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Towards geographies of privileged migration: An intersectional perspective

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Abstract
While geography has traditionally 'looked down' in the search for social justice, a recent trend in the social sciences has argued for thinking through privilege. Taking this call seriously, this paper draws on feminist scholarship and uses intersectionality to demonstrate that reflections about privilege are imperative in the pursuit of social justice. Through laying the groundwork for a theorisation of privilege within and beyond migration geographies, we use transnational circulation, as one of the – unquestioned and taken for granted – characteristics of elites, arguing that an understanding of privilege in migration is critical to understanding and combatting inequalities and injustices. This leads us to argue for the need to explore privilege in relation to its others, such as precarity and vulnerability. We conclude by advancing a research agenda on privilege in (migration) geography that draws upon a feminist ethics of responsibility.

Keywords
Privilege, inequalities, migration, social justice, intersectionality, feminist ethics

I Introduction

There is a long standing ethos in geography of the pursuit of social justice (for example, in this journal: Ho, 2022; Hopkins, 2021; Israel and Frenkel, 2018). Yet, in exploring the 'unfair outcomes that result from both social processes and institutional decision-making' (Hopkins, 2021: 382), the general focus is on oppression and discrimination that result in inequality, with privilege barely addressed as an entry point. This paper argues that, besides a focus on discrimination, privilege deserves critical attention to understand and combat inequalities and injustices. Privilege refers to social advantages that benefit and/or support some people's profitable position in society. As a derivative effect of structures of power, it can be produced by being a member of a privileged group, what is described as wearing an invisible backpack (McIntosh, 1989). Moreover, its relational dimension helps acknowledge how the privileges of some exist at the expenses of others. This varies according to the spatial contexts where it takes place,

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which means privilege is highly geographically contingent and reconfigured across in different spaces (see, e.g. Ley, 1995; Mitchell, 1997; Ong, 2006). Arguing for the need to unpack the operation of privilege in the (re)production of power relations, scholars in social sciences gather reflections on privilege under a dedicated subfield of studies (McIntosh, 2012; Twine and Gardener, 2013). Drawing on these scholars who have turned their attention to the lives of the elite, privileged and super-rich (including: Cunningham and Savage, 2015; Elliott, 2014; Hay and Beaverstock, 2016; Khan, 2014; Sherman, 2017), we develop these reflections by turning our attention to the spatialities of the most advantaged. We examine the ways privilege is expressed through transnational migration. This transnational circulation is considered as a way of circumnavigating the world with ease (Khan, 2014; Sklair, 2000), one of the unquestioned and taken for granted characteristics of the privileged. As scholars have reflected on the power geometries of global im/mobilities (Massey, 2005) and how international migration is shaped by power relations within global regimes of power (Glick-Schiller and Salazar, 2013), we argue that reflections about privilege are imperative to understand inequalities within migration geographies and broader geographies aiming towards social justice.

In the search for combatting inequalities, migration studies have long had the tendency to look 'down'. Research on the more privileged forms of migration has been set as less worthy of academic attention, an 'uncontroversial segment of migration' (Knowles and Harper, 2009: 7), which discourses on the 'glamorisation' (Glick-Schiller and Salazar, 2013: 184) of mobility have firmly sidelined. A relatively small, although growing set of critical migration scholars have nonetheless laid the ground for including privileged transnational mobilities in migration research (see, for example, Amit, 2007; Benson and O'Reilly, 2016; Botterill, 2017; Cranston and Lloyd, 2019; Kunz, 2016; Richardson, 2018). This paper argues that despite the various calls that point to the 'rather particular and limited notions of migration processes as a whole' (Fechter and Walsh, 2010: 1198) and the need to investigate further 'the nature and impact of privileged mobility in an age of globality' (Croucher, 2012: 9), the notion of privilege within migration research would benefit from a clearer examination to emphasise its place within calls to explore inequalities. Studying the dynamics that result in people's international migration being privileged helps redress an imbalance towards studying down in migration geography, while revealing how the advantages that some people experience are related to and causal of the disadvantages of others.

Privilege is present within discussions of highly skilled migration (Beaverstock, 2002, 2005; Findlay et al., 1996), elite mobilities (Beaverstock et al., 2004; Birtchnell and Caletrìo, 2014; Hall, 2019) or through efforts to grasp 'the quest for a better way of life' under the framework of lifestyle migrations (Benson and O'Reilly, 2009). As Croucher (2012: 3) notes, the category of 'privileged mobility' is a broad one, potentially encompassing skilled workers and investors, students, sojourners and retirees. To address this challenge, we review existing literature according to two main criteria: First, the element of agency in making and shaping their mobility through a commonly assumption of the ease of international movement in relation to skills and capitals (Croucher, 2012); Second, the relative position of power of those considered as privileged migrants in relation to local communities (Benson, 2014), opening to the consideration of place-specific contexts. Migration has been widely studied through the scope either of experiences of being migrant or of infrastructures that channel migration, notably analysing the role of the state. Drawing on a regimes of mobility approach (Glick-Schiller and Salazar, 2013), we do not see experiences of migration and state regulation of migration as two opposite scales of analysis. We argue rather to articulate them for a better understanding of how 'certain types of mobile individuals, become the subjects of praise or condemnation, desire, suppression or fear' (Glick-Schiller and Salazar, 2013: 196). Moreover, as we have addressed elsewhere the role of infrastructures in facilitating the movement of some (Cranston and Duplan, 2023), we focus in this paper on everyday experiences as embodied experiences of privileged migration. For so doing, we place the body 'as a locus of power relations' (Duplan, 2021a), being considered as the

first place of experience of – and possible resistance to – oppressive norms that shape it. Drawing on feminist scholars, we use intersectionality to account for privileged migrant's embodied experiences as a core focus of analysis of privilege.

In what follows, we present first intersectionality as a framework of analysis enabling us to go towards an unpacking of the structures of power that produce and maintain embodied privilege in the everyday. The following sections successively review: how privilege in migration has been constituted under the frame of class, through economic and cultural capitals; how privilege remains racialised and western-centred while associated to the power of whiteness; and how gender lies as an ambiguous structure of power positioning notably women in a kind of paradoxical space of privilege. This leads us to argue for the need to explore privilege in relation to its others, such as precarity and vulnerability. Drawing on feminist epistemologies, the conclusion situates the ethical implications of researching privilege within inequalities research and identifies future research directions.

II Intersectionality as a useful framework for analysing the geographies of privilege

While feminist scholars have in some ways drawn upon ideas from intersectionality to analyse migrants' subjectivities and experiences (for instance: Benson, 2019; Fechter, 2007), it has not been theorised as such. In this section, we present our use of intersectionality. We argue that intersectionality enables us to unpack the production of privilege in migration and demonstrate how an intersectional analysis is needed for a better understanding of global inequalities.

As discussed elsewhere (Duplan, 2023; Hopkins, 2019; Mollett and Faria, 2018; Nash, 2008; Raghuram, 2019), intersectional analysis draws upon a broad range of Black feminist theorists who have paved the ways prior to conceptualisation to shed light on the interlocking workings of structures of oppression (Anzaldua, 1987; Combahee River Collective, 1979; Davis, 1983; Hooks, 1984). Developed by Crenshaw (1989, 1991) to make visible how women of colour experience specific forms of violence at the intersection of racism and sexism, the term intersectionality has spread in social sciences as a heuristic tool enabling accountability for minorities' lived experiences of oppression (Davis, 1983). As a critical theory (Bilge, 2013; Hancock, 2016), intersectionality aims at addressing the interweaving of power relations and the way they are co-produced, maintained and experienced through the body. While intersectionality is recognised by many scholars as 'the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies, in conjunction with related fields, has made so far' (McCall 2005: 1771), debates continue around its use as a 'theory, concept or heuristic device' (Davis, 2011: 4) and its operationalisation as there is no specific method to engage with it (Nash, 2008; but see Raghuram, 2019, 2021; Rodó-de-Zárate, 2014; Valentine, 2007). However, we follow Cho et al. (2013: 795) that the point is about 'what intersectionality does, rather than what intersectionality is'. Intersectionality enables an analytical distinction between structural and individual levels of privilege, between social categories and social relations (Anthias, 2012). This helps consider how some bodies and experiences are rendered in and out of place (Cresswell, 1996), highlighting the spatial dimensions of experiences of oppression (Mollett and Faria, 2018) and the clear contribution intersectionality can bring to geographical discussions. Furthermore, an intersectional approach clearly sheds light on how structural conditions affect everyday lives through the material shaping of embodied experiences. Finally, using intersectionality as a framework of analysis requires us to acknowledge that there is no location outside of the matrix of domination (Collins, 2004). As such, intersectionality can account not only for the experiences of the oppressed but also for the maintenance of power relations by those most powerful. Indeed, Nash (2008: 11) even points to privilege as a direction that needs to be further explored by intersectional theorists, that is, 'the way in which privilege and oppression can be co-constituted on the subjective level'.

Migration scholars have started to scrutinise the way power relations shape and structure privileged migration, exploring how being a privileged migrant

is not a single identity but one of many (Bailey and Mulder, 2017). Feminist scholars have notably called attention to the role of gender in the everyday experiences of the highly skilled (Coles and Fechter, 2008; Duplan, 2014, 2021a, Kofman, 2000, 2004; Kofman and Raghuram, 2015). Research has also usefully favoured an analysis through the lens of race to unsettle the whiteness of experiences in migration (Knowles and Harper, 2009; Leonard, 2010; Lundström, 2014). However, migrants' subjectivities are 'inhabited' through – among others – race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexuality and gender (Bonjour and Chauvin, 2018; Duplan, 2021a; Fechter and Walsh, 2010, 2012; Leonard, 2010; Lundström, 2014; Walsh, 2018). While migration scholars have usefully reflected on the way one or two axis of power might play in migrant's lives, there is still a crucial need to use an intersectional perspective to further investigate how much more complex subjectivities and experiences of space tell us how privilege is constituted. As Nash (2008: 12) argues: ' in conceiving of privilege and oppression as complex, multi-valent, and simultaneous, intersectionality could offer a more robust conception of both identity and oppression'.

This paper uses intersectionality to explore 'how privileged groups may experience structural advantages as well as personal losses' (Lundström and Twine, 2011: 71). Intersectionality demands a consideration of the ambivalence of privilege in its relation to its others (Collins, 1990: 225), to account for both the way privilege is actively maintained in everyday practices and 'the ways in which privilege and oppression intersect' (Nash 2008: 12). It also helps conceptualise how privilege is related to precarity and vulnerability. Dismantling the making of privilege requires an acknowledgement of the fluid and contingent location of individuals within the matrix of power. As such, privileged migrants actively police the everyday boundary making of their social advantages, although this can be non-intentional as their specific location can prevent them seeing how their everyday making of privilege comes at the expenses of the less privileged ones (see, e.g., Collins, 1990). This is where an intersectional analysis becomes crucial to better understand the insidious ways power is reproduced by the most powerful. Subjectivities and senses of belonging in privileged migration hence need to be questioned as complex relational and performative productions that are deeply materialised through the body, the latest being used as a central site of bordering in transnational everyday encounters (Ahmed, 2000).

Looking at the intersectional entanglements in privilege allows us to uncover some of the dynamics through which privilege is constituted and operates through the body. Understanding privilege therefore helps us explore the structures that produce precarity and vulnerability, extending how embodied intersectionality is understood. It helps expose how power structures overlap and intersect, in a way that does not place these in a cumulative process nor a competition but rather looks at the everyday embodiments and (re)productions of power. We hence pay attention in the following sections to the subsequent hierarchies produced in privileged migration, along the axis of, amongst others: class; race, ethnicity and coloniality; gender and sexuality. The focus is therefore clearly oriented towards how people gain privilege through migration, notably through capital and race. Beyond a reductionist way of naming these categories, we aim to open up further thinking about how to practice intersectionality (Ahmed, 2012) in research on privilege and privileged migration

III Privileged by class? The relationality and place-relatedness of class privilege

In the context of privileged forms of migration, scholars have for long opted to explore capitals, since 'class is the axis around which their privilege is framed' (Benson, 2014: 48). Through this section, we explore the logics through which the relationship between mobility and capital is defined, including the paradoxical relationship between privilege and precarity.

Privilege is a socio-spatial condition, since it is 'not just about who you are, but is about where you are' (Housel, 2009: 134). Because of this relational dimension, migration changes the groups and spaces through which privilege is defined against. In a simplistic form, privilege becomes conceptualised in

reference to the 'host country', a position of power that people have over the local communities. This is often framed in relation to class or wealth. For example, Benson (2014: 47) locates privilege whereby the Americans in Panama and British in France are *'relatively* affluent' in comparison to the local population. Scuzzarello (2020) highlights privilege as manifest in how Western migrants in Thailand live more luxurious lives than the local populations. In some cases, this power is gained through migration and the changing contexts of power structures. For example, some retirement migrants are motivated to move abroad due to the comparative purchasing power of their pension in a different national context (Maher and Lafferty, 2014). In this respect, privilege becomes defined in relation to both the host country and the 'home' country, but does not translate into privilege at home. The embodiment of privilege is therefore related to the possession of economic capital, although it remains relational and place-based. Economic privilege hence does not systematically translate into privilege more generally. For instance, Ley (1995) shows in his seminal work the intersections between class and race in the reception of 'millionaire' Chinese migrants in Vancouver, highlighting discrimination in housing and labour markets. These dynamics are more broadly described as paradox by Maher and Lafferty (2014).

Acknowledging the paradoxical nature of privilege invites to consider the costs related to privileged migration as any kind of migration. As argued above, structural advantages do not equate individual easiness. Some research focuses on the precarities of migrants considered privileged, which is often construed in relation to capital. For example, Botterill (2017) highlights the financial insecurity of British retirement migrants in Thailand, whose state pensions have been frozen, which can result in health inequalities as they cannot afford access to health care. Rey et al. (2020) demonstrate how international teachers combine the privileges of emancipated globetrotters and the precarity of contractual employment. Understanding precarity in relation to capital highlights a need not to simply assume advantage, but to look at both the advantages and loses associated with migration. Precarity is present in relation to the temporal conditions of the work contract and/or the visa systems which preclude settlement (Green, 2015) or access to health care, material frames that impact upon aspired lifestyles or longer-term prospects (Botterill, 2017). Precarity in privilege is often a condition that can be overcome with economic capital, but is one that usefully highlights that economic advantages should be understood on a continuum (c.f. Conradson and Latham, 2005). An approach through privilege helps therefore nuances previous approaches on capitals by shedding light on the processual dynamics at stake in privileged forms of migration and mobility.

Privilege is also produced spatially through an assumed relationship between mobility and cultural capital. For example, international student mobility is often framed through the acquisition of cultural capital since the experience of being in a different culture as something that can be collected and utilised for social mobility (Waters, 2006). While these tropes draw upon postcolonial geographical imaginations of the value of a Western education, more broadly migration and transnational mobilities have often been analysed as part of a strategy for middle/upper to elite-class' reproduction of privilege (Leonard and Walsh, 2019). As such, transnational mobilities can be analysed as situated cosmopolitan imaginations (Beck, 2002) that relate to class positionality and aspirations (Bonjour and Chauvin, 2018). Drawing on cultural class analyses, scholars have argued how transnational cultural practices become a strategy for distinction, allowing for the formation of a mobile middle-class (Benson, 2019; Bonjour and Chauvin, 2018; Duplan, 2021a). Experiences of migration therefore shape migrant's habitus and ways of life (Benson, 2014) oriented towards an affirmation of a sense of superiority, wealth and status, as social practices of 'distinction' that symbolises luxury and exclusiveness. Transnational migrants create particular patterns of mobility, which in turn shape their subjectivities and lifestyles (Elliott, 2014). This results in a narrative constructed to justify the practices of those privileged enough to enact them in order to maintain their power. However, by becoming inscribed upon the bodies, privilege is

hence not seen as a product of differences in opportunities but instead as a skill, one's individual capacity (Khan, 2014). Uncovering this helps to understand the maintenance and reproduction of privilege by migrants who knowingly access it during the migration process, and work to performatively maintain it through embodied everyday practices. As such, privilege becomes part of an identity to be performed to others through mobility as a capacity to navigate a wide range of socio-spatial contexts at a global scale (Elliott, 2014; Khan, 2014). This 'self-stylisation of globals' (Savage and Williams, 2008) contributes therefore to set mobility as a marker of privilege. This position is not open to all though. Exploring the intersections between race and class, accounts of 'cosmopolitanism from below' highlight 'we cannot simply locate the subjectivity of the cosmopolite within the body of an elite, educated Western traveller' (Kothari, 2008: 502).

Therefore, existing literature that explores the relationship between privilege and class frames this mostly from the perspective of capitals. Migrants are privileged in terms of economic capital due to their relative affluence in comparison to others. This capital produces ease in various aspects of their lives, while crucially remaining place-based. Cultural capital moreover highlights how privilege becomes embodied. This framing of global mobility as a classed cosmopolitan imagination is one that is produced and learnt through the body. Yet this is privilege, its embodiment is intersectional and not open to all. We need to further understand the (re)production of privilege as capital within neoliberal capitalism, contextualising, for example, cosmopolitan imaginations (Cranston and Duplan, 2023; Duplan, 2022). This will help also to destabilise the still Eurocentric bourgeois meaning of most exclusionary cosmopolitan identities and to shed light on how this narrative contributes to support the powerful position of those who claim a supposedly natural openness to the Others (Hannerz, 1996). It is by understanding how privilege (re) produces itself, that we can contest its repetition in the pursuit of social justice.

IV The spatialities of post-colonial imaginaries of whiteness

An important volume of studies has focused on how privilege is organised through the spatialisation of race, more clearly situating privilege at the scale of the body. This section explores discussions of race and privilege in migration, showing how scholars have pointed to the continuities of racial hierarchies in migration along with the invisible workings of whiteness in its intersections with socio-economic privileges in migration.

Research on 'Western' migrants has shown that becoming a white minority[1] results in the 'discovery' of race – a reflection of how whiteness is often perceived as invisible within discussions of migration (Fechter, 2007). In majority-white contexts, research demonstrates the variations in deservedness of whiteness. Van Riemsdijk (2010) argues that inclusion into the majority white group is time and place-specific. Looking at Polish nurses, she illustrates how they do not quite belong within Norwegian national discourses of belonging. Botterill and Burrell (2019), also looking at Polish migrants, suggest that following the Brexit vote in the UK, those migrants lost their 'white privilege' in new immigrant hierarchies where being white no longer affords the same privileges. These ideas about race, and the privileges that whiteness in particular affords, draw upon colonial imaginaries of racial hierarchies. These approaches explore how the migrant becomes entangled within discussions of the past and present (Koh, 2015), where the movement and practices of migration are inflected with the legacies of colonial ideologies (Mains et al., 2014) However, we need to situate privilege not only as inherited from the past, but as current social, political frameworks that reproduce colonial ideologies (Botterill, 2017). For example, Maher and Lafferty (2014) reflect on how Western migrants in Thailand felt a sense of empowerment and increased status as men through their

mobility by drawing upon a neo-colonial imaginary that positions them as superior to Thais. Others highlight that despite governmental visa policies presenting themselves as unracialized, they are often inflected with a racial politics which privileges the access of white people to migration (Guðjónsdóttir and Loftsdóttir, 2017; Simon-Kumar, 2015). A racial lens of analysis, encompassing either the use of Western citizenship or whiteness, reveals how global racial hierarchies remain salient in migrants' lives by structuring privilege.

However, this all enhance how privilege is located within discourses of racial hierarchies coined by colonialism, we have to keep in mind how these discourses are geographically and temporally contingent. Attention to geographical contexts of migration helps us understand how privilege is embedded into matrixes of power and its spatial dimension. Indeed, migrants carry with them through their transnational experience certain embodied resources that play a significant role in how they are perceived in the host community (Benson, 2019). As such, they can actively draw upon affluence and whiteness to assert privilege (Walsh, 2018). Migrants however do not always reflect on their own position of privilege prior to, during or after their mobility since the invisibility of privilege for those who benefit from it allows for its normalisation. Yet, while becoming aware of their position through the changing power geometries related to the context of migration itself, migrants develop various strategies to signify this floating and changing context, adjusting new senses of belongings and subjectivities throughout their life course. They develop narratives justifying their deservedness of such advantageous position, sticking to meritocratic neoliberal discourses (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007; Montsion, 2012), while naturalising what they identify as a form of moral superiority that allows them to identify as a 'good' migrant. Privilege is hence often ascribed not only in relation to the local population, but in racialised hierarchies with other groups of migrants (Cranston, 2017; Knowles and Harper, 2009). Migration scholars have underlined the contingency of such narratives, where goodness is imbued with whiteness in an articulation to recently acquired class privileges, while remaining highly locality-related (Benson, 2019; Cranston, 2017; Duplan, 2021a; Leonard, 2010; Lundström, 2014; Scuzzarello, 2020). In so doing, migrants perform their privilege, in an attempt not only to justify but also to secure it. Other privileged migrants actively position themselves as 'good' through their engagement with the local community (Higgins, 2017), which can be articulated through their disavowal of 'expatriate' or 'privileged' status (Cranston, 2019). However, their power to practise or claim different types of belonging is a form of privilege in itself, one that obfuscates the structures through which privilege is made. Those migrants 'internalise dominant identities' in their body, embodying elite cultural schemes. Privilege works hence both at material and discursive, structural and individual levels, while remaining highly related to how it is translated in place (Ong, 1999).

Understanding enduring racial hierarchies in migration contexts is key to understanding the production of privilege itself. The everyday operations of (neo)colonial power works to both shape in a relational way who has access to migration and how their migrations are experienced and narrated. Bodies are sorted on the basis of skin colour which works to benefit certain groups at the expenses of others allowing privilege to be (re)produced by being a member of a privileged group. An understanding of racial privilege in migration is therefore crucial to expose how the structures which benefit white people in migration, simultaneously work to disadvantage others, and how it intersects with citizenship and being migrant or not (Ho, 2018; Richardson, 2018). White privilege hence relies on the vulnerability of non-white people, in migratory contexts too, and such racial privilege needs to be exposed and contested in the pursuit of social justice.

V Gender in privileged migration: Between oppression and dominance

Feminist scholars have usefully analysed the intersections of power that led some to be more privileged than others, analysing vulnerabilities and precarities within privileged migration (Fechter and Walsh, 2010). Recent studies that argue for considering

'migrations as sites for the negotiation of privilege' (Benson, 2019: 25), focus on its fluid and relative character. Indeed, while privilege is produced through class and race, not all privileged migrants are equally privileged according to their gender.

Gender is hence acknowledged to be a differentiating factor in the access of class and racial privileges since gender subordination complicates migrant's position as white and wealthy ones (Botterill and Burrell, 2019; Lundström, 2014; Van Riemsdijk, 2010). Patriarchy also plays a wider role in disadvantaging women: many studies have developed how the practices of privilege play out differently depending on gender (Duplan, 2021a; Lloyd, 2019; Yeoh and Willis, 2005). For example, women moving between locations may lose status through different rights and patriarchal regimes. This helps recognise the instabilities of white privilege when it intersects with class and gender to produce wide discrepancies in meanings and experiences (Leonard and Walsh, 2019: 8). More broadly, other social identifications may be acknowledged for how they may undermine or unsettle white or classed privilege in migrants' subjectivities. An intersectional lens of analysis therefore invites the question whether women remain definitively placed outside privilege according to the deeply masculinist grounds of discourses and realities on/of the cosmopolitan elite. Moreover, gender may be analysed beyond binaries of male domination/female subordination and extended to a more complex analysis of heteronormative assumptions that still frame migration experiences and research itself (Duplan, 2021b; Manalansan, 2006; Oswin, 2012, 2014). Further research hence needs to be done on how gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation intersect in relationship to privilege and precarity, highlighting for instance the working of privilege in homonormativity (Puar, 2007) and exploring further how trans* and non-binary identified people experience transnational mobilities in relation to the matrix of power relations.

Research has therefore so far embraced gender in a quite reductionist way, mostly equating gender with women. Considering privilege and its relationship to vulnerability within groups leads to unveil how structural conditions such as racism and patriarchy make both the decision to move and the lives abroad more difficult for some than others (Esson, 2020). For example, Coles and Fechter (2008) argue that some 'accompanying spouses' have become 'incorporated labour' without this often being recognised or valued. This idea is encapsulated in the idea of the trailing spouse, a person who in moving as part of their partner's job is unable to work, resulting in a reimagining of gender norms and relations (Cranston and Tan, 2023; Duplan, 2021a; Walsh, 2018). It is therefore important that we consider gender relations in thinking about the motivation to move (Hardill, 1998), as well as how ethnicity and sexuality may prevent individuals from wanting to move to certain locations. In terms of lives abroad, Cranston and Lloyd (2019), looking at privileged migrants in Singapore illustrates how for female migrants, feeling safe is a way in which their privilege is defined because they feel liberated from structures of vulnerability at home. Duplan (2014, 2021a) shows how migrant women in Luxembourg, although constrained by the patriarchal regime of expatriation, negotiate their gender subordination through the enactment of embodied practices of privilege. However, vulnerability does not stand for the opposite of privilege, they are not dichotomous but have relational hierarchies (Botterill, 2017). Walsh (2018: 107) underlines how for the British in Dubai, women's intimate lives and bodies are regulated due to the illegality of unmarried pregnancies, highlighting how a 'normative status of whiteness as privilege is disrupted'. Benson and Lewis (2019) challenge the normative assumption that British migrants abroad are privileged through whiteness by looking at the experiences of racism among migrants of colour in Europe. We can see through these accounts how an intersectional analysis shows how power and agency can be constrained within privileged migration itself.

Accounts of privileged migration in the everyday therefore contest readings of class, nationality or race, or gender as privilege to demonstrate that privilege cannot be uniform or assumed. Part of this emphasises the variations in experiences between people who are seen as homogeneous groups. Research on privileged migration might therefore usefully consider why members of a group can be

considered excluded from privilege, as well as exploring privilege between groups themselves. Exploring the relational aspects of privilege and vulnerability helps elucidate inequalities in different aspects of people's lives by helping to explain the multi-faceted structures of power that create inequality itself.

VI Concluding remarks and future research perspectives

The paper has shown the entanglement of privileges of class, race and gender in migration. It started to expose the production of privilege as an on-going mode of governance of bodies and subjectivities shaped by, while contributing to, the renewal of the creeping power of neoliberal capitalism and heteropatriarchal and racial ideologies. Understanding privilege in migration becomes a way through which social injustices can be questioned by examining how power operates from the intimate scale of the body, differentially structuring the embodied experiences and practices of migration. This surfaces how the experiences of the cis able white middle-class male body as typical privileged migrant, count as truth order on which ideologies, structures and discourses rely on, and we must question – or even contest – as a process method through which privilege is reproduced. We explored this along the interlocked axis of power of class, race and gender, aiming to dismantle the interwoven logics of capitalism, racism, colonialism and patriarchy. However, one has to keep in mind that all oppressions are connected, and, especially when it comes to movement in space, a crucial dimension which has been missing in research on privileged migration is disability. This contributes to surface the usefulness of an intersectional lens of analysis in both exposing global inequalities and working towards 'undoing privilege'. Our paper therefore calls to further troubling the wider logics that produce privilege, aiming to a better understanding of the relational dynamics of precarity and vulnerability in migration.

Calling for further research to be done on privilege in geography draws upon a feminist ethics to argue that academia cannot elude issues of responsibility (Massey, 2004). By not exposing the making of privilege we, as researchers, run the risk of becoming complicit in its maintenance (Noxolo et al., 2012). Coming back to migration geographies, exempting understandings of privilege points to risks of essentialisation of what migration is. This is clearly seen in the lexicon of the term 'expatriate' which is broadly used by the media as well as institutional discourses, opening to the term's performative reproduction (Cranston, 2017; Duplan, 2022; Fechter and Walsh, 2010; Kunz, 2016).This is one reason that we need to make privilege more visible, as we need to understand the enduring ideologies that position and enable the practice of whiteness and other structures as privilege (Ahmed, 2012). Highlighting how power operates to advantage some and disadvantage others will help emphasise the similarities between migrants, as well as wider populations, beyond citizenship, a method to contest the focus on migrant difference and instead build empathy (Dahinden, 2016). We need to think how implementing research on privilege might be oriented towards decolonising imaginaries of migration along with categories we rely on in our research (Collins, 2019). In geographical research more broadly, we need to go further in understanding the (re)production and maintenance of privilege in different spatial contexts. We started writing this paper following the death of George Floyd and the subsequent mainstreaming of the Black Lives Matter movement showing the unequal 'reading' and legitimacy of bodies by the racist state gaze. This movement has highlighted that being silent on and ignoring the importance of understanding the workings of power within people's lives and society is part of a denial or complicity within the structures that produce both privilege and marginality. In the pursuit of social justice, we need further explorations in how some bodies are privileged in space and the work that this privilege does in producing oppression for others.

Related also to issues of responsibility and feminist ethics (Lawson, 2007; Raghuram et al., 2009; Noxolo et al., 2012), discussions on reflexivity and positionality also deserve further consideration for future research perspectives. As accounts of social justice have argued, we need to understand the location, context and politics of the conceptualisations we use to explore and contest inequalities (Hopkins,

2019). Therefore, we need to account for the location through which privilege is theorised, including that in this paper. Despite research on privilege in migration being a relatively niche topic, there is a prominence of female voices who are predominately, but not exclusively, white. Both the authors of this paper fit this description, and also come from the position of having personal and family experiences of privileged migration. Drawing on feminist and postcolonial theories (Griffiths, 2017; Jazeel and McFarlane, 2010; Oswin 2019; Spivak, 1985), which have widely argued for the need to politicise knowledge production in relation with social justice, we argue that this homogeneity in profiles needs to be problematised further in relation with the consequences 'voices' of white women have on conceptualising privilege (Faria and Mollett, 2016) from the perspective of the most advantaged. As such, the examples we use reflect our own personal and academic positionality as well as the current stream of research that map the main flows from the 'Global North' to the 'Global South' (but see: Ho, 2018). We invite hence to open up further reflections on ethics of responsibility from a feminist perspective that account for 'postcolonial interventions' (Noxolo et al., 2012), extending Spivak's (1985) point about which voices count and are listened to or not, and who is allowed to speak and for whom, incorporating 'the potential connections and disconnections between responsibility, care and power, at a variety of scales' (Raghuram et al., 2009: 10). We urge then for reflections about privileged voices to be integrated more systematically into everyday academic research practices aiming at social justice.

Placing privilege in migration research hence usefully works as a counter part of the still preeminent tacit focus on subordination in migration studies that plays as a (still silenced) bias in academia. By laying the ground to provide a framework for understanding how privilege is experienced and reproduced, we have shown how privilege, vulnerability and precarity come from somewhere and whilst manifesting in different ways, are produced through similar logics. This can be extended beyond geographies of migration to other areas of geography. We advocate therefore for embracing intersectionality as a feminist ethics (Raghuram 2019, 2021) that will help nuancing the dominant optic through which privileged migration has been reflected on so far and hence call for a better integration of reflexivity in research in the pursuit of social justice for everyone.

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Note

1. We are not conflating nationality with ethnicity – a wider assumption of research on 'Western' migration is that this over-focuses on white migration, at the expense of considering the diversity of Western populations (Benson and Lewis, 2019).

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