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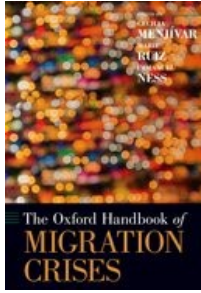
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CHAPTER

37 Gender and Social Exclusion in European Migration Crisis: A Sociohistorical Perspective

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Abstract

This chapter discusses social exclusion in European migration from a gendered and historical perspective. It discusses how from this perspective the idea of a crisis in migration was repeatedly constructed. Gender is used in this chapter in a dual way: attention is paid to differences between men and women in (refugee) migration, and to differences between men and women as advocates and claim makers for migrant rights. There is a dilemma—recognized mostly for recent decades—that on the one hand refugee women can be used to generate empathy, and thus support. On the other hand, emphasis on women as victims forces them into a victimhood role and leaves them without agency. This dilemma played itself out throughout the twentieth century. It led to saving the victims, but not to solving the problem. It fortified rather than weakened the idea of a crisis.

Keywords: [gender](#), [migrant women](#), [NGOs](#), [trafficking](#), [refugees](#)

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THIS chapter looks from a gender perspective at the question how structural forces repeatedly generated and constructed the idea of a refugee crisis in the past hundred years. Migration is as much part of life as are birth, death, and marriage. From that perspective migration is normal but the normality of migration is seldom emphasized. Sudden and sharp increases in the number of migrants—especially in the number of refugees—lead to the use of the term “refugee crisis,” which emphasizes instability and danger, and which leads to calls for changes in policies or support structures. Crises are constructed by the media, by policymakers, and by politicians and organizations. This chapter critically examines what a crisis is, how it is gendered, and how this concept is used in the field of migration research. The chapter takes a historical approach. Strategies and campaigns that were (successfully) developed and conducted in the past continue to determine current campaigns and social exclusions.

Gender is used in this chapter in a dual way. In the first place, there were both men and women among all migrant groups in the past hundred years, although percentages differed per group. The percentage of men among the Hungarian refugees of 1956, and the Tamil refugees in the 1980s, was 80, while the percentage of men among the Vietnamese refugees of the 1970s or the Yugoslavs of the 1990s was 50. The word “migrants” is used in this chapter for all categories of migrants including refugees, on which the “crisis literature” focuses. Secondly, there is a difference according to gender when it comes to claim makers. As will be illustrated in this chapter, women were important as claim makers and advocates of migrant rights. Frequently these activities were part of their emancipatory trajectory. In the 1920s and again after the 1970s nonmigrant women—mostly white, Christian, Western, and middle-class—came out in support of migrant women.

p. 660 This chapter starts with a comment about the reasons for having a chapter on gender, followed by a section on the problematization of migration in general, and a brief enumeration of the number of refugees in the twentieth century. It is followed by sections on changes in the problematization of (refugee) migrations over the course of the twentieth century.

Why Have a Chapter on Gender?

For several decades reviewers have protested against having a chapter on women or gender in a handbook because it is used as an excuse for ignoring gender in all other chapters (Schrover 2014). However, there is large literature on gender and migration, as well as a societal and political debate (Schrover and Moloney 2013), and that is reason to have a chapter on this subject, despite valid objections.

There are biases in the literature. Texts about gender and migration are frequently only about women, and not about differences between men and women. The literature on gender and migration is also mostly about family, trafficking, and prostitution, and much less about work and opportunities. Furthermore, there is an emphasis on victimhood. The victimhood discourse has successfully been used by organizations and advocates for acquiring rights for immigrant women. However, as a result all migrant women came to be seen as vulnerable and in need of protection. Discourses that use vulnerability and victimhood deny migrant women agency. Since the 1980s, authors have objected to the use of a victimhood discourse in issues concerning women, minorities, or minority women (MacLeod and Saraga 1988). According to Mohanty (1988) Western feminists eagerly bought into the construction of “third-world women” as “powerless,” “exploited,” and “sexually harassed.” “Third-world women” were as a category automatically defined as religious, and as family oriented. Their victimization played a role in the construction of a counter identity of “Western” women, who were everything the “third-world women” were not (Doezema 2001). Walaardt (2013) has shown that refugee men could also play the victimhood card successfully (and acquire rights based on that), but they did so while retaining a masculine hero image. Women were victims but seldom simultaneously heroes. The “success” of the victimhood discourse for migrant women is not only explained by the fact that it fitted key (Western) ideas about femininity. It was also used to give a humanitarian face to restrictive immigration policies (Schrover 2009). The emphasis on victimhood was and is instrumental for the problematization of migration and for enhancing the idea of crisis.

Problematization of Migration

p. 661 The process of problematization and the creation of a crisis are gendered. How organizations, politicians, and journalists pay attention to men and women differs; migrant men are portrayed as causing problems, and migrant women as having them (Roggeband and Verloo 2007), or men are portrayed as a risk (to the labor market, or security) and women as *at risk* (of being trafficked, ending up in prostitution, forced marriages, situations of domestic violence, or becoming the victim of honor killings) (Schrover 2009, 2010).

This section briefly outlines how the process of problematization works in theory and practice (see also Schrover and Schinkel 2013). Problematization is the process in which actors (such as academics, politicians, journalists, and lawyers) analyze a situation, define it as a problem, expand it by attaching issues to it or by exaggerating the number of people or the cost involved, and finally suggest a solution (Foucault 1991). First, the “problem” has to be defined as new: if it is not new it is not news, and there is no need for worries, new policies and new research. Mockery, ridicule, and appeal to common sense are frequently used to stress that “of course” today’s problems cannot be compared to those of the past. Secondly, the ownership of the “problem” is relevant: if it is “our” problem, “we” have to offer a solution. Thirdly, the “problem” has to be legitimized. Politicians justify (controversial) policies by pointing out that their actions were legal and benefiting “the people.” They stress the normality of policies, and the abnormality of circumstances as well as the seriousness or the “threat” (Martin Rojo and Van Dijk 1997; Walaardt 2013). Fourthly, via “tactical linkage,” issues regarding migration are connected to issues like social cohesion, safety, criminality, or terrorism (Rhodes 1997). The “problem” is expanded by making use of the numbers game; the exaggeration of the number of people involved or the costs (Schrover 2009, 2010). In the fifth place, there is the sensationalization and personification of the “problem.” In the case of personification one person is singled out to illustrate a certain issue. Personification makes use of detailed stories, full of grueling elements (Schrover 2009; 2010). Personification is used to make claims on behalf of a larger group, but without making that too explicit in order to avoid fueling the argument that a precedent will be created. Lastly, problematization works via the use of metaphors, which suggest causes and consequences without naming them. The water metaphor is favored in the migration discourse. Dams have to be thrown up against the rising tide, the streams and floods which swamp the country and undermine the dykes that keep out the infinite ocean (O’Brien 2003). Water metaphors are popular because, by nature, water is difficult to stop. Through this metaphor, lack of control over movement is equated with lack of control over change (Charteris-Black 2006).

When it comes to problematization in the case of gender, and thus the creation of an idea of crisis, personification is a favoured strategy of claim makers, and scholars tend to reproduce this strategy: the personal story of a woman or a child is put center stage. Stories used for this problematization focus on the issue of trafficking, and therefore it is useful to say a bit more about this issue (Agustin 2005). The result is that the subject of trafficking is *over-studied* (Anderson and O’Connell Davidson 2006; Andrijasevic 2004; Biemann 2002; Chapkis 2003; El-Cherkeh et al. 2004; Gould 2010; Leppänen 2007; Macklin 2003; O’Connell Davidson 2006; Salt and Stein 1997; Schaeffer-Grabel 2010; Soderlund 2005).

p. 662 The literature on trafficking shows continuity over time. Around 1900, the figurehead victim of trafficking was called Maria (emphasizing virginity), currently the stereotypical victim is called Natasha (suggesting an almost European origin), and trafficking is called the Natasha trade (Hughes 2001). Stories about trafficked victims include personal stories and heartbreaking details about the lives of the women, who are mostly referred to as girls, even when they are well beyond the age of girlhood. Personification is effective for drawing attention to a problem, but has the disadvantage that it results in attempts to save the victim, rather than to solve the problems.

Debates about trafficking in women were extensive in the 1920s and 1930s, precisely at the moment when many states moved towards more restrictive immigrant regimes. After the 1970s, and at the onset of a new restrictive era, debates about trafficking were rekindled. The new debates were very similar to those from the beginning of the twentieth century, but few cross-references were made, so as not to lose the emphasis on the newness of the problem. Older stereotypes, which were also influenced by the othering and exoticization used in the colonial context, were recombined with newer ones.

Some scholars have taken a critical stance towards the profusion of scholarship about trafficking, which is part of what Agustin (2007) calls “a rescue industry.” Authors have pointed out that claims about the number of trafficked women are based on poor and inadequate research, that all migrant women are seen as trafficking victims, and that heartbreaking stories are used to mobilize support for control and restrictions on the mobility of women (Brennan 2008; Brysk 2011; Deane 2010; Fehér 2000; Kapur 2005; Oude Breuil et al. 2011; Weitzer 2010; Wooditch, DuPont-Morales and Hummer 2009).

Trafficking is used to expand the problem and is linked to slavery, human organ harvesting, forced marriages, child abduction, prostitution, and female genital cutting. Already in the 1920s and 1930s trafficking in humans was linked to trafficking in arms and drugs. From the 1990s onwards it was increasingly linked to illegal migration, and later to terrorism. In a 2003 speech US president Bush effortlessly moved from the “War on Terrorism” to the “War Against Trafficking” (Soderlund 2005).

Scholars have repeatedly pointed out that the stories about trafficking are overdramatized. They pointed out that numbers are overestimated and that part of this group of women were prostitutes before they migrated, or they knew they were going to work as prostitutes (Agustin 2007; Bovenkerk et al. 2006; De Vries 2005; Soderlund 2005). These revelations hardly had an effect on the discourse, or on the number of publications about trafficking. Authors who try to counter the overdramatized stories and try to present a more balanced picture are accused of not caring for girls. Overall, what is important for this chapter is that the trafficking discourse involving innocent victims, violated borders, and criminality is part of problematizing migration and feeds into the idea of a migration crisis (Berman 2003).

Number of People on the Move and the Feminization of Migration

The idea of a migration crisis was—of course—also influenced by increases in the number of refugees. In the twentieth century, there were several moments when the number of refugees increased and in all of these periods organizations, politicians and journalists pushed for change and support.

The First World War caused the displacement of twenty million people in Europe. At the outbreak of the war, one million Belgians fled to the Netherlands (which at that time had a population of 6.3 million) while 250,000 Belgians fled to England, with 16,000 of them leaving in rickety boats from Ostend to Folkestone on one single day. These migrations led to panics among the authorities, and also to large-scale societal support.

After the Russian Revolution, 1 to 1.5 million people fled West, while 50,000 Russians fled East. Two million Armenians fled West and South from Turkey, of whom 25,000 eventually got into the United States despite the policy of restrictionism. During the Spanish Civil War, half a million people fled to France, Belgium, the UK, the Soviet Union, and Morocco. After the Nazi takeover about 37,000 German Jews (of the 523,000 Jews living in Germany at the time) fled to neighboring countries, while smaller numbers of German Jews continued to leave after 1933. In 1938, 225,000 German Jews sought to flee, but hardly any country was willing to take them. In the immediate post-Second World War period, there were in Europe 11 million refugees and Displaced Persons (DPs) and 12 million expellees (ethnic Germans) in camps in Europe. In 1956, 225,000 people fled from Hungary after the Hungarian Revolt. In the 1970s, two million people fled

Vietnam, and they were partly resettled in European countries and the United States, after a conference in Geneva decided on distribution across countries. The disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s led to the displacement of four million people. Currently there are about 1.2 million refugees from Syria in Europe. Increases in numbers led to debates about crisis.

The idea that there is a migration crisis, however, need not be the result of a (sudden) increase in the number of refugees. The idea also occurred when it was feared that the number of refugees might increase. This for instance happened shortly before the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Western states expected that seven million people would flee from the crumbling state, mostly to the United States (Rosenberg 2002). The twenty-four member states of the Council of Europe gathered in Vienna to develop a joint strategy to receive these refugees. The United States planned to create a Survivors of Totalitarianism Resettlement Fund in order to help them. Attempts were made to control the crisis and regulate this migration, but in the end, no crisis materialized.

p. 664 The idea of crisis was mostly linked to refugee migration. However, the arrival of large numbers of migrants from the (former) colonies of France (Vietnam and Algeria for instance); the UK (India, Pakistan, Uganda); the Netherlands (Indonesia, Surinam); Portugal (Angola, Mozambique); and to a lesser extent Belgium (Congo, Burundi), during and after the process of decolonization, also led to feelings of crisis, and calls for support and policy change. In the 1970s, after the end of the guest worker regime, the arrival in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands of large numbers of family migrants, in a similar manner led to debates about crisis and the need for policy changes.

Debates about numbers are gendered. The idea of a crisis is created or enlarged by emphasizing that especially the number or the percentage of women on the move has increased in recent years. Migration researchers and policymakers endlessly repeat the claim that a feminization of migration has occurred (Schrover 2013a). Authors generally offer no proof for this, and only observe that women today form 50 percent of the migrants. After that, they move on to issues such as migrant women's health hazards, the problems of careworkers, domestic servants, mail order brides, prostitution, trafficking and illegal migration (Biemann 2002; Sassen 2003). The alleged feminization of migration is assumed to create problems (Dannecker 2005; Labadie-Jackson 2008; Lepp 2002; Ryan 2002). The emphasis on the feminization of migration is used to problematize the migration of women, and create an idea of crisis.

In reality there is not so much a feminization of migration but rather a feminization of the literature on migration. Since the 1980s the number of publications on gender and migration, or women and migration, has sharply increased. Migrant women have become more visible in debates, and in the literature. The debate about migration clearly has feminized (Schrover 2013a). Since the 1970s, organizations acting on behalf of migrant women have used highly personalized cases to fight for immigrant rights via media campaigns (Schrover 2009). In an attempt to gain (legal) equality, differences between migrant men and women were stressed. In asylum cases, for example, rape, female circumcision, honor killings, domestic violence, coercive family planning, forced marriages, or repressive social norms have been introduced and recognized as new—women-specific—grounds for asylum. The drafters of the 1951 Refugee Convention conceived of flight motives as political, public, and collective. They did not conceive of women applying for refugee status (Oxford 2005; Spijkerboer 2000). In recent decades, there has been (what can be called) a women-specific enlargement of refugee grounds. It strengthened the idea of crisis.

For Women, By Women

p. 665 The attention to women on the move has increased but it is by no means new. At the end of the nineteenth century the number of voluntary organizations sharply increased. People felt they could change societies, and organized to save women and children, redeem prostitutes, protect animals, abolish slavery, eradicate alcoholism, and convert the heathens (Davies 2013; Epp 1998). People wanted to protect morale, tradition, and Christian values, and to fight decadence or modernism. Because of increases in wealth, women and men had more time, energy, and money to spare than before, and they spent it on changing and saving the world. From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, migration was a key issue on which organizations focused: they wanted to increase and regulate migrations, stop and frustrate the movement of undesirable migrants (including prostitutes and paupers), or help protect people on route. Progressive (immigrant supporting) and regressive (restricting migration) organizations were both active. Women especially started to play an important role in these voluntary organizations. At the end of the nineteenth century, European and American women, labeled “maternal imperialists” (Ramusack 1990), traveled to the colonies with—among other motives—the drive to civilize children and save them from their parents, from forced marriages and slavery, and for Christianity. This was very much an emancipatory trajectory for Western, Christian women.

Organizations fighting trafficking were highly visible in the beginning of the twentieth century and its leaders were largely white, Christian, and middle-class. In the extensive campaigns at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was an emphasis on youth, innocence, whiteness, corruption, and foreignness. Numerous conferences were held on the subject of trafficking and campaigners travelled extensively between countries. Organizations in the first decades of the twentieth century used the new medium of motion pictures to create public interest. The number of newspaper articles in this period about trafficking was stunning: thousands of articles were published yearly (Schrover 2015). The issue enabled organizations to gain high visibility and make strong moral claims. Saving women was a cause to which many people could subscribe. Between 1902 and 1919 several conventions were concluded (Lehti and Aromaa 2006). Success was largely symbolic, but the large number of conferences and gatherings on the issue of trafficking did provide opportunities for the development and exchange of strategies among organizations.

p. 666 Ideas about strategies spilled over into the campaigns for the Armenian refugees in 1915–1917, which were like those against trafficking largely driven by women (Western, white, Christian women, to be more precise). The American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief (ACASR) (later known as the American Committee for Relief in the Near East [ACRNE], Near East Relief [NER], and Near East Foundation [NEF]) was an active organization, led by Mabel Elliot, Mabelle Phillips and Annie T. Allen. They were middle-class, middle-aged, white, Christian women, and also in this case their activities were very much part of their emancipatory agenda. Campaigns were about saving Christian women from Muslim men. NEF ran a highly successful and innovative campaign and created awareness for the Armenian cause on an unprecedented scale. It managed to successfully resettle 25,000 Armenian refugees (most of them women) in the United States at the heyday of restrictionism (Schacher 2013). Anti-immigrant sentiments in the United States were anti-Semitic, anti-Islamic, anti-Asian, and anticommunist (expressing the fear that there might be communists among the people fleeing Russian Revolution). The NEF’s forerunner successfully used the media, photographs, motion pictures, posters, and celebrity claim makers. Women were put central stage as victims. The campaign, its leaders, and its results are important because the NEF is one of the oldest NGOs (Nongovernmental Organizations) currently working for refugees which has now partners in forty countries. The Armenian campaign was the world’s first large-scale, modern humanitarian project. It set the stage for strategies and models that were followed in later campaigns.

In the 1920s there were also campaigns—again largely run by organizations in which women played a prominent role—for the 250,000 Russian refugees who arrived in China and from there moved to the

European colonies in Asia. Organizations feared that the Russian refugees, and especially the few hundred women among them who were believed to work as prostitutes, would undermine colonial hierarchy by giving colonized men access to white women (Richard 2012). In the years before the refugees' arrival, Aletta Jacobs, a Dutch women's rights activist, and Carrie Chapman Catt, an American suffragette, traveled for sixteen months through South Africa, the Middle East, Ceylon, India, the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, Hong Kong, China, and Japan (Bosch 1999). Catt was the founder of the *International Woman Suffrage Alliance* (founded in 1904). This organization later had strong ties with the League of Nations. Everywhere they went, Jacobs and Catt gave lectures about women's rights and the right to vote. Jacobs and Catt were famous at the time, and newspapers published extensively about their trip announcing their arrival in several countries, while local women's organizations and authorities did their best to provide a warm welcome. Catt and Jacobs campaigned for women's rights, and at the same time constructed strong images of the colonized other as submissive, repressed, indolent, passive, and childlike: everything Western women claimed they were not. These stereotypes influenced a crisis discourse for decades afterwards. In the 1920s, UILFC (International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues) and other important Western women's organizations gathered extensive information on what they called "marriage customs and abuses" in the "South Pacific, Africa, and Asia and the Islamic world" and other "ancestral, male-dominated societies." It bought into the stereotypes created by Jacobs and Catt and fed into later campaigns.

Women's organizations also very actively campaigned against the position of *mui tsai* in China (Pedersen 2001). *Mui tsai* were girls, who were 5 to 14 years old, who were transferred from their parents' household to another household, where they worked as domestic servants until a suitable marriage was arranged for them, or they became a concubine at age 20 (Paddle 2003). Local authorities called it adoption, while Western authorities called it slavery and emphasized that since Britain was a nation of Christian civilization it should not tolerate this "evil" (Ko 2008). The *mui tsai* system became a cause célèbre for the inter-war European feminists. In 1921, organizations addressed the issue of the "child slaves" of Hong Kong with a large British media campaign (Poon 2000). The *mui tsai* issue was also taken up by eugenic organizations—led by women such as Cora Hodson—which linked it to racial mixing, prostitution, and the creation of a Eurasian population, which they considered as a threat to colonialism (Chung 2010).

p. 667 As has been said previously, there were contacts between organizations and strategies were copied from one organization onto the other. This applies also to Save the Children, which sprang from the British antiwar movement (Mahood and Satzewich 2009). Save the Children copied strategies but was also highly innovative. Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton started the Save the Children's predecessor, the Fight the Famine (in Russia) Council, which had good contacts with the International Women's Association for Peace and Freedom. In 1919, Jebb was arrested in England for distributing pictures of starving Soviet children (Sasson 2016). The pictures, and thus the campaign, was considered to be too shocking. After the First World War, the Council became the Save the Children Fund. It continued its striking campaigns, with page-long advertisements with pictures in newspapers. In 1921, Save the Children and the Red Cross tried to coordinate emergency famine relief in the Soviet Union. Opponents—including Russian émigré organizations—claimed they were feeding the children who would kill "us" in twenty-five years. Despite this opposition, Save the Children succeeded and claimed to have saved 250,000 children from starvation. It raised over a million pounds within a year, branched out to other countries, and gained support from Pope Benedict XV and the Red Cross. In 1921, the League of Nations called Save the Children its pioneer (Nehlin 2009).

As said, in the 1920s and 1930s models were developed regarding gendered migration issues which would be used for decades to come. After 1945, organizations—originally called voluntary organizations—were increasingly referred to as NGOs. Societal changes such as secularization, emancipation, and technological change in travel and communication affected the role of NGOs and strengthened their position (Davies 2013; Epp 1998;). During the Cold War escape from behind the Iron Curtain was difficult, and often spectacular.

Refugees—frequently labeled escapees—tunneled their way from East to West Berlin, swam across the Danube river, hid in the cold storage compartments of trains, or used a glider driven by a Trabant engine to get to the West. Escapees were few, they were portrayed as heroes, and they were mostly men. When women escaped, they were believed to join husbands or accompany boyfriends. They were seen as apolitical, and as moving for love or to join family members. They were not seen as refugees (Walaardt 2013).

Beginning in the 1960s, in several countries including the UK, Sweden, Germany, and the Netherlands multiculturalism emerged as an ideology and a policy for managing the cultural diversity that resulted from migration (Bhabha 2009). The multiculturalist policies “allowed” immigrants to be different from the rest of the population, and encouraged them to hold on to their language and culture (Moller Okin 1999; Schrover 2010). Part of the policy was subsidy for immigrant organizations that bought into these ideas. The policy created, stressed, and maintained differences between immigrant men and women because it reproduced stereotypical ideas about the roles of men and women in countries of origin. All migrant women were seen as wives and mothers. In the 1980s, the economic crisis led to severe cutbacks on subsidies for immigrant organizations (Schrover 2013b). When subsidies were reduced, the organizations focused on immigrant women rather than on immigrant men, and magnified differences between men and women (Schrover 2010). When the idea of the temporariness of the guest worker migration was dropped, discourse shifted to religion and especially the assumed oppression of women within Islam. Women’s issues—such as the wearing of headscarves—took center stage in debates on integration (Rottmann and Marx Ferree 2008).

The role of women in NGOs campaigning for refugee or other migrant rights was reinforced in the 1970s, when the possibilities for labor migration in Europe were reduced at the end of the guest worker migration regime. Since guest worker migration had largely been a migration of men (80 percent of the guest worker migrants were men), the family reunification migration that followed was largely one of women. When men migrated within the framework of marriage their migration was seen as a cover for labor migration, especially when the migrating partner was a non-Western man. In response, countries such as Denmark, Germany, Austria, France, the Netherlands, and the UK introduced age bars (with minimum ages of 18 to 24), dependent resident status, housing and income requirements, and tests to be taken before migration (Bonjour and Block 2013; Grillo 2008). Dependent resident status means partners cannot divorce until a waiting period lapses (one to four years). If they do, the dependent partner must return to the country of origin. From the 1970s onwards, the issue of dependent resident status led to large-scale campaigns (Schrover 2010). As a result, Germany, the UK, and Norway introduced so-called hardship rules, or domestic violence and abuse clauses: migrant women should not be forced to bear inhumane treatment in order to avoid losing their legal status. These campaigns were important because they very much strengthened the victimhood discourse. Organizations of migrant women for this reason protested against activities by organizations for migrant women, but this had little effect.

The end of the Cold War freed the agenda for “women’s issues” (Joachim 2003). Attention shifted away from the male hero, and refugees came from more and different countries than before. The end of the Cold War meant that it was less clear who was “good” and who was “bad.” The Cold War refugees had been seen as proving communism wrong and capitalism right, by their flight from the “workers’ paradise.” After the Cold War, refugee issues could no longer be used to claim the superiority of capitalism over communism. There was no longer a simple distinction between friend or foe. A new dichotomy had to be found.

In the 1960s and 1970s, NGOs gained high visibility with their campaigns for refugees from Biafra (Nigeria) and Vietnam. During the Biafran War, NGOs distributed images of starving children on a very large scale. In 1971, a group of French doctors founded *Médecins Sans Frontières* after experiencing at firsthand the suffering in Biafra. The Biafran crisis also made older NGOs, like Oxfam (est. 1942), Save the Children, and Caritas (est. 1897) more visible than ever before. They were also criticized more for failing to help. NGOs explicitly moved their attention away from political causes, and this made it possible for them to take on the

role of crucial mediators. NGOs claimed that states were unable to solve problems, while they as neutral organizations could. Famines and refugee migration in and from Ethiopia and Sudan led to the creation of the international Muslim NGO IIRSA (International Islamic Relief Organization of Saudi Arabia, est. 1979), as well as of Islamic Relief (est. 1984), and Muslim Aid (est. 1985) both based in the UK. Their creation was partly a response to the Band Aid (1984) and Live Aid (1985) campaigns, with their celebrity claim makers. The Islamic organizations called them patronizing and neocolonial. Muslim Aid became one of the largest Muslim NGOs in the world.

Overall, attention for Islam increased. In recent years, oppression of women within Islam emerged as a major issue in several countries. Older orientalist ideas were integrated into a perspective in which European women served as the standard against which women from elsewhere were measured (Lutz 1997). Muslim women are currently viewed in North-Western European countries as the prototype of immigrant women. They are perceived as exploited victims, handicapped by their cultures of origin. Islam and Western values are presented as incompatible and static (Molokotos Liederman 2000). Debates are characterized by gross overestimates of the number of women wearing headscarves, or other forms of veiling. This discourse—to which both Western feminists and right-wing politicians contribute—uses stereotypes about non-Western women as religious, family-oriented, traditional, and backward (Mohanty 1988; Rosenberger and Sauer 2012).

The debate on family migration increasingly intertwined with debates about Islam. Muslim-Christian marriages had already been problematized in colonial contexts, and their stereotypical portrayal as problematic spilled over into the postcolonial contexts. Debates were about polygamy, child abductions by migrant fathers from Muslim majority countries, divorces not being recognized under Islamic Law, and about so-called sharia courts (De Hart 2001). Campaigns were partly conducted by women's NGOs, in which—as before—white Christian middle-class women dominated, while the cases they campaigned for mostly related to lower-class Muslim women (Schrover 2013b). Regressive organizations and populist and right-wing political parties increasingly became the advocates of women's rights as well as of gay rights, and both were made part of their anti-Islamic rhetoric (Korteweg and Yurdakul 2008; Lettinga 2011).

In the 1990s, refugee migration became more difficult. Authorities tried to penalize carriers (ships, airplanes) for bringing people into countries where they wanted to apply for refugee status. Frontex—the joint EU border authority—put up signs in Mauretania to stop people from leaving and applying for refugee status in Western countries. Frontex border control operations partly had the same effect: they reduced the chances of people reaching countries where they could apply for refugee status. Other buffers were also created. In 2008, the Italian Berlusconi government paid the Libyan Khadafi regime five billion dollars to detain people and stop them from crossing the Mediterranean. Protests against the attempts to curtail migrations emphasized the risks women encountered. International NGOs, in response to restrictionism, tried to get more rights for refugee women. In 1984, the European Parliament passed a resolution, recognizing that women are sometimes persecuted for breaking the social or cultural norms assigned to their gender. For the UNHCR this was reason to also put gender persecution on its agenda. Awareness grew that not only armed resistance was reason to flee, but that rape should also be seen as a form of torture and persecution frequently inflicted on women for political, religious, and ethnic reasons. The UNHCR said that women and girls among the refugees had special needs, although it was never clear what these needs were. Women and children were said to form 75 percent of the world's refugees. By grouping women with children, the numbers were increased, and thus the size and the urgency of the problem. It however also put women in the same role as children: in need of support but without power. Several authors have argued that this portrayal of refugee women downplays—as was true in earlier decades—their agency, while constructing the refugee-receiving states as morally superior to refugee-producing states (Baines 2000). Organizations succeeded in getting issues on the agenda, but with little results in practice, as had been the case in the 1920s (Baines 2000). Authorities and organizations tried to stop people from leaving by investing

much more than before in humanitarian projects in the countries of origins. The UNHCR became more involved than before in providing development relief: bringing safety to people, instead of people to safety. UN peacekeeping operations sought to stop people moving across borders and becoming refugees. Several NGOs allocated a key role to women in this peacekeeping process. In practice, this meant the reconstruction of communities, via the reconstruction of households, through which key ideas about (mostly Western-style) civil society were to be transmitted. Women and girls who had fled, were made part of new—often fictive—families, in the hope that these would provide shelter and protection, as well as the basis for stability and reconstruction. Men and boys were, however, moved from camps near the areas of conflicts to destinations further away. As “freedom fighters” they were perceived to be in need of a different kind of protection from the women and girls. Men more easily got refugee status than women, as had been the case during the Cold War (Jackson 2010).

Gender mainstreaming became a key phrase at the end of the twentieth century. Larger NGOs, mostly Western and Christian in origin, put gender issues on the international agenda. Trafficking is again one of these issues. European countries aspiring to EU membership had to develop policies regarding trafficking and established NGOs came out in support. They determined to a large extent how these policies were shaped and how the discourse was constructed. Large and established organizations pushed out the initiatives of grass-roots organizations. Since 2000, the new EU Member States have become the special concern of NGOs fighting trafficking (Anderson and O’Connell Andrijasevic 2004; Agustin 2005; Davidson 2006). Prostitution was taboo in communist countries, and it was seen as part of Western decadency. As a result, there was no strong NGO interest in fighting trafficking before the EU borders moved eastwards. Currently, the Czech Republic is named by organizations as a transit and destination country for women trafficked from Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, China, and Vietnam. Organizations such as La Strada (est. 1995) help new and potential EU Member States to bring their policies in line with EU guidelines. By doing so they exercise a strong influence, and voice old stereotypes. In 2002, a European Conference on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings took place in the European Parliament with the cooperation of the IOM (International Organization for Migration), the European Commission, the EU Parliament, and EU Member States (Goodey 2008). It brought together more than one thousand representatives of Member States, EU-candidate countries, developing countries, and numerous organizations (Laczko 2005). The new Member States became a key target for NGOs, and these countries were under the obligation to have a gendered policy, which the NGOs were happy to provide.

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Conclusion

This chapter has shown how and why gender played a role in social exclusion in what was commonly referred to as the European migration crises. It has shown how migrant women were continuously over the past hundred years constructed to be at risk and in need of protection. The stereotypes and discourses that were used, and problematization of the migration of women, were different from those of men. Of course migrant men were also portrayed as in need of support, but women (with children) were allocated a key role as victims. It gave urgency to the issue, and created empathy. It also created the idea that women were to be saved from their “own” patriarchal culture and oppressive religion. A sharp contrast was created between the culture of the West and that of the Rest. Women as claim makers played an important role in this construction, and thus in the construction of the idea of migration crisis. The outcome of the campaigns was that the victim was saved, but the problem was seldom solved, despite the large number of conferences, treaties, and letters of intent. The problematization strategies played a role in creating the idea of crisis, empathy and the need for support, but it did not offer a solution beyond the symbolic level.

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