

## Abstracts

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### Susanne Binder, *Left Aside Categorically. The Category Gender in Asylum Politics*

Gender has so far not been recognised as a category that has a great impact on flight and migration. During the flight as well as during the stay in the new host country, women are far more vulnerable than men. Therefore they would need special protection. In her article, Susanne Binder focuses on a gender sensible view on flight at different levels. Beginning with an analysis on the asylum legislation it becomes clear that it is mainly based on the situation of male refugees. Women and their specific female reasons for flight as well as the reasons for persecution do not find entry in the legislation. Once arrived in the country of asylum, refugees face difficulties they have to cope with. The situations differ for men, women and children. A gender sensitive approach can help asylum seekers to feel more comfortable and to adapt better to the new challenges.

This article not only deals with theoretical insights but also offers empirical data on the subject. Sofija K., a refugee from Bosnia-Herzegovina, was the interview partner of the author during a study on Bosnian Refugees in Austria. Her experiences and the results of the study enlighten the theoretical approach, gender specific aspects become especially relevant by analysing the changing roles of the family members in exile.

Finally it is the aim of the author to emphasise that refugees are not passive but that they rather have to actively deal with their new situations. Anthropological research looks beyond the role of the victim and strongly points out the active roles and agencies of asylum seekers.

### Traude Bollauf, *Flight and Refuge. As Domestic Servant to England. The Example of three Women from Vienna*

Over 55 % of the 55,000 refugees who came to Britain on their flight from prosecution in Germany and Nazi-occupied Austria were women. Nearly 20,000, or over one of three, of the refugees – the vast majority of these being female – came as domestic servants.

These are the astonishing figures the author of this essay was confronted with when she was researching the background of Luise Fischer's flight from Nazi oppression in former Austria to Great Britain in autumn 1938. Luise Fischer, a journalist, used a "domestic permit" as her flight document. And so did Dr. Stella Klein, a teacher at the Jewish gymnasium in Vienna, and Hedy Feller working in a Viennese kindergarten. The domestic permit – at first a document for British employers enabling them to engage foreign domestic servants for a fixed period – became the only available opening into England, especially for women. A considerable proportion of these women who used this document to escape from Nazi prosecution because of their Jewish origin, were not actually domestics by trade. The essay tries to enlighten the backgrounds of flights by the help of a domestic permit as there are: a special Austrian tradition of young women – not only Jewish ones – who used to go to England as domestic servants from the beginning of the Great Depression; the British refugee policy; the work of the refugee organisations; the problematical relationship between mistress and maid etc. There is also a focus at the fundamental change in the life condition of the refugee servants after the start of Second World War: Suspicions of being German spies and internment as "enemy aliens".

The essay is a preliminary study connected to the doctoral research of the author.

**Edith Hobsig, Women on the Flight. Asylum and Integration in Austria from Woman Specific Perspective**

The article deals with the general situation of female asylum seekers and refugees in Austria as well as with their special needs and problems. It is based on a broader report on behalf of the UNHCR in Vienna.

Since the war in former Yugoslavia there is a growing awareness about gender-related aspects of migration in Austria. This could be recognised in the political and public discussion. The main points are the appreciation of female causes in the asylum seeking process and the special needs of female refugees during their integration period.

In spite of the demands of UNHCR, ECRE and various NGO's only few political measures took place to improve the situation. No special laws have been enacted until now. Despite the legal situation some women got asylum because of female causes in the last years.

The public opinion in Austria sees women of foreign countries who have other social and religious backgrounds mainly as members of a bigger group than as individual persons. Therefore Austrians show a tendency to generalise, f.e. they think all arabic women are dominated by their men.

Female refugees said this point stress them most because Austrians don't like to see them as individual persons with their own habits and problems. The women said they have to defend their religion, their husbands, their ways of living far too often. This point is not only a personal problem. As we know, this is one of the main problems – for women and men – integrating into Austrian society, especially in the employment sector.

Therefore Austria needs to raise the awareness about the real situations of female asylum-seekers and refugees in everyday life as well as on the legal field.

**Annemarie Steidl, Young, Unwed, Mobile and Female. From the Countries of the Habsburg Monarchy to the United States of America**

Although women participate in every human migration, more actively in some than in others, they have been ignored by migration research for a long time. However, migrating women or women in migration processes, whether as stayers or movers, are no longer invisible. Analysing a sample of passenger lists from Bremen to New York and the Census of the United States of America in the year 1910 will give new inside in female migration over long distances, from the Habsburg Monarchy to the United States of America, at the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While women accounted for roughly 40 % of the total immigration in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, since 1930, by contrast, women have dominated migrations to the United States.

Inhabitants of the Habsburg Monarchy had already started migrating to North America from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards, but in the decades preceding the outbreak of the First World War there emerged a new type of migration. Particularly in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Austria-Hungary became a major source of migrants to the United States of America. The proportion of women who took part in this great overseas migration varied by ethnic background and type of migration. The unmarried, young, and independent migrant was female, since more single women than men from the provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy decided for a transatlantic move.

Although migrant women wage earners in the United States, like in Europe, clustered in very few female-dominated occupations, their possibilities to earn ones living changed after they went overseas. While domestic service was the most important and most exclusively female occupation in Europe, the demand for factory "girls" increased in the USA and more and more Polish, Czech, Jewish, and German women were occupied in textile factories and garment production. Especially for the daughters of the migrants the transatlantic move raised their chances to climb up the social ladder. In addition, women migrants of every background were less likely to return to their homelands than were men.