Pastoral and Spiritual Care Across Religions and Cultures II

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Spiritual Care and Migration

Isabelle Noth
Claudia Kohli Reichenbach
(eds.)

V&R

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Isabelle Noth/Claudia Kohli Reichenbach

Preface

Addressing human spiritual needs in today's pluralistic societies requires understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives and identities. Failure to cultivate deeper respect for diversity risks cultural misunderstandings and relational harm in the context of helping relationships. Therefore, personal encounters and scholarly exchanges between Muslims, Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, people without religious affiliation, and atheists are critically important and unquestionably valuable.

Of equal significance is the cooperative approach of the disciplines concerned – in particular the disciplines of psychology and theology. Each scholarly field contributes unique and valuable insights to the topic of culturally competent spiritual care in increasingly pluralistic contexts. The International Association for Spiritual Care IASC, founded in 2015 in Bern, Switzerland, is dedicated to the promotion of richer interdisciplinary dialogue amongst people from different cultural and religious backgrounds. The inaugural conference of the IASC was held at the University of Bern and in the House of Religions in June 2016, and was focused on the pressing topic of migration in today's world. Inevitably, migration prompts topics such as social exclusion and alienation. In the case of forced migration, traumatic experiences are a critical issue for spiritual caregiving. Conference attendees gathered to explore the particular psycho-spiritual dimensions of suffering related to migration, and appropriate strategies for healing. For instance, how might various methods of self-healing be better supported by spiritual caregivers? How can faith communities cultivate more supportive contexts, responsive to the particular needs prompted by migration?

Selected papers have been published in this volume. This publication solely reflects the views of the authors. The conference sponsors cannot be held responsible for any actions based on the information contained herein.

Given the fact that the authors hail from different countries and scientific disciplines, there has been no standardisation of formats for the various contributions. We thank all participants of the conference and those who continue to engage this most urgent matter: How can we provide appropriate spiritual care in migration contexts? The IASC continues to engage the complexities of human migration in its ongoing gatherings and research dialogues.

Bern, March 2018
Isabelle Noth and Claudia Kohli Reichenbach

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Isabelle Noth[1]

Spiritual Care, Human Dignity, and Migration

Abstract

This essay examines the function of spiritual care in the context of migration, calling for solidarity, respect, and dignity. The biblically-founded unconditionality within the theological language of human dignity is emphasized, indicating the universal equality of all people independent of their race, gender, and other orientations of identity. It is argued that to disregard another person does not diminish that person's inherent dignity, but it disregards our own destiny to live in God's likeness.

1. Introduction

The theme of the International Association for Spiritual Care (IASC) 2016 Conference, "Spiritual Care and Migration," responds to a phenomenon that began the previous year, referred to by the media as the European refugee and migration crisis. More than 2 million people – a mere fraction of those who fled their homes to move to the west and north – managed to enter an EU Member State.[2] Currently, more than 35 million non-native persons reside within EU Member States. Such startling shifts over the past two years make migration an urgent political topic in Europe. Of course, the issue is pressing for the entire international community; worldwide, more than 65 million people were displaced and seeking resettlement in 2015.

In 2016, shortly before his death, the critically acclaimed Polish sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman (1925–2017) published *Strangers at Our Door*, a searing appraisal of the migration crisis.[3] It was published in German with the evocative title, "Fear of the Other: an Essay on Migration and Fear-

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2 http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics/de (accessed 12-29-17).

3 Zygmunt Bauman (2016): Strangers at Our Door, Polity Press (Cambridge).

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Mongering."[4] Bauman diagnoses us as seized by a "veritable 'moral panic,'" a widespread fear "that some evil threatens the well-being of society."[5] In fact, this "evil" is comprised of our fellow human beings.

Moreover, the raw statistics of these "strangers," who are actually our neighbors, hardly justify the extremity inferred by the term "crisis." Bauman argues that the true impact of their presence is that we cannot avoid facing the possibility that we, too, could suffer displacement and upheaval. Such persons "remind us, irritatingly, infuriatingly and horrifyingly, of the inevitable vulnerability of our own position and of the endemic fragility of our hard-won well-being."[6] Rather than carefully considering the societal consequences of neoliberalism and globalization, we become unreflective and defensive instead, expressing hatred for "foreigners."

These migrants fleeing unlivable conditions now serve as convenient scapegoats. In a Gadamerian sense, Bauman sees hope in a "fusion of horizons," enacted through relationships and personal encounters.[7] For Bauman, "there is no exit from that crisis other than the solidarity of humans,"[8] which is necessarily rooted in mutual respect for the dignity of one another.

The tangible functions of spiritual care emerge in such a context, calling for solidarity, respect, and dignity. The first functional task is rooted in the educational impetus of spiritual care. A second is the overcoming of fear with love (1 Jn 4:18). With regards to education, interdisciplinary dialogue is critically necessary. Spiritual care practices that integrate accounts from across genres, such as Bauman's sociological analysis, deepen understanding and broaden perspectives on complex concepts such as "migration panic."[9] In addition to crossing disciplinary boundaries, it is also crucial to seek a diversity of voices across the boundaries of gender, race, and other orientations of identity. Bauman's analysis, for instance, lacks an account of gender as an essential factor in the context of migration; such matters of inclusion are given special consideration in the contributions within this volume. The second function of spiritual care is accomplished by drawing from tradition in relevant, fortifying ways. This task will now be illustrated with the example of the term human dignity, which is particularly relevant in the context of refugees and their treatment.

4 Zygmunt Bauman (2016): Die Angst vor den anderen. Ein Essay über Migration und Panikmache, Suhrkamp Verl. (Berlin).
5 Zygmunt Bauman (2016): Strangers at Our Door, Polity Press (Cambridge), p. 2.
6 Ibid., p. 16.
7 Ibid., p. 19.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 2.

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2. Human Dignity as an Abstraction

Students of psychology and cognitive science will be familiar with the following classic experiment, which seeks to illustrate the dimensions of human memory:

The instructor asks the students to remember a series of words, spoken aloud in a list:

bread knife, parrot, pencil, hamster, canary, motorcycle, tulip, train station, encyclopedia. Then, the students are asked to recall the words they have remembered. In the second round, the instructor names a different list of words:

virtue, morality, contradiction, hope, meaning, knowledge, reason, consent, sensibility.

The experiment shows students how and why their brains function. Students find memorization of the second list to be much more difficult than the first.

Why?

The answer is simple, but crucial to our theme:

The first list was comprised of concrete words that prompt images, which are visually and verbally coded. Abstract words, by contrast, resist easy elicitation of pictures; they are only coded verbally. Our memory-related functions are enhanced when we can generate a visual image of a word.

Human dignity, of course, is clearly an abstractum, and belongs on the second word list. Thus, it also resists easy association with images or visual notions. We do not immediately relate an objective, definitive, universal object with the abstraction of human dignity! First, we must visually code the abstract concept.

Theological tradition, specifically within the domain of Christian theology, principally accomplishes this task with the help of the scriptural notion of humanity created in the image of God. In this way, Gen. 1 provides the fundamental biblical text from which to exegete a theological understanding of human dignity, and to articulate implications for spiritual care in the context of human migration.

3. The Human Being in God's Likeness – Biblical Foundation

Although "not a major topic of Old Testament theology,"[10] the biblical account of the human being's likeness in God's image establishes a decisive reference point and a valuable theological contribution to discourse on human dignity.

10 Andreas Wagner (2018): God's Body. The Anthropomorphic God in the Old Testament. London: T&T Clark, p. 167.

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The central text for this theological notion appears in the very first chapter of the Hebrew Bible, Gen 1:26a:

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

Here, we find that both the being and the destiny of humanity are determined: the human being is wrought within the image of God, with dominion as its destiny. The likeness to God, which also includes the "visible, external form-similarity,"[11] is unconditional. For a human being to be human, no caveats are stipulated, no pre-requisites or limiting adjectives are noted. In other words, to be created in God's image does not equate with any of the conventionally valued aspects of humanity – beautiful, smart, powerful, male, obedient, willing or friendly. Rather, the human, in God's image, is simply…human. In fact, this Genesis passage is even gender neutral! Notably, the Priestly source of this text is "otherwise patrilinear" as well as "androcentric."[12] In fact, the historiography of this passage reveals multiple efforts to limit or qualify humanity's creation in God's image. Though Paul wrote in Gal. 3:28 that neither men nor women, but all were one in Christ, we find in 1 Cor. 11:7, "For a man should not cover his head, since he is the image and reflection of God; But the woman is the reflection of the man."
Conversely, the Hebrew meaning of "Adam" connotes a collective definition of humanity, inclusive of both male and female. The divinity of the human being lies within its very nature, and such divinity affects its physicality, unconditionally and universally.

To quote my Bernese colleague, Old Testament scholar Andreas Wagner: "This is truly the embryo of the world-wide concept of the equality of all mankind."[13] Such an insight, indicating the universal and historical essence of human dignity, is a powerful kernel which yields a vast bounty of possibilities.

4. Theological Interpretations

An important task remains: to concretize the abstract term, „human dignity." Developing one's own understanding of human dignity is deeply idiosyncratic. Conflicting and contradictory differences abound between various understandings of this term. One who speaks of human dignity cannot depend on universally agreeable definitions.

11 Wagner, p. 176.
12 Wagner, p. 173.
13 Wagner, p. 173.

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As previously noted, a definitive starting point for human dignity within Christian theology is found in Gen. 1. And yet, it is not the case that Christian theology has served as the architect of the modern protection of human dignity, and the human rights resulting from it. Only in the 20th century, after overcoming many obstacles, was Christian theology transformed into a full advocate for human rights. This makes the matter all the more momentous: the universal equality of all people, in the fullness of their differences, is forged in Gen. 1. Something has been planted here which has slowly evolved and bloomed.

Two further insights illustrate the theological constructs beneath the universal dignity of all humanity:

1.) The first observation comes from Heinz Rüegger.[14] He refers to a problem of particular interest within contemporary discourse: aging with dignity, and dying with dignity.

I want to age with dignity, and die with a sense of self-worth. If I can no longer wash myself, feed myself, or know my own name – my dignity is lost, as is my sense of worth. Such talk of dignified aging and dying implies that an undignified life and death might be prevented by active euthanasia. Only a self-determined death is a worthy death. Clearly, human dignity is inextricably linked to issues related to quality of life, cognitive ability, and capacity for self-determination. "A decline in one's quality of life is perceived as a loss of dignity – consequently, this leads to an understandable fear of aging and dying!"[15]

2.) The second observation comes from Frank Mathwig: he sees a "connection between the decline of the social importance of the churches and the tendency to an increasingly relativistic attitude towards the unconditional protection of human dignity."[16]

The church's voice fades from these discussions, according to Mathwig, and so also fades a very central criteria for a theological grounding of human dignity: unconditionality. Such an insight speaks to why I believe the theological, biblically-based approach to human dignity is critically important.

Perhaps no one more aptly captured the essence of theological understanding of human dignity as did Jürgen Moltmann when he wrote, "There is no more

14 Heinz Rüegger (2006): Das eigene Sterben. Auf der Suche nach einer neuen Lebenskunst, Göttingen (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

15 Ibid., p. 57.

16 Frank Mathwig (2007[3]): Den Menschen ins Recht setzen. Menschenrechte und Menschenwürde aus theologisch-ethischer Perspektive, SEK Position 6, Bern (Verl. Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund), p. 13.

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human dignity or less; there is only either-or."[17] Such bold and unequivocal clarity is exceptional; it carries concrete implications for how we relate to ourselves and one another.

Moltmann elegantly summarizes the point when he writes: "(…) the likeness to God is a relation, namely the relation in which God puts himself to the human being. The likeness of God therefore applies in all human conditions, whether the person is healthy or sick, old or young, disabled or not disabled, born or unborn. This relation, the relation of being in the image of God, if it is understood in the light of God, is true for the whole human person, body and soul (…)."[18]

Relevance to the Theme of Migration

How does all this apply to our theme of migration?

The biblically-founded unconditionality within the theological language of human dignity clearly invalidates any constraint or incursion upon one's entitlement to dignity, including any limitations based on mental or cognitive abilities to articulate or understand such dignity. Every human being has inherent dignity, and this prerogative is inalienable and universal. One may disrespect, disregard, or deny the dignity of one's neighbor, but a human being's inherent dignity is ultimately inviolable.

As a theologian, and particularly as a practical theologian, I cannot speak of human dignity in theory without also the witness of human dignity in practice. We might best learn of the nature of human dignity from those for whom it might be seriously denied: in our era, these persons are refugees. What we see today is a grave challenging of human dignity, and an attempt to abstract it, and decouple human rights from it. I contend that such disregard of another human does not ultimately diminish the person's dignity. Rather, the person who fails to respect another's dignity, also fails to live into the future God holds for her/him, so clearly articulated in Gen. 1: that we might each live fully as God's image in the world. To disregard another is to disregard our own destiny to live in God's likeness.

As a practical theologian, I would like to broaden the implications of this insight. If we speak theologically about the dignity of human beings, we must enact and embody such understandings ourselves. Mere abstraction will not suffice.

17 Jürgen Moltmann (2012): Ethics of Hope, transl. Margaret Kohl, Minneapolis (Fortress Press), p. 87.
18 Ibid., p. 87–88.

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Through the course of life, we all acquire experiences of injustice, and experiences of the harm we cause ourselves. An understanding of one's own dignity becomes all the more important, for it reminds us of an essential and inviolable integrity.

Every human being possesses something of God that transcends injustice, abuse, shame, and humiliation. Any violence to the contrary does not ultimately affect one's dignity. Reflecting upon human dignity may offer us better understanding of one another.

When asked what Jesus Christ meant to him, Helmut Gollwitzer replied:

"He makes people dear to me. Some of them are dear anyway, many others are not. He tells me that he loves those who are alien, indifferent or even unattractive to me. In so doing he helps me to behave in a different way, to be capable of talking, listening to others as openly and seriously as I would like them to listen to me and take me seriously, never writing anyone off, never pronouncing a final judgment on anyone, always attempting new things with them in hope. In this way, he extends my horizons towards those who are further afield: to those outside my milieu, to the needs of society, to the Third World. They all become my neighbors."[19]

6. Conclusion

In this essay I argue that the disrespect of the dignity of another person does not diminish that person's inherent dignity. Instead, such disregard signals the hindrance of one's purpose as articulated in Gen. 1: to represent and reflect God in the world. Let us dare to hold fast to our dignity, and to respect the dignity of our fellow human beings. Perhaps this is expressed no better than through the verses of Marianne Williamson:

Our Deepest Fear

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.
We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?

Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small does not serve the world.

19 Dorothee Sölle (1990): Thinking about God: An Introduction to Theology, Eugene, Oregon (Wipf and Stock), p. 105.

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There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.
We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.
It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.[20]

May the fruits of the 2016 IASC Conference contribute to our liberation.

20 Marianne Williamson (1992): A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles, New York (HarperCollins), p. 190.

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Pamela Cooper-White[1]

Women Migrants, Gender-Based Trauma, and Spiritual Care[2]

Abstract

Nearly half of migrants worldwide are women, but politicized images of migrants as dangerous young men dominate the media. Scholarly literature on migrants rarely discuss women's gendered experiences of migration but, rather, focuses on political violence and terrorism; literature on women migrants rarely addresses sexual and domestic violence, although gender-based violence is endemic to women's experience of migration. This essay puts current multi-cultural approaches to trauma care in dialogue with accounts of women migrants' gender-based experience of violence. The author recommends a stance of solidarity, in which spiritual caregivers value witnessing over "fixing," listening without prior assumptions about what women migrant survivors of violence really want and need, and supporting self-healing and liberation.

Migration, Violence, and Gender: Facts vs. Denial

"Sometimes I think it was just a nightmare, but then I feel the pain and remember it was not" – "Norma," detained in the U.S. by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), from El Salvador, fleeing the M18 gang members who raped her and threatened her children because her husband was a police officer. (UNHCR 2015b:5)

"Globally, at least 35 % of women have suffered from gender-based violence." (UNFPA 2016; WHO 2012) "Worldwide, almost one third (30 %) of women" have experienced intimate partner violence, and "[g]lobally, as many as 38 % of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner." (WHO 2012) Rape and other forms of sexual violence are routinely used as a systematic tool of war. In disasters and humanitarian crises, women are more likely than men to suffer from food insecurity. Even though women produce half of the world's food, they comprise 70 % of the world's hungry. Of the more than 125 million

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2 A briefer version of this paper was presented to the International Association for Spiritual Care, annual conference on the theme "Spiritual Care and Migration," Bern, Switzerland, 21 June 2016.

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people in need of humanitarian assistance" according to the UN, "over 75 % are women and children. In 2015, 61 % of maternal deaths[3] occurred in 35 countries experiencing emergency situations. Their average maternal mortality ratio was on a par with England's between 1800 and 1850." (UNFPA 2016)

Migrants, of course, include both immigrants (those who voluntarily leave their country of origin seeking better economic, health or other opportunities) and refugees (those who flee violence in their country of origin to seek asylum elsewhere – a category that includes many more persons due to economic violence, starvation, and now climate degradation, than are listed on official counts) – and there is some overlap as well with victims of human trafficking.[4] The United Nations estimates that close to 60 million persons are now forcibly displaced – that is, officially recognized as refugees – either internally (within their countries of origin) or externally. (UNHCR 2015a) This is a staggering new high, up 20 million in the last two decades, due primarily to "wars, conflicts, and persecution." (UNHCR 2016b) And "the average time of displacement among the world's 60 million refugees, half of whom are women and girls, has now reached 20 years." (UNFPA 2016a)

Violence experienced by women migrants includes:

Violences sexuelles: violation, sodomie, tortures sexuelles, sequestration puis négociation pour échanger la ou les filles, harcèlement sexuel, exhibition forcé comme danser nue devant les autorités, exploitation sexuelle – prostitution forcé; violences psychologiques: menaces, reclusion, injures; violences physiques: frapper avec des bâtons, gifler, gîte de l'eau bouillante sur le corps, tubasser; practiques traditionelles: multilations sexuelles; etc. (Keygnaart et al., 2008, cited in Laacher 2010:13)

(Sexual violence: rape, sodomy, sexual torture, sequestration then exchanging sex with a woman or her daughters for protection, sexual harassment, forced exhibition such as dancing nude in front of authorities, sexual exploitation – forced prostitution; psychological violence: threats, isolation, verbal abuse; physical violence: hitting with clubs, slapping, throwing boiling water on the woman's body, beatings; traditional practices: sexual mutilation; etc.)[5]

3 According to the World Health Organization, "maternal death" is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes. WHO (2016b).

4 It is beyond the scope of this paper to address the problem of trafficking in persons. There is a difference between migrant smuggling (transporting migrants illegally for profit) and trafficking (enslaving persons against their will, within or across borders), although there is some overlap. Statistics on trafficked persons vary widely, from estimates of 40,000 to 20 million. For more information on human trafficking, see UNODC (2014), US Dept. of State (2015a, 2015b). For information on the related issue of "mail order brides," see Simons (1999).

5 French translations in this essay are my own.

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Sexual and gender-based violence is endemic. (UNHCR 2016c) In one study of a refugee camp in northern Ethiopia, "all female informants experienced physical violence against female refugees in the camp" (Gebreiyosus 2014:38), with sexual violence being the most common form (p. 44). The author of this study, Yonas Gebreiyosus, wrote, "Despite serious consequences of sexual violence, most incidents of sexual violence of female refugees in different parts of the world go unreported due to the various socio-cultural as well as legal constraints." (p. 44)

Sonia Nazario, the author of the Pulitzer-prize winning book *Enrique's Journey* – an account of one young boy's journey to find his mother across the U.S. border – details horrific stories of gang rapes of central American women and girls along their escape route (e. g., pp. 97–98), committed by both bandits and local authorities – many of whom are indistinguishable from one another because of the collusion of violence among civilians and police. (p.74; see also Kaltman et al., 2011) These are the facts of life for 30 million women in national crises *from* which – and even *to* which – migrants flee throughout the world. (See also UNHCR 2015b.)

Nearly half of all migrants are women. (UNFPA 2015) Yet, the prevailing image of "immigrants" is of young *men:* "male, non-white, unproductive and uncontrolled." (Chell-Robinson 2000:117; see also Boyd & Grieco 2003: 1; Freedman and Tarr 2000:1; Gebreiyosus 2014: 31; Laacher, 2010:12–13,17–18) Regarding refugees, erstwhile American presidential candidate Ben Carson erroneously stated, "We don't know whose [*sic*] those people are, and the majority of them are young males, and they could easily be people who could be infiltrated by terrorists." (Schleifer 2015) The current U.S. President, Donald Trump, painted an even more prejudicial gendered and raced image of immigrants on the campaign trail, creating a manipulative "us-them" dividing line when he said, "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you. They're not sending you. They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us [*sic*]. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists." (And as an afterthought, "And some, I assume, are good people.") (Lee 2015)

In academic literature the same gender bias – or blindness – largely obtains. Women migrants in general were largely ignored in the literature on immigration until the 1980s. (Knörr & Meier 2000:9) In a survey of books published since the year 2000 on migrants and trauma, there were few or no references to "women" or "gender" in the book indices until very recently, and in several edited volumes specifically on women/gender and migration, there is virtually no consideration of sexual or domestic violence. (Knörr & Meier, 2000; Morrison, Schiff & Sjöblom 2008; Piper, 2008; Arya & Roy 2006)[6] In the

6 Note that this is slowly changing, both in more granular studies of specific geographical locations and cultural contexts, and in more general publications. E. g., Anthias & Lazaridis (2000); and Espín & Dottolo (2015).

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field of psychology, a comprehensive volume entitled *Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Refugee Communities: The Importance of Culturally Sensitive Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment* (McDonald and Sand, 2010), there were only two specific references to women at all – and these were made in passing – among the 50 pages (pp. 6, 8). Only slightly better, in his single-author book *Counselling and Therapy with Refugees and Victims of Trauma*, Van der Veer includes a 10-page, fairly rudimentary chapter (out of 168 pp. total text) to treating "women and sexual violence," in which he addresses sexual violence toward both men and women. (Van der Veer 1998:141–150) Most recently it has been a pastoral theologian, Jan Holton (2016), who *does* take sexual violence into more than passing consideration in her ethnographic research on forced migration, war trauma, and the theological as well as psychological experience of homelessness.

In books on economics and so-called (economic) "development,"…

> Despite what some researchers have called the feminization of international migration (Donna Gabaccia et al, 2006), economics have been slow to incorporate gender into their migration research in a substantive way. When gender enters into their economic migration models, it is rarely the focus, but rather, a simple control variable – what Monica Boyd and Elizabeth Grievo (2003) call an 'add women, mix, and stir' approach. (Morrison et al. 2008:12)

Even in a recent edited volume entitled *Migration, Gender and Social Justice* (Truong et al 2014), the issue of gender-based violence is only discussed in one chapter (approx. 6 pages out of 400). This book does highlight, however, the rise in economic exploitation of women migrants – a form of violence recognized by the UN : "Export-oriented production and women's international migration since the 1970s have evolved into mechanisms that incorporate women from the South[ern hemisphere] into wage labor for the North…[especially] the urban service sector." (Truong et al, 2014: 7)

In sociology, in an edited volume on women and immigration in France, Freedman and Tarr (2000) write,

> Whilst they make up very nearly half of the populations of immigrant origin in France, within dominant representations of women of immigrant origin are more often than not either ignored or represented in stereotyped categories. Older women are portrayed as wives and mothers, responsible for the 'integration' of the family into French society, whilst when young people of immigrant origin are discussed it is usually the problems of young men which come to the forefront. Young women are often forgotten, 'as if their experiences posed no problem' ('*comme si leur vécu ne soulevait aucun problème*'). Only an explosion of media and public interest in an issue like that of the Islamic headscarves in French schools brings the problems of young women of immigrant origin to the foreground, albeit in a very limited manner. These stereotyped representations, which portray women of immigrant origin as wives, mothers or daughters, supports for the process of 'integration' of immigrant

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communities into France, or 'victims' of patriarchal Muslim cultures, are clearly obstacles to the full understanding of the heterogeneity of identities and representations of the multiple dimensions of problems and difficulties that touch these women's lives. (pp. 1–2)

And in the field of anthropology, while studies of women and migration in general have increased dramatically "since the 1970s when migrant women were largely invisible" (Knörr & Meier 2000:9), the issues of trauma and gender-based violence against women is still largely neglected.

In countries where U.S. military presence has been strong, as in Iraq, American servicemen's and local translators' patriarchal assumptions easily collude to produce a "good girl/bad girl binary" around the figures of women. "Good" Arab women are uneducated, naïve, domestically and sexually subservient, and require protection because otherwise they might be victimized by other men outside the family (although they will be blamed, and may be killed by male relatives if they engage in any relations with outside men, or even if they are raped – known "honor killings" – for bringing shame on the family.) "Bad" women are "sexually dangerous," predatory, and like to "party." "In the final analysis there are only two mutually exclusive options available: either an agent (representing and asserting himself or herself) or a victim (the passive object of chance or cruelty)" (Asad 2007:79, cited in Campbell 2016:98) "Female [Iraqi] subjects, imaginable as double victims – first of a tyrannical regime and now of senseless terrorism – faced an imperative to construe themselves as unknowing and nonagential vis-à-vis US power." (Campbell 2016:98) Women refugees are similarly viewed as passive and naïve in western countries of asylum, if they are seen at all, because patterns of sequestration continue after immigration. In some contexts where both political and sexual violence are endemic, women may have no choice other than "strategic invisibility" as a survival tactic; however, this perpetuates their isolation and ongoing disempowerment. (Rojas-Wiesner & DeVargas 2014:211)

Even when such violence is acknowledged, it is not granted the same psychological status of trauma as political violence. Portrayals of conflicts by media across the globe ignore, minimize, or normalize women's quotidian experiences of gender-based violence, while covering clashes between civilians and military or para-military forces in horrific detail. As just one example, in Mexico…

Representations of both migration and '2006'[7] are frequently portrayed as visible sources of shock, trauma, panic, transcultural psychosis, and PTSD, domestic

7 "2006" in this quotation refers to a 7-month violent clash that year between state and national military forces vs. "tens of thousands" of teachers and others demanding social and political change.

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violence is portrayed as a type of normalized traumatic stressor that contributes to a range of diffuse symptoms but *not* PTSD. (Duncan 2016:221)

Smaïn Laacher (2010) describes a similar phenomenon regarding refugees in France:

Certes, la faim, la soif, l'extrême fatigue, se faire escroquer et les très mauvaises conditions de voyage doivent être considerés comme autant de violences et de traumatismes. Mais ceux-ci sont relativement assumés et supportés, car c'est le prix à payer pour parvenir au bout du périple. En revanche, les violences sexuelles ne sont jamais, et en aucune manière, assumés ou acceptées…ainsi, les violences physiques et sexuelles faites aux femmes sont très largement sous-estimées parce qu'elles sont invisibles: la parole est ici barrée, pour le longtemps, par la honte et la souillure. Ce qui est spectaculaire, et suscite compassion et indignation, c'est l'arrivée devant les cameras et les ONG, dans des embarcations de fortune, de jeunes migrants assoiffées et mourant de faim. Les violence faites aux femmes restent invisible parce que les femme demeurent inaccessibles: non de leur fait, non par choix social ou moral, mais parce que ces femmes son sous la domination et le pouvoir des hommes qui gouvernent leur parole et leur degré de visibilité dans l'espace public. Ce mêmes hommes qui peuvent abuser d'elles ou les violenter. C'est encore et toujour eux qui prennent la parole sur les malheurs survenus lors du voyage; des *malheurs en général* [emph. orig.] valent pour tous, sans distinction, renvoyant à des topos milles fois répétés devant des journalists…" (pp. 11–12)

(Certainly hunger, thirst, extreme fatigue, fraud, and the very bad conditions of the voyage must be considered likewise as forms of violence and trauma. But these are relatively expected and supported, because such is the price to pay to reach the end of the journey. On the other hand, sexual violence is never, and in no way, expected or accepted…thus, physical and sexual violence against women are very largely underestimated because they are invisible: to speak is barred, indefinitely, by shame and a sense of defilement. What is spectacular, and solicits compassion and indignation, is the arrival before the cameras and the NGOs, in the bounty hunters' boats, of young migrants, parched and dying of hunger. Violence against women stays invisible because women remain inaccessible: not by their own doing, nor by social or moral choice, but because these women are under the domination and the power of men who control their speech and their degree of visibility in the public space – the same men who can abuse or rape them. It is still and always [these men] who assume the privilege to speak about the adversities survived throughout the voyage; of *adversities in general*, applying to everyone without distinction, returning again and again to tropes repeated thousands of times before journalists…)

One large exception to this blindness toward gender-based violence toward women has been the work of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, the UN's agency for refugees worldwide. The UN defines gender-based violence as…

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violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. (UN Women 1992, General Recommendation No. 19, article 6),

corresponding to similar definitions by the World Health Organization (2012).[8]

Gender-based violence according to the UNHCR encompasses five forms: sexual violence, physical violence, emotional and psychological violence, harmful traditional practices, and socio-economic violence (UNHCR 1995: 17) and includes "physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs." (UN Women 1995: Section D, 113c) At the famous World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1995, these were further detailed to include "forced sterilization and forced abortion, coercive or forced contraceptive use, female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, women's human rights violations in situations of armed conflict particularly murder, systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy, and hostage taking." (UN Women 1995: Section D, 113–115) And while migrant smuggling and human trafficking are separate crimes, there is documented overlap between them; 70 % of trafficking victims are women and girls. (US Dept. of State 2015b; UNODC 2014) Economic exploitation was further added in 2003. (UNHCR 2003:45)

The UNHCR further recognizes that gender is a social construct, and does not conform to essentialist definitions. As stated in a 2003 publication:

In order to understand the nature of gender-related persecution, it is essential to define and distinguish between the terms 'gender' and 'sex'. Gender refers to the relationship between women and men based on socially or culturally constructed and defined identities, status, roles and responsibilities that are assigned to one sex or another, while sex is a biological determination. Gender is not static or innate but acquires socially and culturally constructed meaning over time. Gender-related

8 The World Health Organization (WHO) has also defined sexual violence as "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using force by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting," and intimate partner violence as "behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours" – both "mostly perpetrated by men against women." (WHO 2012). In the same report from the WHO, "population-level surveys based on reports from victims provide the most accurate estimates of the prevalence of intimate partner violence and sexual violence in non-conflict settings. The first report of the "WHO Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women" (2005) in 10 mainly low- and middle-income countries found that, among women aged 15–49: between 15 % of women in Japan and 71 % of women in Ethiopia reported physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime; between 0.3–11.5 % of women reported sexual violence by someone other than a partner since the age of 15 years; the first sexual experience for many women was reported as forced – 17 % of women in rural Tanzania, 24 % in rural Peru, and 30 % in rural Bangladesh reported that their first sexual experience was forced.

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claims may be brought by either women or men, although due to particular types of persecution they are more commonly brought by women. (UNHCR 2003:111)

UNHCR (1995, 2001, 2003, 2015b) has sponsored a number of conferences and publications since the mid-1990's specifically addressing gender violence against women (recently including transgender women – UNHCR 2015b), with a focus on documenting the prevalence of sexual assault, abuse, and domestic violence, and making policy recommendations at a meta- or general oversight level. It is questionable, however, given the prevailing lack of attention to these issues in both academic and popular consciousness, whether these recommendations have had much force for implementation even in UNHCR monitored camps and other sites. (Cf., Gebreiyosus 2014)

Feminist studies specifically investigating the condition of refugee women point to continued isolation, and lack of care and advocacy for women facing gender-based violence and trauma. Immigrant women are among the most vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and human rights violations. (National Network on Immigrant and Refugee Rights, 2000) Because they are caught at an intersection[9] of being immigrants, women, and often ethnic or religious minority status, immigrant women are vulnerable to triple discrimination and marginalization." (Berger 2013) Lesbian immigrants face additional hurdles of discrimination and lack of legal status. (NNIRR 2000:37)

In one study of Sri Lankan Tamil immigrants in Toronto, widespread domestic violence led to "several Tamil women who had jumped to their deaths from their apartment building" one winter, their isolation exacerbating "an already existing situation of powerlessness with no family here to intercede on [their] behalf." (Morrison et al. 1999:155) In a comparative study of Somalian and Filipino migrants in Italy, Chell-Robinson (2000) states:

Both groups of women, Somalian and Filipino, indicated that local government organizations, trade unions, and voluntary organizations, were little able to attend to or recognize the specific concerns of these women (issues such as domestic violence, pregnancy and hospitalization, counselling for the emotional distress caused by integration, and for Somalian women the issue of infibulation [usually caused by female genital mutilation]). (p. 117)

The UN has recognized "acts of sexual violence, family/domestic violence, coerced family planning, female genital mutilation, punishment for transgression of social mores, and discrimination against homosexuals" as "gender-based persecution" since 1951 in its Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and again its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. (UNHCR 2003: 110) This constitutes grounds for asylum according to the UN, although as the UN recognizes, such declarations by the UN do not

9 Note that the term "intersectionality" itself, now frequently used to describe many forms of multi-layered discrimination, was first coined in the context of describing domestic violence/gender-based violence against African-American women (Crenshaw 1991).

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have the force of law – again – the actual implementation of these resolutions is only a "guideline," frequently disregarded in individual countries where asylum is sought.

Furthermore, as noted in the UNHCR's *Guidelines for Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-based Violence*, "[g]ender based violence against female refugees can occur during all phases of the refugee cycle: *prior to flight, during flight, while in the country of asylum, [and] during repatriation and reintegration.*" (UNHCR 2003:19 – emphasis added; see also Morrison et al. 1999; Simons 1999) And it should be noted that these statistics and protocols refer only to refugees, and do not begin to address the sexual and domestic violence perpetrated against millions of women immigrants do not qualify for refugee status internationally (even though according to UN protocols they would be eligible) – these women *also* flee political, military, economic, and domestic and street violence in their countries of origin (including extreme poverty exacerbated by global climate change),[10] suffer further sexual violence and degradation en route to their hoped-for destinations, and find themselves at even greater risk than officially recognized refugees from coercion, threats, and continued trauma because of lack of legal recourse and fear of retaliation and deportation. (Boyd & Pikkov, 2008:36[11]) In a recently published study of women fleeing Central American countries, "*All women interviewed* fled their home countries because they could not find protection." (UNHCR 2015b:[41])

Trauma and Women Migrants

"Claudine saw a lot of stuff, I don't know if I can say some of them, but they were raping women and Claudine saw all of that and they did that to her and they killed even her uncle in her eyes. She saw a lot…But you know, sometimes when you already have a lot of shocks in your life, it's very difficult to go back, you know, to be really, really normal. And we try. We try, we try everything. And even (Claudine

10 As documented in personal interviews by the Rev. Dr. Michael Cooper-White and students from the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, PA, on a study trip in Honduras and Guatemala, January 2016.

11 "A harsh reality for undocumented immigrants is that they are vulnerable to deportation at any time for any infraction of the law. While this has grave implications for trafficked women, undocumented immigrant women who suffer physical abuse at the hands of their spouses are also vulnerable. In response to this susceptibility, battered women's advocates pressured the US Congress to create a provision in the 1994 Violence Against Women Act, or VAWA, which reserves green cards for undocumented immigrant women who have been physically abused (though the abuse must be suffered at the hands of a citizen or lawful permanent resident spouse), and allows them to petition for permanent residency without the knowledge or support of their husbands. By 2001 17,907 women had applied under the provision." (Boyd & Pikkov 2008:36)

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