

# GENDER, REFUGEES AND SECURITY

International conference on gendered conditions  
for refugees during and after refuge

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Gender and Development in Practice



## GENDER, REFUGEES AND SECURITY

International conference on gendered conditions for refugees during and after refuge, October 21-22, 2016.

Sponsored by the City of Gothenburg and Gothenburg University. Organized by GADIP – Gender and Development in Practice.

Approximately 70 participants, from academia and various non-governmental organizations.

Organizers: Ulla Björnberg, Edmé Dominguez, Nina Jonnerhag, Birgitta Jordansson and Carina Larusson on behalf of GADIP; Gender and Development in Practice.

This report has been written by Maria Gelotte, revised by Nema Vinkeloe Uuskyla and edited by Ulla Björnberg, Edmé Dominguez and Carina Larusson.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

**ABF Trollhättan** - Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund Trollhättan

**CSCE** – The Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe

**GADIP** – Gender and Development in Practice

**GUE/NGL** - Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left

**IKFF** – Internationella Kvinnoförbundet för Fred och Frihet. The Swedish section of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, WILPF

**Kvinnor för Fred** [Women for Peace]

**MERGU**: Migration and Ethnicity Research Gothenburg University

**SCPR** – The Syrian Center for Policy Research

**Tillsammans** [Together]

**Trama di Terre** [Weave of Lands]

**UNFPA** –United Nations Population Fund

**UNHCR** – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**WRC** – Women's Refugee Commission

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**Leif Andersson:** *Which are the trends of men's and women's patterns of migration?*  
The Swedish Migration Agency.

**Giulia D'Odorico:** *In search of liberty through self-determination: women in need of international protection and violence against women in the contemporary context of globalized migrations.*  
Association Trama di Terre, Italy.

**Malin Björk:** *How do the migration of men and women affect the policy of the European Union?*  
Member of the European Parliament.

**Georgios Karyotis:** *Securitization in refugee policy.*  
Senior Lecturer in International Relations, Glasgow University, UK.

**Ingela Mårtensson:** *Feminist Security Policy in theory and Practice.*  
Kvinnor för fred, Sweden.

**Sofia Nyström:** *Gender and migration: The Syrian war and the situation of refugee women.*  
IKFF, Sweden.

**Alexandra Bousiou:** *Does securitization of the EU Asylum affects gender balance in the flows?*  
PhD student, Global studies, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

**Andrea Spehar:** *Integration of refugee women. What is the problem?* Associate Professor, Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

**Fataneh Farahani:** *Cartographies of Hospitality: diverse and shifting conditions of hosting.*  
Associate Professor in Ethnology, Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender Studies, Stockholm University, Sweden.

## WORKSHOPS

**Tillsammans:** *Integration – a concept that we need to let go?*

**ABF Trollhättan:** *About a meeting place for women.*

**IKFF:** *War and refugees.*

**UN Women Gothenburg:** *UN Women.*

## WELCOME ADDRESSES

Welcome speeches were held by **Carina Larusson**, GADIP, **Oksana Shmulyar**, MERGU, and **Helena Lindholm**, vice chancellor at the University of Gothenburg. Helena Lindholm underlined the importance of the conference theme for the University and for society in general. She considered the event as part of Gothenburg University's efforts to assign importance to migration and gender themes within research and teaching.

## INTRODUCTION

**Ulla Björnberg**, professor emerita at the Department of Sociology and Work Science, University of Gothenburg, introduced the conference's three main themes: migration and risks; risks and security; and women and security.

The EU was established in order to achieve international security and stimulate the economy through the mobility of capital, labor force and goods; however, Björnberg argued, free mobility, particularly the mobility of people, is still perceived as a threat by some. This threat derives from the fear of losing jobs to arriving migrants and an increased number of poor citizens provoking the erosion of the state's social security spending, as well as feelings of insecurity. This, Björnberg claimed, generates incentives for increased and strengthened protection.

The mainstream discourse regarding securitization within the EU is primarily concerned with how to protect Europe from terror and how to establish secure societies, Björnberg argued. This has resulted in measures such as restricting economic migrants' mobility and denying political refugees admittance into the EU. Björnberg highlighted the gender imbalance of migration visible today, where male migrants considerably outnumber female migrants. This gender imbalance has societal consequences and, as argued by some, might imply numerous risks. Another consequence of the EU's restrictive position is that male migrants attempt the hazardous journey to Europe first, in order to arrange passage for their families later. This however places women

and children in a precarious situation, since they are subject to much higher risks and dangers while travelling alone than men. This is why it is important, Björnberg argued, to focus on female refugees and analyse how risks and security affect women.

The various approaches on how to establish security have impacts for both women and men. It is the aim of the conference to address these impacts as well as highlight the cause and effects of different security strategies, Björnberg stated. She further noted that security for one part might imply insecurity for another.

Having introduced the main themes, Björnberg gave an overview of the conference programme and highlighted the conference's focus on female migration, how migration patterns affect European migration policies, gender and security, and discussions on securitization from more theoretical perspectives.

Ulla Björnberg emphasized the purpose of the conference was to bring together academics and civil society organizations, in the hope that the discussions – both in seminars and workshops, but also through informal exchanges during the joint dinner and coffee breaks – will lead to reflections, actions and knowledge production.





## REFUGEES IN SWEDEN AND IN EUROPE: GENERAL TRENDS

### WHICH ARE THE TRENDS OF MEN'S AND WOMEN'S PATTERNS OF MIGRATION?

*Leif Andersson*

The first plenary lecture of the conference, titled 'Which are the trends of men's and women's patterns of migration?', was held by **Leif Andersson**, head of one of the asylum examination units of the Swedish Migration Agency in Gothenburg.

He explained that the Migration Agency's main mission is to ensure Sweden pursues regulated immigration, in accordance with the Swedish Alien Act, and to ensure the implementation of sustainable migration policies that protect the right to seek asylum. The UN Refugee Convention serves as a starting point for the Migration Agency and thus informs the Agency's assessment of asylum seekers' need for protection as well as its decision-making processes. The framework of regulated immigration, Andersson claimed, aims to facilitate movement across borders, promoting a demand-controlled labor migration, while simultaneously taking into account the effects migration has on development.

Andersson presented statistics on the distribution of gender among migrants who were granted residence permits in Sweden in 2015, revealing a majority of men in most groups. Of the total number of 36,645 migrants granted asylum in 2015, men constituted 64%, and 65% of residence permits granted to work-related migrants were given to men. Of the migrants granted residence permit in Sweden due to studies or research, 47% were female and 53% male. Only in one category, namely family-related migration, did women represent the majority by constituting 59%. Among the 35,000 minors who applied for asylum in Sweden in 2015, 90% were male.

Andersson's presentation illustrated the number of asylum seekers in Sweden has escalated dramatically during the past years; increasing from 29,648 applicants in 2011 to 162,872 in 2015. In late 2015, the tightening of migration legislation and strengthened border controls made it more difficult for migrants to come to Sweden, which in turn

generated a drastic decline in asylum applications. Subsequently, the Migration Agency estimates there will be approximately 28,000 asylum applications in Sweden in 2016.

Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Turkey (in this order) comprise the most common countries of origin for asylum seekers in Sweden, according to statistics presented by Andersson. Stateless persons, predominantly from Palestine, constitute the fifth largest group. Whereas the division of men and women among stateless applicants and applicants from Syria was rather even, applications from other countries of origin displayed significant gender imbalances. Of all applicants from Afghanistan, a mere 32% were female; and the proportion of female applicants from Turkey was 33%. Forty percent (40%) of asylum seekers from Iraq were women. The high proportion of women fleeing from Syria might be explained by the disastrous situation in the country, which, according to Andersson, compels women and children to ignore the traditional migration patterns where men migrate first, and instead directly attempt the precarious project of migration themselves.

There is a distinction, Andersson argued, between refugees and those in need of protection. A refugee, according to the UN Refugee Convention, is someone with sound reasons to fear persecution due to ethnicity, nationality, religious or political beliefs, gender, sexual orientation or belonging to a particular social group. In need of protection are those who have reason to fear death penalty and torture; are in need of protection due to war or conflict in their country of origin; or who cannot stay in the country due to environmental disaster. This group is ascribed a lower level of priority, however still have the right to seek protection.

Andersson concluded his presentation by stating the migration crisis is not over, although its effects may not be as visible in Europe compared to the previous year. Situations in refugees' countries of origin continue to escalate and ultimately force people to seek refuge. This makes it exceedingly difficult to predict the effects of political decisions aimed at restricting the number of people coming to Europe, as well as the number of refugees seeking protection in the future.

## IN SEARCH OF LIBERTY THROUGH SELF-DETERMINATION: WOMEN IN NEED OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZED MIGRATIONS

*Giulia D'Odorico*

**Giulia D'Odorico**, on behalf of the association Trama di Terra in Italy, held the presentation 'In search of liberty through self-determination: women in need of international protection and violence against women in the contemporary context of globalized migrations', in which she gave an account of the association's work with refugees arriving in Italy after crossing the Mediterranean.

The feminist association was created 1997 in Bologna and provides help and support to women in order to attain its main objective of asserting women's rights and generating political measures addressing the concerns of women. Most of the association's founders and members are of migrant origin. The association, D'Odorico argued, actively works with developing and promoting gender-sensitive reception measures and tools in order to secure the specific needs of women and girls in a refugee context.

Trama di Terre provides an array of advice and support services, such as an anti-violence centre, a safe house, a housing programme for women and children in need, a cultural centre, a women's library and a school for learning Italian. The association currently provides housing to around 30 women, and Trama di Terre provides support to hundreds of women each year in the form of legal advice, career guidance and by offering a space where women may openly speak about their experiences, D'Odorico explained.

She briefly contextualized Trama di Terre's work in the current refugee situation by presenting statistics from UNHCR. It is estimated that 115,000 people arrived in Italy between January and June 2016. The proportion of women among these increased from 9% in January to 14% in August. The migrants' main countries of origin were Nigeria, Eritrea, Sudan,



Gambia, the Ivory Coast, Guinea and Somalia. According to the International Organization for Migration, around 3,500 people have so far lost their lives crossing the Mediterranean this year. This number, D'Odorico added, includes missing people.

Trama di Terre is concerned with improving the life conditions of women seeking international protection in Italy, and has its starting point in women's own experiences and perspectives, according to D'Odorico. She explained that the women currently housed by the association come from Cameroon, Eritrea, Mali, Nigeria and Somalia. Moreover, the association financially sustains a number of women who have been excluded from the official aid system in Italy.

The association provides women with immediate relief through housing, health and economic support, legal aid and psychosocial care during



the often lengthy asylum procedure. In addition to this, the association appeals to politicians, health services, training centres and universities to improve aid efficiency at the local, regional and national levels. The aim, D’Odorico argued, is to design and implement long-term solutions for an adequate refugee protection system within a specific gender-sensitive and cross-cultural perspective.

She further argued the refugee system in Italy continues to be managed in emergency terms, as if the flux of migrants is solely temporary. This is clearly not the case, she claimed, which is why a comprehensive and collaborative approach within both the UN and EU is necessary.

Various organizations (such as Amnesty, Save the Children and Women’s Refugee Commission) have reported the majority of women and girls seeking asylum in Europe experience multiple forms of violence in their countries of origin, during transit and upon arrival in Europe. This is why, D’Odorico asserted, Trama di Terre seeks to establish a supportive space for women where they are encouraged to share their experiences and discuss traumatic events.

Many women housed by Trama di Terre, D’Odorico explained, have described how they experienced gender discrimination when they grew up; such as being denied access to formal education or forced into early marriage, which included marital rape and unwanted pregnancies. Others recounted how they were forced into military service, including different forms of exploitation, torture and sexual harassment. Other women fled from war contexts, dominated by religious fundamentalist groups, where women often suffered rape and extreme violence at the hands of official or unofficial armed groups.

A main issue addressed in Trama di Terre is the trafficking and sexual exploitation of female asylum seekers, D’Odorico explained. Many women are at risk while travelling to Europe; in particular in Libya, where they are at the mercy of traffickers, camp guardians, official and unofficial armed groups. Many women recount being held in private houses and jails against their will, while others have been forced to work without remuneration or to prostitute. Some women have been allowed to be taken on board to cross the Mediterranean only by means of “accepting” to be raped by the traffickers. Women are susceptible to violence even in the transit and reception centres, D’Odorico argued, since there are often a lack of experienced and gender-trained personnel, as well as sex-segregated facilities or female-specific shelters.

The phenomenon of trafficking for sexual exploitation of women of Nigerian origin is a particularly problematic issue, D’Odorico argued. Italy provides a special programme for victims of trafficking. The vast majority of women and girls entering this programme are of Nigerian origin. All six Nigerian women currently hosted by Trama di Terra have been subjected to sexual exploitation on their journey to Italy. They could still be at risk of sexual exploitation in Italy and across Europe, D’Odorico added.

She concluded her presentation by urging for the recognition of women’s right to seek and claim asylum due to gender-based violence and further advocated for the importance of developing adequate measures and tools for long-term aid policies with a specific focus on the situation of women and girls including the different forms of violence they may suffer.

## HOW DO THE MIGRATION OF MEN AND WOMEN AFFECT THE POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION?

*Malin Björk*

The next speaker, **Malin Björk**, member of the EU Parliament as a representative of the Left Party of Sweden, addressed EU’s migration policies and how they affect female migrants and refugees, as well as the decision-making processes within the European Parliament. She asserted that the GUE/NGL (of which representatives from the Swedish Left Party are members) are actively seeking to promote an approach to migration policies that differs from the one currently being pursued by the EU.

She was critical toward the way the EU frames the political and real current situation as a “refugee crisis”. “We do not experience a refugee crisis”, she said, “but a political crisis”. Although more people than ever are on the move, Björk claimed it cannot be possible for European countries, with a combined population of approximately five hundred million, in this very difficult situation are incapable of receiving a couple of million people. It is thus a political crisis that Europe is experiencing; a situation where governments cannot agree on the appropriate course of action, she argued.

Although the EU seems to be overwhelmed by the numbers of refugees coming to Europe, Björk emphasized most refugees are taken care of in neighboring countries; not in Europe. She further asserted that a failure by the European countries to defend and promote the international right for asylum might inspire other countries to similarly discard it. If Europe does not promote the right to seek asylum, other countries might question the necessity of accepting refugees, she claimed.

Björk criticized the way migration is discussed in the EU, since it focuses on “pull factors”, the securing of borders and “asylum shopping”. Countries that admit large numbers of refugees, like Sweden and Germany, are openly accused of having too generous migration policies and thus establishing migration flows and attracting countless refugees. Right wing groups of the European Parliament



continuously push for further securing the member countries’ and the EU’s borders, and frequently use the words “refugee” and “terrorist” in the same sentence. By focusing on these issues, Björk argued the EU fails to address the humanitarian aspect – of refugees fleeing for their lives and risking dangerous passage to Europe. The massive responsibility taken by neighboring countries and the importance of maintaining and defending the right to asylum is equally neglected.

Migrant women continue to be a particularly vulnerable group, Björk argued, comprising of an estimated 40% of asylum seekers in 2015. Refugee camps, generally with exceedingly inadequate health and sanitary standards, are especially precarious for women. When finally arriving in Europe; a place believed to be safe; many women are subject to xenophobia, racism and sexism.

The responses to the “migration crisis” presently established by the EU – the outsourcing of

EU's borders, the agreement between the EU and Turkey, stronger border security, pursuing undocumented migrants, and military operations in the Mediterranean – was criticized by Björk. She argued that the issue is not a lack of viable options, but rather there seems to be a strong reluctance to admit refugees in European countries. This problem, Björk claimed, is not insoluble; if the will for change is strong enough, it is possible. The formation of a coalition of states willing to accept refugees could constitute a starting point.

Björk further highlighted the importance of pursuing the establishment of legal ways to Europe for refugees. One way to do this is to enable family reunion; a measure supported by international legislation, but inadequately endorsed. Although refugees have the right to family reunion, the process is often prolonged and sometimes remains unfinished. The failure to ensure this right seems to be understood as unimportant; the violation of any other EU legislation would provoke immediate repercussions for the states involved. Thus, ensuring the endorsement of family reunion in all EU member states could constitute one measure of establishing legal ways to Europe for refugees.

The current proposals by the EU need to be counteracted, Björk argued; instead, new propositions must be established and pursued in order to promote a viable and humane solution to the current problem. She argued that “if we are



able save banks, then we are also able to establish a dignified refugee reception in Europe”. It is important to remember that the arriving migrants inhibit a considerable capacity to help us with generating the change we need, she added.

## SECURITIZATION IN REFUGEE POLICY: PROCESS, IMPLICATIONS AND RESISTANCE.

*Georgios Karyotis*

The final speaker of the day was **Georgios Karyotis**, senior lecturer in International Relations at Glasgow University, who spoke on the subject ‘Securitization in refugee policy: process, implications and resistance’. He sought to address what are the implications of securitization and who are the winners and losers of securitization processes.

Karyotis introduced and contextualized the subject of securitization by referring to the migration-security nexus and the prevailing anti-immigration attitudes visible in European societies today. The concept of securitization, Karyotis argued, helps us understand how the security frame becomes dominant in political discourse.

There are three main migration frames constantly competing for dominance, Karyotis argued, namely the normative, liberal and realist. The normative frame appeals to people’s ethical, humanitarian and legal rationales and is characterized by a moral duty to protect those in need. The right to seek asylum can thus be said to rest on the principle of normativity. In contrast, the liberal frame emphasizes the benefits of migration in terms of economic contributions and demographic progress. The realist frame, which Karyotis proclaimed as the dominant frame today, instead focuses on the perceived threats of migration, primarily in security terms. As the dominant frame, the realist perspective presents a specific problem definition, interpretation of causal mechanisms, moral evaluation and recommendations for action.

Karyotis suggested the possibility of an underlying ‘identity dimension’ informing people’s fears regarding the economy, politics, security, and, particularly, migration; thus provoking their perceived need for securitization. By referring to images of identity, of both themselves and of others, a “we” and “they” is constructed, leading to the fear of the outsider threatening the identity of the insider, merely by means of being perceived as dangerous, inferior, and most importantly, different.

Securitization, Karyotis argued, occurs when a political actor, by using a rhetoric of existential threat, pushes an issue out of the sphere of ‘normal politics’ and into the security domain. This is done in order to justify the implementation of extraordinary measures, normally located outside the conventional practices of politics. There is considerable knowledge of the process of securitization but, as argued by Karyotis, much less is known of the reversed movement – on the return to normality.

There are three steps of securitization, according to Karyotis’ presentation: the securitization move, audience evaluations, and policy change. The securitization move is generated when a security frame is constructed; when actors, usually but not exclusively political elites, claim a certain issue constitutes a security threat. The objective significance of the perceived threat is entirely irrelevant, Karyotis asserted; rather, emphasis lies in creating a case where an issue is perceived as a threat. In this context, perceptions prevail over facts.

In the second step, the actors make their claim to an audience, which evaluates its legitimacy. If the claim is believed valid, the actors gain legitimacy and their security threat is ascribed substantial importance. The successful securitization of an issue thus leads to the final step, where the perceived threat is so great it justifies extraordinary measures and policy change. In this context, Karyotis argued, it is critical to acknowledge the importance of language; that a speech act may serve to provoke securitization and specific discourses may be used to pinpoint certain issues that actors want to securitize. It is however important to note, he added, that language is but one of a multitude of processes which contributes to the securitization of an issue.

Karyotis proceeded to discuss the implications of securitization of migration and argued it is questionable whether securitization serves to promote refugee rights and EU values. He named security, freedom and justice as core values of the EU and consequently stated that those three, most evidently, are not granted equal value in the reception of and discourse on refugees in Europe today.



Karyotis claimed securitization in a migration context has geopolitical implications, by referring to the establishment of numerous geopolitical obstacles to increase the efficiency of border controls. Instead of decreasing the number of refugees coming to Europe however, these measures provoke smugglers to develop new methods and modes of operation. The displacement of migration routes merely serves to increase the hazard of travelling to Europe. Securitization thus, Karyotis explained, is not enough to stop or deter irregular movement; rather, it solely makes it more complicated. Such a development may further increase insecurities among migrants and host country populations, thus aggravating social tensions and racism.

As a result, there are numerous unintended consequences of securitization, according to Karyotis. He claimed that restrictionist migration frames lead to irregular movement, which might pose increased threats to the public order. Restrictionist measures might further encourage migrant settlement, since migrants might not dare return to their country of origin out of fear of not being able to re-enter the EU. Securitization of migration might thus not only fail to reduce the perceived threats, but may instead have the opposite effect and by increasing the number of refugees also increases the perceived risks.

Political elites, Karyotis argued, seek to securitize various issues in order to maximize their own goals, interests and legitimacy – a mission which produces advantages only for right and far-right groups. The process of securitization always plays into the hands of the right-wing, leading to an increase in right-wing views and support, he claimed. Consequently, securitization fails to promote self-interests and legitimacy, since only some, predominantly right-wing groups benefit. Moreover, those benefitting may not be those promoting securitization in the first place.

According to Karyotis, this generates a “vicious circle” of securitization, where the bounded rationality of elites compels them to support the security frame, thus provoking the processes of securitization, that consequently generate demands



for security, influencing the elite bounded rationality. The only way to depart from this circle, he argued, is to promote desecuritization as the dominant frame, using the political elite and the current dominant frame. Karyotis presented three possible paths to desecuritization in the migration context: promoting the normative frame, promoting the liberal frame, or escaping what he called the “normative dilemma”.

By promoting the normative frame, by educating and sensitizing the public by means of projecting refugee’s voices and stories, one would appeal to people’s compassion and empathy. By emphasizing that migrants are not complete aliens but fellow human beings, and by establishing the pursuit of generous migration policies and a humane refugee reception as the only decent thing to do, the normative frame could influence public opinions concerning migration and security. Karyotis however emphasized this approach merely has short term effects and fails to generate long-term change. “It helps, but it does not do enough”, he claimed.

Promoting the liberal frame implies emphasizing the benefits of migration for the host society and

eliminating misconceptions and prejudices by presenting empirical evidence. This approach is problematic, Karyotis argued, since corrections frequently fail to reduce misperceptions among the targeted group. Moreover, it may have a “backfire effect”, where the presented evidence not eliminates, but rather increases the targeted groups’ misperceptions. “The truth is not enough; facts are not enough”, Karyotis explained. “You need to find a way to ‘sell’ it – the packaging is almost as important as the content” he added.

The third path, presented by Karyotis as the most probable to generate change, suggests escaping the “security dilemma” by means of avoiding security language of “us” and “them”. Instead of emphasizing differences, one should seek to highlight commonalities; to identify shared values, aspirations and skills among host citizens and migrants. It would further be useful, Karyotis argued, to invest in migrants’ human capital and skills and to seek to overcome the perceived competition between host citizens and migrants over scarce resources. It is important, he added, to seek to ensure the host population ceases to perceive migrants as antagonistic.

Karyotis concluded his presentation by stating securitization is evidently socially constructed and

counter-productive. How we respond to causes and consequences of forced displacement of people is profoundly shaped by the context and key frames dominating our discourse of the phenomenon; thus, perceptions are immensely important. Public concerns about migration are critical for the development of immigration policy and have hitherto generated a vicious securitization circle. It is however important to remember, Karyotis added, that securitization is not inevitable and it may be both resisted and reversed.

When responding to audience questions, Karyotis noted securitization is not by definition negative or positive. In a migration context, he understands securitization as negative, “but there are other cases where securitization might be exactly what we need to deal with an issue that is important”, he explained. Global warming, he continued, is such a case; where the present lack of commitment to the problem could be remedied by securitization. Securitizing HIV has encouraged the development of appropriate responses, Karyotis added. In other cases, however, securitization is used to establish feelings of permanent threat among the public, thus making it easier to manipulate people and gain support.

## THE SECURITY PERSPECTIVE REGARDING REFUGEES AND GENDER

### FEMINIST SECURITY POLICY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

*Ingela Mårtensson*

The presentation 'Feminist security policy in theory and practice' by **Ingela Mårtensson**, representing Kvinnor för fred, commenced the conference's second day. She started by problematizing the concept of security by asking what it means, for whom, and in what context. The concept of security, she noted, has changed and developed in the past decades.

Mårtensson consequently presented different approaches to security and how it has been discussed in Europe at various points in time. At the creation of the UN in 1945, security was primarily concerned with nation-states' security. The signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 by the CSCE instead established three aspects of security, namely military; human rights and democracy; and trade, economy and environmental issues. The Palme Commission contrastingly advocated for joint security in 1982, promoting disarmament of nuclear weapons and ensuring the cold war did not escalate into armed conflict and war. Global peace, they argued, must be more important than countries' need to prove their superiority and sovereignty.

The creation of NATO in 1949, Mårtensson claimed, emphasized security for the members of the group and thus reflected the notion of security as cooperation. The UN broadened the concept of security by emphasizing human security; thus seeking to prevent political and social divisions from escalating into (armed) conflict to ensure human security. Human security is further concerned with ensuring access to education, poverty alleviation and human rights, Mårtensson claimed.

She noted how women's admittance in the Swedish Parliament in 1924 was marked by the female Members of Parliament's background in anti-war movements, resulting in their efforts to promote disarmament and peace negotiations. They thus

presented an approach to advance society not by armament and conflict, but by joint discussions and problem solving.

Mårtensson did not provide a concrete definition of feminist security, but rather accounted for her own perception of what feminist security implies. She emphasized the importance of including women in processes of peace negotiation, rebuilding post-war societies and preventing war, and strongly advocated the idea of joint security. Joint security is concerned with arriving at solutions by joint discussion and cooperation, rather than focusing on one's own values and interests. "Women's participation in society must increase if one wants to achieve peace and security" she added.

The adoption of UN Resolution 1325 in 2000, Mårtensson argued, was a result of women's movements' continuous efforts to make governments acknowledge the importance of including women in decision-making processes concerning peace and security issues. Women's participation is vital if lasting peace is to be achieved, she argued. Women would in this context not only constitute a resource but also ensure the protection of women in war and conflict situations.

Although the resolution has been generally disregarded, NATO has sought to implement it by encouraging its member states to enroll more women in the military. This interest in female participation, Mårtensson claimed, derives from a wish to improve the success of military operations. For example, there might be situations where male recruits are denied access where female recruits could be admitted and gather the intelligence needed for the military operation to be successful. However, this is not why women's groups fought for the adoption of Resolution 1325, Mårtensson added.

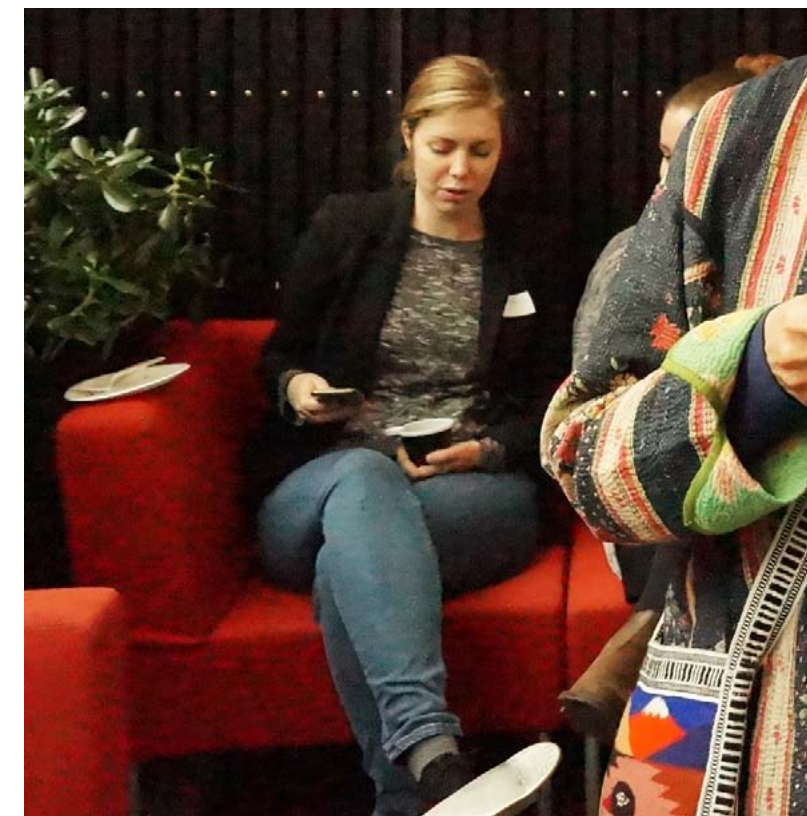
She criticized the Swedish government for failing to comply with its self-proclaimed feminist foreign policy. A recent foreign policy declaration by the Swedish government emphasizes the importance of continued and increased cooperation with NATO and suggests armament and a strengthening of Sweden's military power. Although the declaration

states that the Swedish government will pursue a feminist foreign policy with the goal to counteract discrimination against women, improve women's conditions and contribute to peace and development, Mårtensson argued that the declaration's focus on military security does not display a feminist foreign policy.

Further, Mårtensson suggested the Swedish government understands Resolution 1325 primarily as a gender issue, chiefly promoting increased female participation, for example in the military. Mårtensson however asserted that she understands Resolution 1325 not as a gender issue, but as a security issue, mainly concerned with including civil society in decision-making and encouraging the introduction of new and different approaches to conflict and conflict resolution. Consequently, Mårtensson expressed disappointment in how the resolution is implemented today by focusing on the military.

NATO, she explained, establishes its security on the basis of nuclear weapons and asserts that the security of Europe's population is to be achieved by means of possessing nuclear and conventional weapons. Thus, Sweden's increasing involvement with NATO has consequences for Sweden's security policy.

Sweden's extensive arms export, particularly to non-democratic regimes, was likewise criticized by Mårtensson and deemed incompatible with a feminist security and foreign policy. The cooperative agreement between Sweden and Saudi Arabia, she



added, is another example of how Sweden fails at acting in accord with a feminist foreign policy. She concluded by stating the indisputably most prominent component of international security continues to be military power. Although we are faced with numerous security threats such as climate change and large-scale migration, military measures are not always the most appropriate solutions, Mårtensson claimed.



## GENDER AND MIGRATION: THE SYRIAN WAR AND THE SITUATION OF REFUGEE WOMEN

Sofia Nyström

The next speaker, **Sofia Nyström**, board member of IKFF likewise addressed war and conflict, albeit in context of the situation in Syria, by presenting 'Gender and migration: the Syrian war and the situation of refugee women'. She commenced by presenting a brief overview of the historical events leading to the current conflict, as well as identifying key actors.

Nyström emphasized the complexity of the situation, with a fragmented country and over 100 opposition groups engaged in conflict with the al-Assad regime, ISIS, and each other. The conflict is claimed to have started after a group of teenagers painted catch phrases from protests in neighboring countries in March 2011, which lead to the Syrian regime arresting several young teenagers. This provoked the first regime critical demonstration in decades, responded to by armed forces killing several demonstrators. Since then, Nyström explained, the conflict escalated dramatically, giving rise to the conflict observable today.

The humanitarian impact of this conflict is immense, she continued: the UN estimates 250,000 Syrians have been injured and killed; according to the SCPR, this number amounts to 470,000. SCPR further claims 11,5% of the Syrian population has been killed or injured in the conflict. There is an estimated 4,8 million international refugees from the Syrian conflict and approximately 8,7 million internally displaced refugees, according to UNHCR.

This undoubtedly has consequences for international migration to Europe, and Nyström continued by outlining the increase in refugees arriving in Europe in the two past decades. Between 1994 and 2002, the EU received on average 300, 000 refugees each year. In 2014, this number increased to 663,000; and in 2015 to 1,005,000. There has been 1, 151,865 Syrian asylum applications in Europe in 2016 so far, and approximately 970,000 refugees have crossed the Mediterranean. We may therefore talk about a humanitarian crisis, Nyström asserted.

The proportion of women among Syrian refugees has increased considerably since last year, she continued. In 2015, women amounted to roughly a quarter of Syrian refugees whereas to date in 2016, 55% of Syrian refugees are female, according to UNHCR estimates. Nyström highlighted the numerous dangers facing female refugees and recounted how a recent report by Amnesty International claims women fleeing the war in Syria feel unsafe during their flight. The women interviewed in the report state that in almost all countries they passed through, they experienced physical abuse, financial exploitation and were groped or pressured to have sex with smugglers, security staff and/or other migrants. They further accounted for experiencing a lack of health care, sexual harassment, living in constant fear, violence by police and authorities and inadequate conditions in transit camps. Consequently, Nyström claimed, refugee women and girls are faced with violence, assault, exploitation and sexual harassment during every stage of their journey.

Government and aid agencies fail to provide even basic protection for female refugees, Nyström argued. Women travelling alone or with children, adolescent girls and unaccompanied children are especially at risk and need coordinated and effective protection responses, as stated by a joint field assessment by the UNHCR, UNFPA and WRC. The risks facing female refugees are present also on European soil, for example in refugee or transit camps. Nyström presented a quote from Amnesty International, stating "[t]hese women and their children have fled some of the world's most dangerous areas and it is shameful that they are still at risk on European soil".

Nyström concluded the presentation by mentioning some of UNHCR's recommendations for preventing gender based violence and improving the situation for refugee women and girls. There is a need, for example, to acknowledge the risks for female refugees and subsequently assign personnel and establish procedures to identify, respond to and prevent sexual and gender based violence. Further, it is necessary to establish a coordinated response system within and across borders to protect women and girls.

## GENDER ISSUES AND REFUGEE RECEPTION CONDITIONS AT THE EU'S EXTERNAL BORDERS? – EMPIRICAL MATERIAL FROM LESVOS (2015-2016)

Alexandra Bousiou

Gothenburg University PhD student and lawyer **Alexandra Bousiou** presented 'Gender issues and refugee reception conditions at the EU's external borders? – Empirical material from Lesbos (2015-2016)', where she addressed the common European asylum system and the EU's legal framework for refugee reception as well as highlighted the gendered dimension of migration.

She commenced by questioning the notion of Europe experiencing a refugee crisis. Firstly, she claimed, European countries are affected differently by the current flow of migration. There are countries in the EU that have not received any refugees; some do not want to receive any refugees; others, such as Sweden and Germany, display a political will to, and indeed do, receive refugees; and some border countries have no choice but to receive refugees and accommodate them, with various levels of success. Thus, Bousiou claimed, there is not a crisis all over Europe. Secondly, there is no refugee crisis, but rather a reception crisis, she continued. The EU, and particularly border countries, experience numerous issues with refugee reception and are partly overwhelmed with the number of arriving migrants. What is observable today, thus, is a reception crisis where European countries struggle with how to manage the refugees arriving in Europe, she claimed.

Bousiou referred to various legal directives, regulations and frameworks informing the refugee reception in the EU, starting with the definition of a refugee presented by the Geneva Convention from 1951 as a person who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" is in need of protection. The revised Asylum Procedures Directive, she claimed, states that there must be common procedures for EU member states for granting and withdrawing international protection for individuals. Further,



asylum seekers with special needs have a right, according to the directive, to receive the necessary support to explain their claim, and unaccompanied minors and victims of torture should receive greater protection. The uniform approach on paper however translates poorly into practice, Bousiou argued; different EU member states implement European law differently and subsequently treat refugees differently.

The revised Reception Conditions Directive seeks to ensure there are humane material reception conditions for asylum seekers in the EU and the fundamental rights of the refugees are respected, and detention of refugees is applied only as a last resort. This, Bousiou claimed, is evidently not the case, as there is a considerable lack of adequate material reception, there are severe violations of refugee's rights, and detention of refugees is mainstreamed and applied in most cases. In this context, the practice stands in outright opposition to the EU directive. The EU has established common standards for how to consider migrants' eligibility for international protection in the revised Qualification Directive, in order to promote justice and equality. Officials in different EU member states however act differently in practice, generating different refugee reception in different countries.

The Dublin Regulation was formed to facilitate the processing of asylum applications by establishing that refugees must apply for asylum in the first EU member state they enter. This is problematic, Bousiou argued, since refugees can enter only the border countries of the EU directly. This inevitably generates an uneven burden among EU member



states and subsequently creates inequalities in the asylum system. Bousiou mentioned the EURODAC Regulation, concerned with collecting and comparing data and fingerprints of arriving migrants; using security as a justification for collecting personal data.

She briefly explained the differences between an EU directive and regulation, stating the directive is less binding and does not require as rigorous compliance as a regulation. Directives are expected to be incorporated into member states' national law, but there is considerable room for interpretation of the directive and no strict time frame for implementation. A regulation, however, is binding and non-negotiable for individual member states; there is a specific time frame for the regulation's incorporation in national law, and it must be included in the same wording as in the regulation itself. Bousiou noted how issues related to migrants' rights are addressed by directives, whereas issues concerned with security are addressed by regulations, implying that the EU prioritizes security and border control over ensuring human rights.

There has been a steady trend in 2016, Bousiou argued, of an increased proportion of women and children arriving in Europe. The EU's response to the arrival of refugees, she continued, has been characterized by the agreement between the EU and Turkey and the establishment of 'hotspots'. The EU-Turkey agreement decrees that every migrant arriving in Greece since March 2015 will be returned to Turkey, in exchange for a Syrian refugee. Arriving refugees are still required to submit asylum applications. The agreement further states the EU and Turkey will seek to improve the humanitarian conditions in Syria, although it provides no concrete suggestions as to how this is to be achieved. Apart from being considerably expensive for the EU and ineffective, Bousiou deems the agreement outrageously inhumane.

The 'hotspot' approach implies the establishment of specific, highly securitized areas for effective and swift refugee reception; currently, these hotspots are situated in Italy and Greece. The main rationale behind these hotspots is EU's security concern of knowing precisely who everyone seeking to enter is and registering them before admission inside its borders. Once refugees have been

registered, they are meant to be relocated to other European countries. In this way, the hotspots contribute to the implementation of temporary relocation programmes proposed by the European Commission. However, this intention has hitherto not been implemented; out of the 60, 000 refugees currently stranded in Greece, a mere 1, 849 have been relocated, Bousiou explained.

In practice, the hotspots approach has resulted in turning islands off the coasts of Italy and Greece into 'prison islands' where refugees are subject to detention. Bousiou shared numerous photographs from her fieldwork on Lesbos, displaying camp facilities, tents, beaches overflowing with used life vests and rubber boats, and dirt roads lined with piles of trash. Initially, there had been numerous actors facilitating arriving refugees, including non-governmental and volunteer-based groups. The securitized European idea of hotspots could not however allow outside actors to engage in refugee reception, Bousiou argued, which is why all non-official infrastructure was destroyed in favor of confining refugees to the prison-like official camps. These hotspots, she claimed, are detention centers lined with barbed wire, with a capacity of accommodating 2, 000 people but currently facilitating 5, 000 refugees. It is self-evident that there is poor or no vulnerability assessment or protection provided for women and children in this situation, Bousiou argued.

It has been reported by various organizations that women, minors and other vulnerable individuals face violence on the move and in and out of the hotspots. Female refugees frequently experience sexual harassment and the risk of violence and abuse is considerably heightened for women and children on the move, Bousiou argued. The overcrowded reception camps and the lack of appropriate accommodation and separate, protected facilities for women and children affects the health and well-being of innumerable refugees. Bousiou stated the EU's approach to refugee reception has resulted in various forms of violence, mostly and most severely experienced by the refugees. There is a considerable gap between EU policies and reality, she concluded, which needs to be addressed if the EU is to successfully address and alleviate the current reception crisis.

## INTEGRATION OF REFUGEE WOMEN. WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

*Andrea Spehar*

**Andrea Spehar**, Associate Professor in Political Science at the University of Gothenburg, spoke about integration and the disadvantages experienced primarily by migrant women in the presentation 'Integration of refugee women. What is the problem?'. She focused particularly on labor force participation and migrants' integration into the labor force.

She commenced by stating integration is a contested concept and is understood differently in different contexts. There is no consensus on how to approach integration and, according to Spehar, models for successful integration have yet to be developed. It is of considerable importance to acknowledge the complexity of integration, as well as acknowledge there are different migrant groups and different gender relations that need to be taken into consideration.

She subsequently defined integration as the process intended to enable the migrant to gain an equal position in society in relation to the native population. Adjustment to the host society and its values, institutions, legal frameworks and formal and informal norms is a process all migrants must go through in order to function in society and attain socio-economic autonomy, Spehar argued.

Immigrants are disadvantaged in almost all areas of life, she continued. They constitute the majority of unemployed people; they are not as engaged and organized in political issues and groups as the native population; they generally suffer from worse health conditions and receive lower salaries; they do not vote to the same extent as the native population; and they do not participate in the labor market to the same extent. Participation in the labor force, Spehar stressed, is particularly important for successful integration.

There is an extensive gap between employment rates of native-born women and women born abroad, according to statistics from Sweden presented by Spehar. Further, migrant men are more engaged in the labor market than migrant women; and consequently there is a considerable



underrepresentation of migrant women in the labor market. This undoubtedly has social consequences, as working life is essential for socio-economic inclusion and integration, Spehar argued. Moreover, the risk of poverty increases in families where women do not work, she continued. Unemployed women are excluded from certain welfare benefits, receive lower pensions and have limited possibilities to integrate into the host society.

Referencing previous research, Spehar presented five main factors explaining why migrants do not participate in the labor force to the same extent as the native population. The first factor relates to the reason for immigration. Refugees tend to experience more difficulties in finding work than labor migrants, due to the circumstances and preconditions concerning their process of migration. The second factor concerns the migrants' human capital. Spehar argued migrants frequently lack the professional experience required for employment in certain areas of the host society. Further, limited knowledge of the host society's native language may constitute an obstacle. Social networking constitutes the third factor and Spehar noted how migrants struggle



considerably to establish informal contacts and formal networks within the labor market. In this aspect, migrants are clearly disadvantaged in relation to the native population. The fourth factor implies barriers of entry into the labor market, where competition for and a lack of positions in low paid jobs makes it significantly difficult for migrants to enter the labor market. Highly educated migrants and the benefits they could provide for the host society is frequently discussed in integration contexts; this however disregards that the majority of arriving migrants have limited education, Spehar argued. Low levels of education affect migrants' labor force participation and the competition for low-skilled work consequently impedes migrants' chances for employment. Lastly, the fifth factor concerns discrimination, which continues to prevent migrants from successfully participating in the labor force. There is clear evidence, Spehar asserted, that large groups of migrants are discriminated against when seeking employment.

Gender values, she continued, may explain the limited participation rates of migrant women in relation to native women and migrant men. Gender values are of significant importance, since the norms concerning women's and men's roles in society affect the behavior of women and men. These values undeniably vary across different cultures and may change over time. Traditional gender roles are significant and affect both men and women, she continued; gender and sex roles considerably influence individuals' life patterns and their decisions concerning participation in the labor force.

There appears to be a correlation between labor force participation among migrant women and their countries of origin. For example, refugee women from secularized countries with more liberal values tend to participate in the labor market to a greater extent than women from more religious and conservative countries, Spehar argued. Further, the labor force participation in the countries of origin may affect migrants' participation in the host society. The average labor force participation among women in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Iran is below 20%; it is then perhaps not reasonable, Spehar argued, to expect female migrants from

these countries to immediately enter the labor market upon arrival in Sweden. Moreover, there is low labor force participation among migrant women from countries with low Human Development Index and Gender Development Index rates.

Different gender equality models have been established to address and alleviate gender inequality, Spehar argued. By subscribing to a specific model, institutions seek to develop and implement policies in order to influence the behavior of men and women, in that way readjusting and balancing gender differences in society. The dual breadwinner model is an example of this. Present and institutionalized in Sweden, this model seeks to influence the behavior and norms of women and men in order to promote a more equal society. The dual breadwinner model, Spehar claimed, is characterized by encouraging both men and women to participate in the labor market and take care of the family, on equal terms. The dual breadwinner model, albeit increasingly being promoted in European countries, is contrasted by the male breadwinner model still pursued in most societies. The male breadwinner model implies that society benefits most if women are engaged in the domestic sphere whereas men provide for the family by working in the public sphere, Spehar explained.

Although the dual breadwinner model is institutionalized in Sweden, there are persisting differences in the uptake of parental leave between Swedish-born and immigrant women, as well as strong variations among migrants by country of origin, Spehar argued. Migrant women generally tend to claim all days of parental leave during the child's first year, and high fertility among migrant women often implies a prolonged absence from the labor market. Consequently, migrant women's entry into the labor market is obstructed.

Labor force participation of migrant women has however been shown to increase in relation to time spent in Sweden, Spehar explained. An average of 12% of migrant women participate in the labor force during their first year of residence in Sweden; this proportion increased to 56% after ten years and to 70% after twenty years, thus displaying a considerable reduction in the employment rate gap between Swedish-born women and migrant

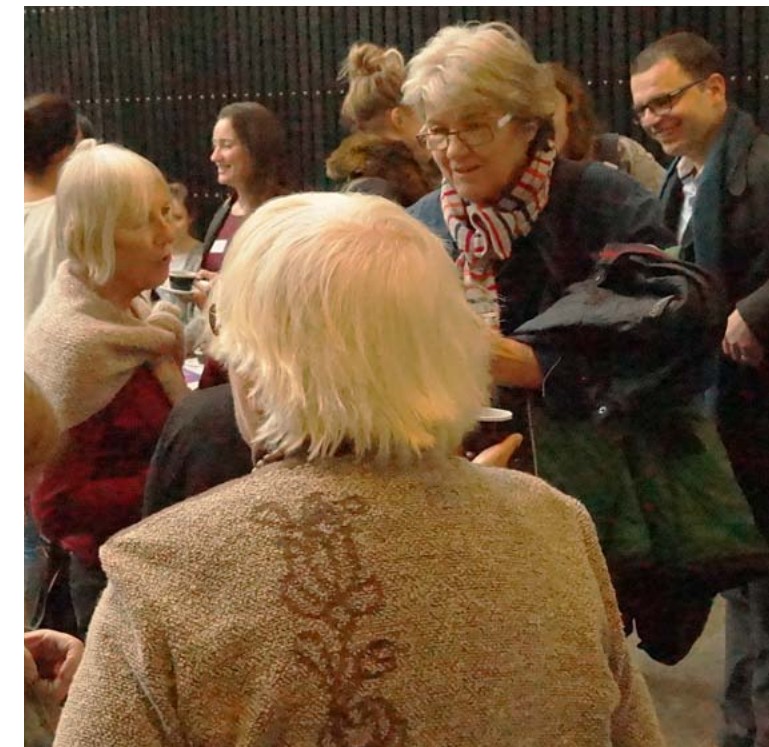
women. Similarly, the gap between migrant men and migrant women's labor force participation diminishes over time. Since women's labor force participation is important for the socio-economic status and well-being of the family, as well as for women's autonomy and their possibilities to advance their level of education, the prospect of women's labor force participation increasing over time is hopeful, Spehar concluded.

It is however important to acknowledge the heterogeneity of migrants, she added. In Sweden, it is generally assumed that migrants are a homogeneous group, sharing issues, ambitions and values, even though women from different migrant groups indubitably have different preconditions, values and experiences. Consequently, one cannot approach the challenges of different migrant groups and migration flows by applying the same policies. Further, one must acknowledge each migrant group in turn may be heterogeneous.

## CARTOGRAPHIES OF HOSPITALITY: DIVERSE AND SHIFTING CONDITIONS OF HOSTING

*Fataneh Farahani*

The conference's final presentation was held by **Fataneh Farahani**, associate Professor in Ethnology at the Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender Studies, Stockholm University. In 'Cartographies of Hospitality: diverse and shifting conditions of hosting', she outlined her ongoing research project concerned with the reception of asylum seekers and migrants in the host society. The research aims to compare the reception of asylum seekers and migrants in three major multicultural cities, namely London, Sydney and Stockholm, and further seeks to investigate the political, philosophical and cultural aspects



related to hospitality in the three different contexts. Farahani seeks to discuss whether it is a country's moral responsibility to accept refugees and how refugee reception relates to hospitality.

Whether a migrant is accepted and granted admittance as a citizen in the host society, or defined as a non-citizen and consequently rejected, is another issue Farahani is interested in addressing in her research. She further seeks to discuss how hospitality is shaped by gender, age, ethnicity and class. The research aims to examine the power relations between 'host' and 'guest' and map how 'hospitality' is shaped and practiced in London, Sydney and Stockholm. Farahani intends to conduct close studies of various civil society organizations engaged with asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants, such as the Swedish organization Ingen Människa är Illegal [No One is Illegal Network].



## WORKSHOPS

### TILLSAMMANS

Workshop one was arranged by Tillsammans, held by Camilla Schultz, Sara Herlitz and Öncel Naldemirci, and addressed the topic 'Integration – a concept that we need to let go?'. They presented how there are often two main images of refugees; the fragile, suffering woman with children, and the young male migrant who needs to be treated with caution. These images however fail to acknowledge the great variation among migrants, they continued. Migration should be understood as multidimensional processes, encompassing subjected experiences and senses of belonging. When addressing integration, structures enabling or preventing access to accommodation, language and employment should be considered. Acknowledging the heterogeneity of migrant categories reveals migrants' different capabilities and resources, they argued.

Integration, they argued, is a concept that needs to be discussed. Participants contributed to the discussion by claiming integration is perhaps not a clearly pronounced and unambiguous concept; that it is not simply "a matter of black and white"; but rather integration needs to be understood as a dynamic and variable process. It is perhaps the very idea and understanding of integration that needs to change. This can be achieved by transforming it into a more interactive, non-hierarchical and wide concept, not primarily focused with helping migrants enter the labor market but attentive also to other aspects of migration, integration and sharing a society, the concept of migration might be more useful. The representatives of Tillsammans added that integration should be understood in terms of belonging, thus implying a focus on societal and cultural aspects of the processes of migration.

Tillsammans has in Gothenburg established 'Tillsammansskafé'; a café open for everyone, on a weekly basis, year round. There are presently three cafés; two in Gothenburg and one in Kungälv; and approximately thirty to forty people attend the weekly meetings. The aim of the café, and of the organization at large, is to provide a space where everyone is welcome; both locals and migrants,

young and old. The participants are diverse and help each other with a wide range of issues. Foremost, the café is an opportunity to meet new friends and establish a social network. Tillsammans is not organized by Swedes only, but rather by everyone involved, together. In this way, the organization pursues a flat hierarchy.

### ABF TROLLHÄTTAN

Nancy Contreras and Salima Dajlan, represented ABF Trollhättan in workshop two, 'About a meeting place for women', wherein they, similar to Tillsammans, focused on grass roots meeting spaces. Salima Dajlan recounted how she came to Sweden with four children and how it took a long time for her to feel incorporated in Swedish society. As there were already various organizations for men, she founded ABF Trollhättan, an organization for women, to reach out to migrant women living in Sweden. Helping women, she argued, is beneficial for their entire families. The organization received grants from the municipality of Trollhättan which enabled them to grow. Currently the organization has two employees and a board of directors from different countries. The organization offers various activities, such as sewing workshops, help with studies, Swedish classes, language café, choir, biking and Nordic walking.

Nancy Contreras recounted how ABF Trollhättan opened a sewing workshop in the most immigrant-dense part of Trollhättan. The aim was to establish a meeting place for women where they could engage in a practical activity while simultaneously becoming acquainted with new people and learn Swedish faster. The sewing workshop became a safe space for the women, where they could feel comfortable and relaxed. After one year, the women took their own initiative and developed new ideas for the workshop and the organization's activities. Many of the women have low levels of education or are illiterate, which is why ABF Trollhättan arranges seminars providing information about the Swedish authorities and their systems, thus for example educating the women in how to register at the Public Employment Agency (Arbetsförmedlingen). Furthermore, the organization provides classes on

how to establish one's own company, encouraging women to become economically independent.

ABF Trollhättan seeks to educate the participants on women's rights and their rights as citizens in Sweden. The organization encourages open discussions about motherhood, womanhood and images of the female body, and it seeks to strengthen mothers' support to their daughters. Furthermore, the organization discusses parenting and upbringing with the women and seeks to ensure there is not a widening gap between mothers and their children, due to the children's frequent and intense contact with Swedish society that the mothers might not have access. ABF Trollhättan wants to encourage the role of mothers and fathers and make them feel self-asserted and confident in their roles as parents, as well as provoke questions and start discussions about family life, give alternative perspectives and help the women with domestic issues they might have.

Integration, knowledge and cooperation are key words for the organization. ABF Trollhättan occasionally collaborates with other organizations to encourage migrant women's participation and integration in Swedish society.

### IKFF

Workshop three, organized by IKFF and held by Titti Wahlberg, Sofia Nyström and Ingela Mårtensson, addressed 'War and refugees' and encouraged an open discussion on the conference topics. They claimed there is a grave imbalance in the world today, where war is considered necessary to ensure security and democracy. The side of the scale encompassing military, arms production and exports, security technology, secrecy and capitalism decidedly outweighs the other side of the scale encompassing refugees, the poor, the planet and the UN. This imbalance undoubtedly has consequences for global politics and international relations. The arms industry continues to be extensive, perpetually feeding into armed conflicts and the notion that war is necessary to ensure peace. Therefore, IKFF stated, it is important to address the lighter side of the



scale and, as in this conference, focus on refugees. Had there been no arms industry, there had perhaps not been any wars, and consequently hardly any refugees. For this reason, it is vital to include refugees, their experiences and perspectives in the peace movement, IKFF argued.

Participants discussed whether the situation today can be identified as a refugee crisis, political crisis or a crisis of wars. The concept of peace was subsequently addressed; one participant noted how peace today seems to be understood merely as the absence from war or warlike actions. The strategy of peaceful conflict resolution was discussed and it was agreed it is a strategy that must be widely implemented if we are to experience lasting peace. There is sufficient theoretical knowledge on the topic but not enough guidelines for successful implementation; consequently, participants discussed how to move from thoughts to action and how theoretical concepts may be translated into practical tools.

Addressing civil society engagement in national and international politics, it was noted how sheer numbers in the peace movement may be of considerable importance. If the peace movement implies a great number of people willing to protest national and international policies, the movement may have chances of influencing the political elite and the decisions they make. Civil society engagement implies considerable work since increasing secrecy is employed to keep information from the public, for example concerning arms exports. Therefore, the survival and power to influence of civil society organizations is dependent on a sufficient number of members.

The discussion addressed how to achieve structural change. There seems to be constant compromises that bypass structural change in society. For example, the efforts to abolish Swedish arms production and exports have not attained their goal; instead, they have been forced to compromise with the government and the arms industry to establish a policy that prevents Sweden from exporting arms to dictatorships. The aim to terminate the Swedish arms industry, thus provoking structural change, is bypassed by negotiating a compromise that scarcely addresses the real issue.

The workshop discussion highlighted how the use of language might constitute a tool in changing society. The way we use language, it was argued, shapes the way we think, and vice versa. Language matters; critically using language as a tool may change how people think and ultimately change their perspectives and values, in extension having the potential to shape politics.

## UN WOMEN GÖTEBORG

Workshop four constituted the conference's last workshop and was organized by UN Women Göteborg, held by Regina Mattsson. The workshop centered on UN Women's work in regard to peace and security, as well as accounted for the organization's activities in Gothenburg. UN Women was established in 2011, bringing together UNIFEM, CEDAW, INSTRAW and OSAGI. The board of directors in Sweden consists of twelve

members, situated in Stockholm. There are nine local organizations in Sweden, UN Women Göteborg constituting one of them. The Gothenburg branch presently has fifteen active persons who meet every other week and approximately 200 members.

UN Women Göteborg seeks to raise funds for global UN Women projects and advocates for women's rights by organizing various activities such as Orange Day, highlighting violence against women; International Women's Day on March 8th; and by participating in the West Pride festival. UN Women is currently lobbying to ensure the Swedish delegates of the UN Security Council, of which Sweden becomes a member in January 2017, are aware of and interested in advocating for women's rights and issues.

Globally, UN Women engages in assistance for women and girl refugees, particularly in Jordan, Libya, Syria and Iraq. UN Women has established 'oases' in refugee camps where women can work in exchange for cash by making various goods needed in the camps. Additionally, the women are given basic reading, writing and computer classes. The 'oases' additionally function as safe spaces for women who have experienced sexual and gender based violence. By engaging directly with women in refugee camps, UN Women seeks to empower women.

The main goal of UN Women is to ensure more women are involved in politics, thus increasing their influence and power over political discussions; and to engage women in local, national and international peace negotiations, decision-making processes and conflict-prevention discussions.

The workshop discussion highlighted how the consequences of war usually affect women and children most severely, which is why the rights and needs of women and children must be prioritized. It is however important to refrain from making assumptions and instead directly ask what refugee women and children want and need. The discussion further noted the importance of educating girls and women on their rights, and how we must raise our children not to differentiate between boys and girls. Consequently, men should be included in discussions on women and girl's rights and equality.

## CLOSING REMARKS

The conference sought to address the consequences of a gendered migration. Further, the conference highlighted women's experiences and emphasized the need to focus particularly on women and girl's rights and needs when discussing migration.

The refugee issue was discussed from a gender and security perspective, debating how security is understood by various actors and in different contexts. The concept of security was particularly addressed in regard to the migration process of women and girls and their experiences at various stages of their journey.

The main focus of the conference was the ongoing 'refugee crisis' in Europe. The dangerous route crossing the Mediterranean Sea, the EU's response to the arrival of refugees, the experiences of female refugees, the reception procedures of Sweden and other EU countries, the 'hotspots' approach to refugee reception, integration of migrants and refugees, and how migration and refugee reception is perceived were some of the topics addressed in the conference's presentations and workshops. Numerous speakers highlighted the importance of the way we perceive and talk about migration and refugees, and argued that Europe faces a political crisis and a reception crisis rather than a migration crisis.

Various research projects related to gender and migration, from both structural and grass roots perspectives, were presented throughout the conference, along with personal narratives from the perspectives of refugees, researchers, volunteers, bureaucrats, activists and locals. The importance of gender equality and women's participation in peace processes was continuously emphasized by various speakers. Integration and reception of migrants and refugees, particularly the gendered access to the labor market, was addressed and discussed, and it was noted how one must understand migration as a dynamic and flexible process with heterogeneous groups of arriving individuals.

Consequently, gender- and culture-sensitive responses need to be developed.

International responses' current focus on security and securitization and its consequences for refugees and host societies was likewise addressed. Numerous violations of refugees' human rights were recounted, accentuating women and children's heightened risk of suffering violence and abuse during and after migration. It was continuously noted how migrant women are exposed to harassment, violence and rape during all stages of their journey. The conference presentations and workshops displayed multiple actors, at various levels, are involved in causing, enabling, facilitating and managing the current flow of refugees.

Underlying ideas in both discourse and action were identified; constructions of "us" and "them", informing public discourse and perceptions about migration. A continued reluctance to receive refugees, it was argued, is discernible in many EU member states, as is the rise of right-wing xenophobic political groups that encourage suspicion and objection toward the reception of refugees.

The conference presented various actions for managing, remedying and improving the current situation; for example by establishing communities where migrant women meet each other and locals and together discuss issues and help each other. It further encouraged continued work with migration issues and facilitated the forming of new contacts among the key speakers, organizers, workshop coordinators and participants. The conference generated varied and diverse discussions and perspectives, as well as provided hopeful prospects of influencing society's perspectives on migration. The conference highlighted that people both within and outside academia care strongly about issues regarding gender, refugees and security, implying favorable conditions for joint action and potential of influencing how migration is perceived and managed in the future.



**GADIP** (Gender and Development in Practice) is an association for feminists within academia, activists and non-profit organizations interested in establishing a mutual exchange of knowledge and experiences.

**GADIP** is a politically independent non-profit organization. Its goal is to establish a forum for activists and researchers to meet and engage in discussion in order to promote gender and development issues in Sweden and internationally. The different experiences and knowledge perspectives of researchers and activists enrich the cooperation among them and enable them to jointly raise issues and challenges. GADIP conducts external activities in the form of advocating gender and development issues, and providing knowledge-expanding activities such as seminars, lectures and film screenings, with the aim of highlighting unequal living conditions.

**GADIP** highly values cooperation with other national associations and activists. Currently, GADIP cooperates with Män för Jämställdhet [Men for Equality], Humlegårdens Stödcentrum [Support Center of Humlegården] and WINNET, Regionalt Resurscentra för jämställd tillväxt och utveckling [Regional Resource Center for equal growth and development].

**GADIP** contributes to increased cooperation and knowledge exchange by establishing alliances with international feminist academics and non-profit organizations. In this way, GADIP seeks to increase solidarity among women worldwide. GADIP is a member of the European network WIDE + (Women in Development Europe) and EFI (Euromed Feminist Initiative).



Göteborgs  
Stad



Gender and Development in Practice

