*, with Engels, he wrote: ‘Society as a whole is splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat’. Although later, in the third edition of *Capital*, Marx mentions three different classes: ‘the owners merely of labour power, owners of capital and landowners’ (Marx and Engels 1967, p. 862). For Marx, access to the means of production and the products thereof is the factor that creates inequality. He argues that state power has a determining effect on economic power. He contends that bourgeois ideology legitimises the inequalities by disguising the processes of production, distribution and exchange as non-political (Marx and Engels 1967); hence, class is seen as a form of social force because,

he argues, all history is ‘the history of class struggle’ (Marx and Engels 1967). Marx does not only provide a description of the multiple social classes, but is also concerned with how these classes transform the societies themselves (Crompton 2008). An important aspect of Marx’s contribution to the concept of class is the notion of ‘class consciousness’. He argues that class consciousness is the process by which a ‘class in itself’ becomes active and eventually makes a ‘class for itself’. This means that it is the individual’s consciousness that leads them to form alliances that can eventually change their history. Marx states that ‘it is not the consciousness of men (and women) that makes their being but, [conversely], it is their social being that determines their consciousness’ (Marx 1962 cited in Crompton 2008, p. 30). Class consciousness (the subjective aspect of class) is considered to be different from objective characteristics of class. Marx’s views on class, although influential on interpretations of the unequal distribution of power in modern industrial societies, are lacking with regard to other forms of inequality such as race, gender and sexuality etc. We now know that women in general are more disadvantaged than men because of the historical and contemporary forms of patriarchy that position them in more subservient positions. Similarly, other social categories have determining effects on how class is experienced by various groups of people on a global perspective. An obvious and simple example of the lack of intersectional analysis is in a migrant and non-migrant workforce in factories based in a Western metropolis, where migrant workers are employed and paid under the minimum wage while the citizenship rights of non-migrant workers protect them from lower wages and further exploitation. Furthermore, consciousness of a class position does not automatically define belonging to a particular class; for example, as will be shown throughout this book, some may characterise themselves as middle class but are not recognised as middle class by that society. As such, knowing and acknowledging being part of a specific class group is not enough. Membership depends on a degree of recognition from the social groupings one has exposure to.

2.1.2 *Status and Class*

For Weber, unlike Marx, a person’s class position is not based on his/her relationship to and control of the means of production, but is instead assessed through the life-chances that the market brings to the individual. As Gerth and Mills (1948, p. 181) argue, class for Weber

is represented by the conditions of the commodity or labour markets. Weber differentiates between ‘classes’ and ‘status groups’. For Weber, social class means having access to resources. As Gerth and Mills (1948, p. 181) maintain, in some circumstances status groups can act as sources which regulate entitlements to material reward. Weber contends that the ownership of stocks of capital, the ability to work and high levels of skill are crucial to the labour and capital markets (Weber 1968). Different occupational groupings earn different levels and types of material and symbolic rewards (or life-chances) (Weber 1968). Status groups associate themselves with others with whom they share common cultures, and their participation in these communities gives them a sense of identity. Performances are part of these community participations. Most relevant to my discussion about class performances is that status is related to ‘life-style’ as ‘the totality of cultural practices such as dress, speech, outlook and bodily dispositions’ (Turner 1988, p. 66 cited in Crompton 2008, p. 35) that are related to prestige (honour). These bodily dispositions, as Weber discusses, allow one status group to form a monopoly amongst professionals; for example, doctors are represented as practising altruism rather than exploiting others in labour markets, which is part of their professional prestige (Sullivan 1999). Similarly, Savage et al. (1992) in their research in Britain, argue that the idea of ‘knowledge worker’ or the category ‘intellectual’ is related to the concept of cultural capital (see below) and certain consumption patterns which link to the concept of prestige. Weber argues that while class is concerned with the production of goods, status is concerned with their consumption. Prestige or social ranking is argued as being one dimension of the status concept (Crompton 2008). ‘[The] Weberian concept of status has three dimensions: (a) referring to actual prestige groupings or consciousness communities; (b) more diffuse notions of “lifestyles” or “social standing” (these first two aspects will obviously overlap to a considerable extent); and (c) non-market-based claims to material entitlements or “life chances”’ (Crompton 2008, p. 96). Weber explores the ways in which, in the Western world, professions are defined by specific forms of occupation (Weber 1968). For Weber, the opportunities that the market brings to an individual and to their relationship with institutions are the main factors that determine a person’s class position.

Relationships and affiliations to institutions continue to form the basis of judgements and evaluations; for example, in Weber’s view, medical professions are seen to carry a particular prestige or honour to the

extent that some have called them ‘the model’ for all other professions (Friedson 1984, 1988). Again, in this approach it is not clear as to how prestige would be assessed when the concept of prestige varies in different societies. In relation to Iranian migrants, what counts as prestige in Iran cannot be easily translated into British culture, as prestige is formed within gendered relations and dynamics of *aabroo* or reputation as well as the historical and familial relationships between families and groups in Iranian society.

2.1.3 *The Cultural Turn to Class*

Most of the studies about class since the start of the twenty-first century have focused on the works of Pierre Bourdieu (Bettie 2003; Bottero 2004; McDonald et al. 2005; Savage et al. 2013; Sayer 2005). As Savage argues, the growing economic inequalities in the UK since the 1980s as shown in the work of Piketty, have brought discussions on class on the table once more.

The class identities of the women in this book are related both to financial and non-financial elements such as education, British hegemonic culture and taste formed and understood within power relations, as was mostly discussed by Bourdieu (1985). For Bourdieu ‘class divisions are defined not by differing relations to the means of production but by differing conditions of existence as well as differing systems of dispositions produced by differential conditioning, and differing endowments of power or capital (Brubaker 1985, p. 761 cited in Crompton 2008, p. 100). Symbolic rather than economic relations are important in Bourdieusian class analysis, and, of course, symbolic relations have been pivotal in extending feminist thinking (Adkins and Skeggs 2005). However, Bourdieu’s lack of attention to feminist theory and his main concern with inequality in operations of class formation has been a major criticism of his work. Nevertheless, the concepts developed in his seminal work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984) provide a useful framework to the study of class in this intersectional approach: *field*, *capital* and *habitus*. Devine and Savage (2005) argue that *field* has some characteristics of social structure in stratification theory. A field, as Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 16) state, can be expressed by a set of ‘objective, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital)’. Power relations are relative in a social field. As such, everyone’s position is defined in relation to all others in

the same field and the position is not static but always in flux. Depending on the situation, a person can be in a position of power, yet can be positioned as less powerful in a different situation. Bourdieu understands this relational power as a form of gravity existing in the social field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). He talks of fields as:

...structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analysed independently of the characteristics of their occupants. (Bourdieu 1993, p. 72)

As people experience mobility between fields¹ they become aware of the strategies of their movements, ethics and tactics (Bourdieu 1984). In Sayer's words, for Bourdieu, 'people's access to particular practices, including jobs, depends on their location relative to others within the social field, be it one of dominance or subordination' (Sayer 2011, p. 11). *Habitus* consists of a set of historical relations 'deposited' within individuals' bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation and action (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, pp. 16–19). *Habitus*, Bourdieu argues, is a structuring mechanism that operates within agents, though it is neither strictly individual nor in itself fully determinative of conduct. Bourdieu believes that *habitus* can be 'creative', but as it is a product that is embodied within social structures it is limited within its own disciplines.

Field and *habitus* are relational concepts and their functions depend on each other. Field is not merely a placid system of spaces that exists in order to be filled by individuals who 'act'. *Habitus* is also meaningless when it is considered without the structure within which agents can act in the field; thus, these two notions are related to each other and cannot function without one another. Gender, for example, can be understood as a *habitus* where it cannot be understood without the field (the context) within which a man or a woman acts, i.e. Iranian society or a specific situation in a family.

The third concept in Bourdieu's analysis of class is *capital*, which may be economic, cultural, social or symbolic. Briefly, economic capital refers to the ownership of assets or goods and determines access to resources. Cultural capital refers to the non-economic aspects of social class. It is a form of knowledge that is accumulated throughout a lifetime and is dependent on diffuse education, family education and institutional education (Johnson 1993). Social capital refers to an individual's access to networks, communications and membership in groups which bring the individual benefits. Symbolic capital means that for all three

(economic, cultural and social) capitals to be valid they need to be recognised within a social field. Bourdieu (1987, p. 12) argues that categories of social class are not distinctly drawn and their meanings are dependent on their association with each other. In *Distinction* (1984), he uses class as a generic name for social groups, and differentiates between them by their conditions of existence and their corresponding dispositions. In fact, Bourdieu's approach (which is not dissimilar to Weber's) to exploring the processes of social differentiation focuses on occupational groups and consumption patterns.

The three major approaches to class analysis outlined above are useful in different ways. Marx's analysis of social structure helps to unravel the unequal opportunities for people in different occupations and to explain how these structural inequalities make social mobility impossible in practice. Weber's approach to market relations and professionalism indicates the differences between the economic and cultural aspects of class. Weber's analysis of status groups as a 'community' rather than a class highlights how lifestyles are associated with and formation of prestige or honour as an inherent part of status. Finally, Bourdieu's approach is useful for studying everyday life practices as forms of habitus and how these bodily dispositions can produce symbolic inequalities and new understandings of class positions such as bodily affect (Skeggs 2004) or beauty capital (Bosman et al. 1997) that did not appear in earlier theories of class.

Bourdieu's approach to details of class disposition is the theme of recent studies on class identities which have highlighted the importance of the formation of class through everyday life practices (Bettie 2000, 2003; Bottero 2004, 2005; Charlesworth 2000; McDonald et al. 2005; Savage 2007; Savage et al. 2001, 2013; Sayer 2005) and through the everyday lives of women in Britain (Lawler 2005; Reay 1998; Skeggs 1997a, 2004, 2005b). These studies focus primarily on individuals' experiences and analyse class ambivalences on their own terms rather than in relation to large-scale differences between occupational groups in society. They are mainly influenced by Bourdieu's *sociology of practice*, which identifies inequalities as the result of interplay between embodied practices and institutional processes which together generate far-reaching inequalities of various kinds (Devine and Savage 2005, p. 13, italics in original).

As class is constructed through webs of power relations, professions play an important role in the degree of power and control they give to an individual and this, in turn, affects the individual's class location (Wright

1997). There are two main aspects that create class belonging: firstly, the acquisition of hegemonic practices within any context, and, secondly, the validation of those practices within that context (Bourdieu 1984); thus, one's profession forms only a part of their social class. As life-chances remain low for individuals within groups who have limited or no access to public resources, class is an important resource through which individuals identify themselves. Economic and material aspects of class are important to the occupational groupings involved in this book and the need to analyse them in the processes of class formation. However, the concern of this book is the reproduction of class inequalities through everyday practices of migration. The objective is to explore the construction of classed identities among migrants, and therefore class is addressed on a subjective level. The issues of identification and recognition in the contradictory lives of migrants are important.

I started the class analysis following on from and expanding on the works of feminist scholar Beverly Skeggs (1997a, 2004, 2005a, b, 2011). Following Bourdieu in her class analysis and bringing a gendered approach, Skeggs draws attention to the importance of gender analysis in the study of inequality (Adkins 2004). She emphasises the dynamics of power struggles in the formation of class and how those struggles are enacted. The concept of *recognition* in Skeggs' work plays a central role. In her studies with working-class women (1997b, 2004), she argues that, historically, discourses produce symbolic power that has the ability to define what is and what is not valuable. This is a key aspect of my analysis of middle-class migrants in which I pay attention to power within family, between couples, at workplace, within an immigration system that assigns power positions to women migrants. For the women in this study, classed identity is central to how they see themselves as migrants in British society; hence, my focus on class is based on the formation of gendered and racialised identities. The classical Marxist, Weberian and Bourdieusian approaches to class do not focus on gender differences or the importance of social intersections which constitute class. In fact, the way that Bourdieu approaches women and class is defined in terms of the women's roles within specific spaces, e.g. the home, which challenges the role of patriarchy but does not attend to the formation of such space in the first place (Adkins 2004; Silva 2005). However, some elements of these Bourdieusian class analyses limit one's analysis in terms of racial and ethnic differences' effects on class experiences that are related to migrant women's experiences, and there is a need to have an intersectional approach to the study of class.

2.2 INTERSECTIONALITY AND THE TREATMENT OF CLASS

Intersectionality has become not only a ‘buzzword’ but also is counted as the most important theoretical contribution to women’s studies (McCall 2005). The term was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a law scholar in the US, who pointed to the complexities of social exclusion faced by black women in the legal system in the United States of America (1989). Her concern was that there are subjects who are placed in between social categories whose lives are multiply negatively affected by being both a woman and black. She wrote,

[...] because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated. (Crenshaw 1989, p. 140)

Although the term was coined for the first time in 1989, the idea of taking into account multiple exclusions and their interrelation and ontological existence had been discussed earlier (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983), and the interrelation of gender and race much earlier, in 1851, by Sojourner Truth, a black former slave woman who gave a speech at a suffragettes’ meeting in Ohio (Brah and Phoenix 2004). For more than a century, gender and race formed the core arguments of feminist and anti-racist discussions, with class having less significance compared to the other two axes of social locations, although there are key texts within feminist and anti-racist literature that have addressed the multi-dimensionality of class in relation to gender and race (Acker 2006; Davis 2011; Phizacklea 1983, 1997; Phizacklea and Miles 1980).

Crenshaw’s argument about race and gender co-constituting multiple systems of oppression draws attention to the importance yet neglect of class positions in the formation of gender in feminism or race in anti-racist movements. Both were formulated about middle-class white men and middle-class white women in terms of how such individuals were characterised as either powerful, independent and capable or powerless, dependent and passive (Crenshaw 1989). How does intersectional approach allow for experiences to unfold within structures of power, such as the strict Islamic schooling or patriarchal family systems? Jennifer Nash (2008) rightly questions the capability of intersectionality in addressing *subjectivity* or its use for *strategic deployment of identity* (Nash 2008, p. 11, my emphasis). In particular, to her view, what is important

is the extent to which intersectionality can deal with narratives of everyday life in order to highlight inequality. Hancock (2016, p. 12) also explicates this fact that intersectionality, as a vast field now, needs to be situated in an ‘interpretive community’ that can set the parameters of intersectionality’s capabilities in answering global questions. So, how is intersectionality used to understand classed experiences?

There is now a wealth of textbooks and sources published on intersectionality and its uses (Collins and Bilge 2016). Cho et al. (2013, p. 785) contend that it is time to think of intersectionality as a ‘field’ of study rather than a methodology or a concept.

Brah and Phoenix (2004, p. 76) define intersectionality:

[...] as signifying the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts. The concept emphasizes that different dimensions of social life cannot be separated out into discrete and pure strands. (Brah and Phoenix 2004, p. 76)

Following this definition, and by acknowledging the multiplicity of intersectional approach, Collins and Bilge (2016, p. 2) define intersectionality as:

[...] a way of understanding and analysing the complexity in the world, in people and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor [...] but by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways.

There are various accounts of how intersectionality developed into being one of the important feminist contributions (McCall 2005). Some scholars have been rightly critical of the politics within academic discussions on intersectionality and an argument that sees intersectionality as the ‘brainchild of feminism’ (Bilge 2013) without acknowledging the role of black scholars and women of colour in the development of the concept.

The approach taken in this book is to recognise intersectionality as a development from the criticism to an additive approach to the ‘triple oppression’ model (race, gender, class). Triple oppression argued that those who experience different marginalised positions together (such as being black, lesbian and a woman) at the same time are the most

deprived (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983). Anthias and Yuval-Davis and others criticised such an additive approach to the study of oppression as it says little about how systems of oppression come into existence in the first place (Anthias 2002, 2008; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1983, 1992; Brah and Phoenix 2004; Yuval-Davis 1997, 2006). Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) argue that the additive multiple oppression model assumes that, firstly, ethnic minority women are always treated as the quintessential oppressed group and, secondly, the various intersections of deprivation can be added to each other to make a person 'more marginal'. The inclusion of historical perspectives on the formation of inequalities is as important as the contemporary experiences of discrimination. For example, without understanding how colonial power relations created black as the inferior object, one cannot understand the continuous and repeated experiences of being the Other in British and American societies.² As Razack (1998, p. 12) argues, 'it is vitally important to explore in a historical and site-specific way the meaning of race, economic status, class, disability, sexuality and gender as they come together to structure women in different and shifting positions of power and privilege'.

Intersectionality has been used not only to highlight systems of oppression but also to emphasise their formation and development through various axes of power (McCall 2001). Systems of oppression such as patriarchy, racism or class domination, and the wider global systems of exploitation and inferiorisation and their contribution to the emerging differences among privileged and unprivileged migrants, work intersectionally. The experiences of middle-class and working-class migrants are not solely about class but also are about race, ethnicity, gender and ability. In addition, the historical as well as geographical locations of women migrants in terms of their country of origin and residence are important intersections in the formation of these classed experiences that cannot be addressed by using the additive approach. Brah and Phoenix (2004) argue that intersectionality avoids the additive problem as it focuses on *how* such differentiations are produced rather than *who* and *what* is affected (see also Levine-Rasky 2011). As a useful and important framework for the study of inequality (Anthias 2005, p. 32), intersectionality, according to Phoenix and Pattiyama (2006, p. 187), 'foregrounds a richer and more complex ontology than approaches that attempt to reduce people to one category at a time'.

2.2.1 *Situated Intersectionality*

Razack (1998, p. 14) argues that ‘power relations deeply shape encounters’. We see what we come to see (via various processes of learning) and how we learn to see. These positionings are formed not only through race, gender, ability and sexuality but are also embedded within power relations, for example, which race has more value in a given context or in another context where gender can be a tool for oppressing or being oppressed, depending on who is placed on the other side of the equation. For instance, how I see myself as an Iranian woman changes when positioned against a white man or a lesbian, middle-class, educated black woman. Such change deeply reflects the systems of oppression, domination and subordination that are internalised historically and contemporarily in each one of us and the way that they are presented when we narrate who we are or how we see the world. As Yuval-Davis (2006, p. 195) argues, intersectionality ‘considers the conflation or separation of different analytic levels in which [it] is located rather than just a debate on the relationship of the divisions themselves’. In a later work, Yuval-Davis (2015, pp. 94–95) defines ‘situated intersectionality’ as a highly sensitive [approach] to the geographical, social and temporal locations of the particular individual or collective social actors examined’. She emphasises that unlike in the traditional theories of stratification that comprehensive theory of social inequality must include ‘global, regional, national and local’.

As such, situated intersectionality refers to how social divisions interact but also how they are received by social actors in a particular location and time. The fact is that we need intersectional thinking and imagination to utilise multiplex epistemologies if we are to treat social positions in regard with power relations and their centrality to any analysis of everyday life (Phoenix and Pattiyama 2006). For example, those Iranian women who marry Afghan men and those who marry English men are, from the Iranian family law perspective, each married to non-Iranian men and hence they do not have the right to pass on Iranian citizenship to their children. However, in the second group, the marriage is often deemed with an aura of victory, pride and classed act among families and relatives although the same law applies to them in terms of transmission of citizenship rights. Here, the position of an Iranian woman marrying a non-Iranian man becomes a relational subject positioning that depends on who the person on the other side of the equation is in terms of legal, social and global race/citizenship

politics. The subject positioning of the English man and the Afghan man in this example are formed ontologically on different bases and cannot be reduced to the category of ‘non-Iranian’ used in legal textbooks. As such, there is no inherent oppression based on one subject positioning, such as Afghan, English, woman, lesbian, black, disabled. As Yuval-Davis argues, intersectionality exists at a subjective level which operates on the ways in which people experience their lives in terms of inclusion and exclusion, discrimination and disadvantage, specific aspirations and specific identities and what they think about themselves and others (Yuval-Davis 2006). At the same time, no social location has a similar organising logic and those such as race, gender and class cannot be treated similarly (Yuval-Davis 2006) as there are power relations that give more visibility to specific social locations in a given context. I will elaborate on this point in the following section.

2.2.2 *Power Relations and Intersectionality*

Power relations are an important characteristic of intersectionality and my intention in this book is to show how social class is created through power relations in terms of inclusion and exclusion in different groups with regard to spaces, gender and sense of belonging. Collins and Bilge (2016, pp. 25–30) define six important core ideas that intersectionality addresses: ‘inequality, relationality, power, social context, complexity and social justice’. Each one of these characteristics is embedded in the ways in which intersectionality can be used as an analytical tool in the study of complex social issues. All six core issues mentioned above are parts of the analytical framework for the study of these classed narratives; however, I am placing a particular emphasis on power relations that construct class categories and the relationality of these categories such as ‘*ba kelas*’ (with class) or ‘*bi kelas*’ (without class) in this context. This is especially relevant because class in diasporas is difficult to define and the boundaries of categories are more blurred when compared to a non-diasporic context such as Iranian society, where other social categories, such as race, are less visible. For example, in analysing diasporic practices in terms of class, gender and political affiliation amongst Iranian migrants, one must attend not only to the political, social and economic contexts of Iran, Britain or other countries where migrants have lived part of their lives but also to differences within members of diasporic groups including age, gender and class (as well as other social divisions); for example

different generations of political opposition in Iranian diaspora have differential points of view towards the Islamic regime. Thus, diasporic narratives of class become more nuanced in terms of intersectional analysis when elements of gender, generation, place making are taken into account. Power becomes an important part of these narratives.

For this reason and to address this particularity of class analysis in diaspora, in each chapter of the book, a particular category of classed identities will be unpacked. One of the first markers of addressing power relations in intersectionality literature was in Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1991) seminal essay 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color', where she analyses categorisation and the interplay of power relations in race and gender by addressing violence against women. Three angles to intersectionality are identified in this essay and are sufficiently noteworthy to be mentioned here: (1) structural inefficiencies (structural intersectionality) that cannot account for the particular experiences of women of colour who are subjected to violent behaviour at home; (2) political intersectionality that places women of colour at a particular disadvantage within narratives of gender (feminism) and narratives of race (anti-racist politics) whilst their experiences are different to white women and black men; and (3) representational intersectionality, which refers to the reproduction of race through representation of women of colour.

These angles are important here as they underline the workings of power relations that marginalise certain subjects and in a similar fashion this has been applied to the construction of class positions in this book. The concern with migrant women's experiences of class is not just to take class as a natural category whilst it is constructed socially (which is the case). More importantly, in analysing a phenomenon intersectionally, it is imperative to note how certain categories that are either taken as privileged (e.g. included, powerful and remembered) or some that are excluded (e.g. forgotten, marginal and unworthy) are formed as such within systems of power and oppression such as capitalism, patriarchy and imperialism. According to Fellows and Razack (1998) these power systems have an 'interlocking' effect, meaning that their systems of operation work together rather than alone. Such an approach and emphasis on power relations takes us away from the binary divisions between the good and bad, the oppressed and the oppressor, and lead us to discuss the relative privileged positions within categories and the power of exclusion that is at work in creating a certain class position that is not always a marginal or a privileged one, but is a position that is in fluctuation from various positions

in the class system (see Collins 1990). Dhamoon (2011) has taken the idea of ‘matrix of domination’ introduced by Collins (1990) to introduce the ‘matrix of meaning-making’. Dhamoon (2011, p. 238) argues that:

The focus of analysis [matrix of meaning-making] is thus not “just” domination but the very interactive processes and structures in which meanings of privilege and penalty are produced, reproduced, and resisted in contingent and relational ways.

It is drawing from such view that I am concentrating on the importance of privileged positioning within a marginal category (i.e. migrant); an amalgamation of various positions and the meaning-making of these positions are what Anthias refers to as ‘positioning’ (2008). The point about power relations is to move away from binary understanding of power that places people, for example, as either the perpetrator or the victim. There are ‘differing degrees and forms of privilege’ and ‘we are always and already implicated in the conditions that structure a matrix’ (Dhamoon 2011, p. 239). In fact, applying intersectionality to the privileged positioning has only recently been taken up as a criticism against the way in which intersectionality has been used as a tool for reform at the margins by lay-practitioners and scholars (Hancock 2016). Such a practice of using intersectionality to focus superficially, to address marginal positions, is criticised as having inhibited the application of intersectionality as a framework that has ‘the potential to radically reform our structures of government and public policies as well as to make other changes’ (Hancock 2016, p. 13). The next section draws on the privileged position and how the intersectional framework has been applied to address power relations.

2.2.3 *Privileged Position and Intersectionality*

What does a ‘privileged migrant’ mean? To understand this subject positioning, it is important to note that there are tangible capitals that construct migrant individuals’ class positions such as migrants’ professions, the need for a labour market for professions, familial assets (for example inheritance) opportunities for enhancement of qualifications that will subsequently bring better employment prospects, the opportunity to migrate, familial links, etc. These capitals place this group of migrants within power relations that exclude a large group of migrants who have more marginal situations, such as refugees and asylum seekers, unskilled labour migrants, students and dependents of migrants who do not have the chance to compete with those

who are highly skilled (this is not to essentialise their position of power compared to ‘white middle-class British’ people). Highly skilled migrants’ contradictory positioning was a concept first introduced in class terms by E. O. Wright (1997), mainly with regard to class positions in the USA. Wright’s argument is that within the class structure there are certain positions which are doubly contradictory in their degree of control. The control comprises three different forms: control of the means of production, control over how things should be produced and control over labour power—in other words, he argued that some are in the grey areas and are located in between class schemata, those who enjoy prestige but not the salary or those whose salaries are in higher tiers but do not fit within the occupational groups defined for those salaries. Floya Anthias (2008, 2005) uses the term differently and more appropriately to the purpose of this book. Her intersectional approach refers to Wright’s overlooking of racial and ethnic differences in class analysis and calls for attention as to how different social locations are important in class differences and vice versa (Anthias 2005). Anthias’s counter argument to Wright is similar to Zillah Eisenstein’s (2014) critique of Thomas Piketty’s well-known recent work on class analysis *Capital* (2014) which highlights Piketty’s lack of attention to intersectionality and to the importance of race and gender in theorising class and inequality worldwide. The term ‘contradictory locations’ is beneficial when it is used intersectionally and by taking into account the multiple and shifting inequalities and marginalities that highly skilled migrants face. In order to address relationality of class and the contradictory positions of women doctor migrants, I am applying Anthias’s concept of ‘translocational positionality’ in conjunction to identity (Anthias 2008) as the former’s emphasis on processes is important in identification processes that help to delve into the processes of othering rather than to the individual. As Dhamoon (2011, p. 235) argues, ‘focus on processes and systems shifts the gaze from the Othered identity and category of Otherness to a critique of the social production and organization of relations of Othering and normalization’.

2.3 IDENTITY AND TRANSLOCATIONAL POSITIONALITY

According to Yuval-Davis (2010), identity is a contested subject. When discussing classed identities in this book, it is important to define what is meant by the use of the term. Much has been written on the definition of identity in different disciplines, and reviewing all the literature is beyond the scope of this book.³ Like some theorists (Brubaker and

Cooper 2000) who argued that the notion of identity is becoming less useful because it tells both too much and too little about a person, Anthias (2008, p. 6) believes that people have ‘multiple locations, positions and belongings in a situated and contextual way which does not end up as a thoroughgoing reification or deconstruction of difference’. Her use of the term translocational (instead of ‘transnational’ and ‘dislocational’) is an alternative approach to understanding processes, ideas and experiences relating to the self and others, and it addresses the shortcomings derived from identity, mainly its treatment in the literature as a fixed concept which does not illustrate the processes and formations of social locations (Anthias 2002, pp. 494–495).

‘Positionality’ comprises a set of relations and practices that implicate identification, performativity or action (Anthias 2002, p. 501). Positionality combines social position and social positioning. The former (position) refers to an outcome or a set of affectivities (social structure), while the latter (positioning) means a set of practices, actions and meanings (agency). Anthias (2000) considers that there are three locales in which migrants are placed: the homeland from where they have migrated, the society of migration and the migrant group. She argues that the notion of ‘positionality’ refers to these three shifting locations of migrants. Positionality is formed through the interplay of the intersections such as race, gender, class and ethnicity in these three locales. For example, an Iranian woman is not fixed to a particular identity, as there is no fixed identity such as being a woman or being an Iranian that could define one in this sense. Her positionality in terms of sense of belonging should be seen in the social locale in which she finds herself in her daily experiences, for example when she is working in a hospital or when she finds herself at home with her family. The other locale, according to Anthias, is the country of origin. Positionality should be understood in relation to processes: for example, to a great extent the experience of being Iranian is embedded in the experiences of growing up in Iran or in an Iranian family in the diaspora. Positionality is not fixed or static and is constantly changing because it is being told and retold in different places and times and for different audiences: for example, the ways in which Iranian women activists inside Iran define the notion of an Iranian woman are different to those of Iranian women outside Iran, because the audiences, the social setting and the migration processes all affect such narratives. ‘Who we are’ is produced at the time the stories are narrated and in relation to the multiple audiences for whom they are narrated.

Skey (2011) argues that narratives about who we are have consequences. Stories are told *within* the intersectional lived life and are told *from* situated and local positionings.

‘Translocational positionality’ as a concept that recognises the issues of exclusion and political mobilisation on the basis of collective identity and narrations of belonging and otherness. It also highlights the role of audiences and the effects they have on the formation of the identity narratives. Anthias believes that by looking at the narratives of location (such as race, gender or class) in different locales (geographical and diasporic locations), the concern with identity being a fixed possession of individuals rather than a process will be eliminated (Anthias 2001, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2010). Anthias (2005) argues that unless we take an intersectional approach to the study of social class, the underlying inequalities that tend to be hidden in the form of hierarchical stratification will not be revealed. As fluid as it is, class is inseparable from other social locations in the social world (Anthias 2005). When we consider the notion of social class, we are talking about social spaces in which individuals deal with power relations (Bourdieu 1984). These power relations confer relative positions and positionings to agents within the social field. Power relations exist everywhere (Foucault 1990) and affect all social stratifications in a constituting way; therefore, class cannot inherently exist without race, ethnicity, gender and vice versa. My intention in this book is to show explicitly how class, as the main focus of the book, is fluid in different locations but also concretely experienced by women through various identity narratives.

The societal practices to which people are subjected obscure the active decision-making of lived experiences within ethnic categories. Our membership in different ethnic groups does not necessarily entail the practices of the markers attributed to that ethnic category; for example, one may call herself Iranian but not practise what others deem to be ‘Iranian’ by any member or non-member of the Iranian community, which illuminates how powerfully people (or ones in the position of enunciation) define ‘Iranian-ness’. Applying the concept of positionality is therefore useful as it draws on these power relations of recognition and misrecognition or inclusion and exclusion, which were described above. The ethnic category of ‘Iranian’ or ‘Muslim’ does not contain specific practices that can be identified with labels of Iranian or Muslim. Categories are constructed and change over time and in different contexts and are not understood in the same way, even by those who define themselves within

those terms. This was evident in my attempts to interview one of the participants for this book who was described by other doctors as non-Iranian. The gatekeeper who introduced her to me warned me about ‘her lack of Iranian attributes’ and as a result her incompetency (in his view) in participating in this research, which was about ‘Iranian women migrants’. She did not tick the box for my gatekeeper. However, when I interviewed her a few days later in her office, she described herself, quite proudly, as an Iranian woman migrant. Within these different contexts and historical moments, subjects make decisions about their practices, about identity narratives and about the categorisations in which they choose to place themselves.⁴

For the purpose of analysing the classed narratives intersectionally, one should also take into account that the way in which we perceive the world or a particular phenomenon, understand or imagine a concept is also situated (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002).⁵ When I arrived in the UK to study gender studies, I was quite aware of the fact that my education, my having grown up in a Muslim country and my experiences of being a young woman from a lower middle-class family in Iran affected me in such a way that I had many differences with my Iranian classmate, who had grown up in an Iranian family in Germany. At one point we had a conversation about sexuality and race, during which I realised how prejudiced I was about certain groups of people such as black people or our lesbian classmate. My situated narratives were different to hers because of the processes of the formation of our different Iranian identities: an example of translocational positionality. Situated narratives are about attachments and identifications as well as normative assessments: we judge people based on these situated understandings. For me, with limited exposure and knowledge about a black person in Tehran, understanding racism outside an Iranian–Afghan relationship was becoming clear when I started working and studying in the UK and became a target of racist remarks at work myself. Of course, class, gender, race and ethnicity are not experienced in the same way everywhere and by everyone; for example, Batool, who is the participant I described above, feels positively about being an Iranian woman living in Britain, for instance constantly referring to positive attributes such as being hospitable and caring, while Solmaz feels differently, for instance criticising the negative behaviour of Iranians living outside Iran (e.g. their perceived unpunctuality). These differences at the very least reflect the historical periods in which migrants entered a host country,

their degree of integration into British society, their professional status and grade at work (being a junior doctor or a senior, being a GP or a surgeon) and their sense of identification within their surroundings (for example, to what extent they shop in Iranian/Turkish supermarkets or go to mainstream Western foodstores). From this, one can understand that the sense of belonging and unbelonging to certain groupings or social locations is not only local and situated but is also intersectional: it is a well-documented fact that Iranian women experience migration more positively (Dallalfar 1994; Dossa 2004) than migrant men, who are subjected to a different form of racism (usually being seen as violent subjects too). However, according to Darvishpour (2002) Iranian women in Sweden invest more deeply than men in ways to integrate into Swedish society. It also became clear in the work for this book that this group of Iranian women migrants are either more, or at least as much, integrated as their husbands are (see Chap. 4 for more discussion of this). As such, focusing on the contexts within which these positionalities are formed helps us to understand the contradictory positions in the lives of these women. They are privileged migrants who are accepted as ‘part’ of the British society in relation to the social class, professional category and the socio-economic status they have, but at the same time they are seen as not belonging on the basis of their ethnicity, particularly in the current atmosphere after nationalistic narratives that regained momentum following the 2016 referendum the UK held to leave the European Union.

Categories are not pre-given. Cultural, economic and political changes bring social change and dislocation of categories as they are all parts of the contexts in which migrants live. Due to the transnational movement of people, easy access to the internet and exposure to events, lifestyle and information in different parts of the world, there is no longer a limit to one’s local (immediate) knowledge. Brah’s concept of diaspora space (1996) was and is still a useful term to refer to these boundaryless locations that migrants occupy, as it looks at differences between individuals not in terms of the migrant and the indigene or the majority and the minority but in terms of the power relations around who can be included and who cannot and at particular times and in particular spaces; and of course in this interplay of power relations, there are different elements at work. These discursive analyses of how the categories of migrant and indigene are constructed impact on how belonging and class are experienced.

2.3.1 *Translocational Class*

Anthias (2005) argues that unless we take an intersectional approach to the study of social class, the underlying inequalities that tend to be hidden in the form of hierarchical stratification will not be revealed. As fluid as it is, class is inseparable from other social locations in the social world. When we consider the notion of social class, we are talking about social spaces in which individuals deal with power relations (Bourdieu 1984). These power relations confer relative positions and positionings to agents within the social field. Power relations exist everywhere (Foucault 1990) and affect all social stratifications in a constituting way; therefore, class cannot inherently exist without race, ethnicity, gender and vice versa. In migrants' experiences, it is translocational, local and situated. In both forms of trans-movement—whether across intersections of the social field or geographical borders—the self is affected by the local knowledges that one acquires about the self and the other. People with different situated positionings and imaginations coexist within the same locality. Our local knowledge is limited to the social networks to which we have access. Thus, knowledge can become local for a person upon their awareness of the existence of the discourses around it. The 'knowing' of the person is the boundary between what is local and non-local to her/him. The idea of locality, then, emphasises a person's agency and autonomy as well as the different forms of capital to which she has access. The subject herself defines what she knows, what she imagines and how she narrates and performs her knowledges in a specific context; thus, the very same acts may have different meanings in another context.

Since we have situated positionings in a symbolic locality, the social experiences of all agents within the same locality are likely to be different. As Bourdieu (1984) argues, knowledge is a matter of positioning. It is important where and how one is located in the classification schemata because that positioning characterises the way one sees oneself and others situated. In discussions about class, then, one should remember that the performances of one person in one locality (geographical and symbolic) are formed within constantly changing limits and boundaries. As Donna Haraway (1988) argues, our *partial perception* is the result of our social positioning. This is why discussions around class in one context do not seem appropriate and meaningful in another context, although the

two may have certain characteristics in common. The situatedness and locality of class reminds us that these contradictory positionings are constructed in and through power relations in society.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter, I have shown that class is formed in and through power relations, which form a set of imaginations, perceptions, performances and validations in discourses (knowledges) available to an individual. Following Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), Skeggs (2004, 2011) and Spivak (1988), recognition was argued to be a key element in the construction of identities. The relationship between power and recognition, however, is not always straightforward and it changes in different settings, depending on the speaker and the audience particularly when addressing the lives of migrants whose social identities are translocated (Anthias 2011). Understanding class in the lives of migrant women requires a rooted consciousness about how one is situated in the matrix of transnational and intersectional positionings that place women differently to men, working classes differently to middle classes, homosexuals differently to heterosexuals and migrants differently to non-migrants. I presented a rather long narrative to conclude that why an intersectional and translocational framework is necessary in examining that everyday practices of social locations of migrant positions. Translocational positionality needs to be seriously considered in any research on social identities with migrant groups as it allows for the situated intersectional positions of privileged, as well as those in marginal positions by analysing the ‘processes’ that have led to their position of privilege or marginalisation. This is to suggest that people’s lives in privileged locations hegemonies are as intersected as those who are in marginal positions (Hancock 2016; Levine-Rasky 2011; Yuval-Davis 2010). In other words, when addressing class in a diaspora, the study of social inequalities and situated imaginings of a concept, other social intersections, transnational practices and global positionings of migrants need to be engaged at all levels of analysis. The treatment of power relations, in micro and macro forms, individual and institutional is placed at the heart of my analysis of class in diaspora. This book attempts to show how the position of a woman migrant doctor changes as she speaks to a fellow Iranian researcher, about other migrants, about home, gender, and for an imagined audience.

NOTES

1. The notion of class mobility and social change are two concepts which should be examined within contexts of society, institutions and interpersonal relationships. The social sphere creates the opportunities to access the means of relationships. Individuals form a '*structuring mechanism*' within themselves to operate inside these relationships (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 16).
2. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown (2015) White people may deny it, but racism is back in Britain: Discrimination, prejudice, violence and common bigotry raise no concern these days, *The Independent*, 12 July 2015, accessed 5 October 2016.
3. See the collection of seminal essays about identity in Paul du Gay, Jessica Evans and Peter Redman (eds.) (2000) *Identity: A Reader*, London: Sage.
4. See Yuval-Davis (2010), who argues that identities, as narratives, are a sub-category of belonging.
5. See Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis (2002) for their differentiation between situated knowledge and imagination.

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