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Why a
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the Union
on Women

Interview:
Ruth Bader
Ginsburg

Women and
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Today

Women and
Leadership



Introduction

We are delighted to devote this issue of *EUI Times* to ‘Women in Europe and the World’, the theme of the EUI’s 2016 State of the Union Conference which will bring together academics, policymakers and civil society to engage in high-level reflection on the European Union, in Florence on May 5th-7th.

The past decades have seen a dramatic shift in the positions occupied by women in societies across the world. Exploring these developments, the 2016 State of the Union will address the extent of change in women’s lives, as well as the challenges to freedom and equality that remain. This 8 March edition of *EUI Times* previews some of the topics to be covered in May.

In our Features section Professor Ruth Rubio Marin outlines why a State of the Union on women this year is so important, highlighting the persistence of violence against women, pay gaps and threats to reproductive autonomy. *EUI Times* also interviews U. S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and speaks with International Relations Professor Jennifer Welsh on women in conflict. Professor Brigid Laffan, Director of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) focuses on the corporate realm, offering her take on how to close the gender gap at the highest levels.

The precarity of female migrants is the focus of our three opinion pieces. Professor Anna Triandafyllidou looks specifically at the gender dimension of migration, while Research Associate Dr Sabrina Marchetti writes on paid domestic labourers and Dr Letizia Palumbo addresses the exploitation of agricultural workers, many of whom are migrant women.

In our Profile section, *EUI Times* takes a look at the research of Professor Deirdre Curtin, who is working on transparency in European governance, and Professor Vanessa Grotti, who works on migrant maternity.

In our Publications section we interview Dr Jan Skopek regarding a volume produced by EUI Professor Hans-Peter Blossfeld’s ‘EduLIFE’ project—a comparative study of gendered outcomes in labour market achievement for young women. Finally, we cover *Beyond Trafficking and Slavery*, a new teaching and research tool co-edited by Marie Curie Fellow Neil Howard.

As ever, we sincerely hope you enjoy the *EUI Times*. In the spirit of debate and exchange, we welcome your thoughts and comments.

Stephan Albrechtskirchinger
Director, Communications Service



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DIRECTOR: Stephan Albrechtskirchinger

EDITOR: Jackie Gordon

WRITING: Olivia Arigho-Stiles

ONLINE: times.eui.eu

EMAIL: times@eui.eu

European University Institute

Badia Fiesolana - Via dei Roccettini, 9
50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI) - Italy
+39 055 4685266

www.eui.eu

twitter: @europeuni

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COVER IMAGE : RUTH BADER GINSBURG AT THE EUI, 2 FEBRUARY 2016

IMAGE THIS PAGE: OLIVIA ARIGHO-STILES AND RUTH BADER GINSBURG, 1 FEBRUARY 2016



Why a State of the Union on Women?

Why a State of the Union on Women?

Women are half of the population in the world. 94% of Europeans agree that equality between men and women is a fundamental right and, I would even say, a distinctive feature of the philosophical understanding of European citizenship. In spite of this, in many ways the objective of gender equality in Europe remains largely unachieved. Moreover, every topic of political relevance that Europe is confronting including the financial and economic crisis, the challenges posed by migration and refugees, or the rise in terrorist threats has a gender dimension to it because it affects women in distinctive ways. This perspective, however, is rarely put to the front of the conversation. This is precisely what the State of the Union will do.

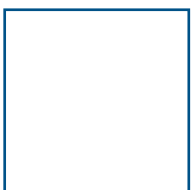
How are European women fairing in terms of gender equality in the marketplace?

Gender gap on employment has narrowed in recent years. At the same time inequalities within and between Member States have grown and many challenges remain in critical areas. Just to give you a sense let me mention that, according to a 2014 European Commission Report on Equality between Women and Men, in Europe women still account for less than a quarter of company board members, the gender pay gap is at 16% and, even more worrisomely, the pension gap has reached 39% while occupational segregation is still widespread. We have long way to go still.

What about violence against women? How is Europe doing in the fight against it?

Unfortunately, the prevalence of gender-based violence is still alarmingly high, with a third of women in the EU having experienced physical or sexual violence mostly in the form of intimate partner violence or sexual harassment. Other forms of gender violence are also prevalent and worrisome. For instance, the statistics on victims of trafficking in human beings reflect a very strong gender bias with 80% of victims being women and girls, many of them trafficked for sexual exploitation.

In terms of measures to combat the expressions of forms of violence some progress has certainly been made over the last decade at the European level. For one thing Europe now has reliable data with the first EU-wide survey on women's experience of violence brilliantly carried out by the Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2014. Also, in 2011 European Directive (2011/36/EU) on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims was adopted. More recently, in the framework of the Council of Europe, we must celebrate the adoption of the so-called Istanbul Convention a Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence which sets comprehensive standards of the matter and which entered into force in August 2014. More needs to be done, especially regarding education and prevention.



Ruth Rubio Marin is Professor of Constitutional and Public Comparative Law at the European University Institute.



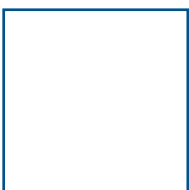
Ruth Rubio Marin

Europe has been promoting the adoption of laws imposing corporate board quotas together with electoral quotas to empower women. How do you assess these mechanisms? Can they be effective tools in achieving the goal of a fair distribution of decision-making power between the sexes?

The proportion of women on the boards of the largest publicly listed companies is at 20% and only 28% of elected members of national parliaments in European Member States are women, with national governments also composed of 28% women on average. The objective of a perfect gender parity or gender balance in decision-making is therefore still far in the horizon. Because in many countries it has been felt that waiting for decades and decades in the hope to incrementally achieve that goal is unacceptable, fast-track gender quotas are being embraced. Legislated quotas to enhance the presence of women in the legislator and the executive have been spreading around the world, with Argentina being the first country to adopt them in 1991, and are now a truly global phenomenon. Full parity and not just a minimum threshold of women is becoming more and more the desired objective, with Latin America leading the trend.

The idea of parity was born in Europe and Europe has taken the lead in the adoption of gender quotas for company boards. A proposed Directive by the European Commission was presented in 2012 but never saw the light of the day. In spite of this more and more European countries, including Norway, the pioneer, but also France, Spain, Iceland, Belgium, Italy and Germany have passed legislation in recent years. In none of the domains of authority and decision-making has parity been achieved as of yet. Also, it is too soon to tell what will be the effect of the increased presence of women in spheres of power and authority, in terms of the policies advanced, and the ways of exercising power.

I think that the symbolic power of having more and more women in positions of leadership is tremendous precisely because it challenges the notion that these are male domains as opposed to the traditionally conceived female domains such as the family. In my view, however, the effects of these measures will remain limited for as long as a more equitable distribution of care work between the sexes is not achieved in the private sphere.



What are some of the interesting questions that Europe is confronting in the domain of sexual and reproductive justice today?

There are many and they push in different directions. In some European countries, especially in some Eastern European countries, we are watching the limitation of women's reproductive rights in the name of a new nationalism which narratively seeks to rescue the "traditional" family from pre-communist times. Even in Western European countries, including in the Nordic countries, women's right to an abortion is being increasingly contested in more or less subtle ways, such as the introduction of parental consent requirements or of mandatory counseling preconditions. These sometimes have an explicitly dissuasive nature and are often presented as aiming at the protection of women. Conscientious objections regulations sometimes present a huge challenge in terms of guaranteeing equal access to abortion.

Technological advances are offering more and more reproductive options, and new reproduction forms, such as surrogacy, are being hotly debated in several European countries.

Some claims of traditionally discriminated sexual minorities, including intersex and transgender persons are making new inroads, and the reproductive and affective rights of gays and lesbians are also gaining terrain in many European nations, as maybe best epitomized by the recent Irish referendum of same-sex marriage. The Catholic Church is actively fighting these evolutions as expressions of what it perceives as a "gender ideology" threatening the family and traditional values across the continent and beyond.

So, you see that there are many debates concerning sexual and reproductive matter, with progression and regression, contradictions and constant change.

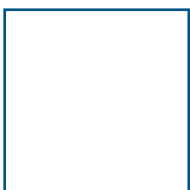
You mentioned that Europe's refugee and migration challenges have a gender dimension. Can you provide some examples?

Think for instance of the heightened risk of violence and abuse that both refugee women and migrant

women experience. Violence, including sexual violence, does not simply occur on insecure routes or shelters, but also in purportedly safe places such as reception centres. Also, language barriers, precarious legal status, limited knowledge of their rights, inadequate access to appropriate jobs and social isolation are some of the factors in increasing the likelihood of immigrant and refugee women to experience violence. From a legal point of view, the problem is not only one of insufficient legal protections against violence but also that, when there is a legal response, it often focuses narrowly on criminal law.

Family reunification and employment legislation applied to migrants and refugees require specific attention. Problematic aspects of family reunification regimes, which often apply to refugees and migrants alike, are for instance the fact that the residence status of the spouse is made dependent on that of their sponsor spouse, or that it comes with limitations in the access to employment. All of this often places women as spouses in a situation of dependence which renders them more vulnerable to abuse.

A similar situation can be observed in relation to trafficking and violence against immigrant women workers. While many domestic legal systems have in place criminal laws aimed at preventing and suppressing trafficking and related phenomena of domestic servitude, sexual exploitation and so forth, labour migration regimes throughout Europe continue to impose a strict dependence of migrant workers from employers. This is particularly visible in the regulation of sectors of the labour market dominated by immigrant women such as domestic work and entertainment. In this way the risk factors linked to isolation and to the private character of these employment realms are aggravated by the strict legal dependence from employers imposed by these regimes as a precondition for continuous enjoyment of residence rights. Protection and autonomy enhancing measures, and not just repressive measures, are required. Often, however, they are in tension with migration policies which often see migrants as a market commodity.





The Quiet American



Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Few octogenarian women have inspired such zeal in so many younger women. But fewer still have sat on the U.S. Supreme Court. Ruth Bader Ginsburg may be the second woman to have ever been appointed to the position (in 1993, at the behest of President Bill Clinton), but in recent years she has more famously assumed a cult following as Notorious RBG, an affectionate moniker referring to Notorious B.I.G., the rapper who was killed in 1997.

Ginsburg's life and career are testament to the massive social transformations experienced by women in America and Europe in the latter half of the 20th century. When she graduated top of her class at Columbia law school, having transferred there from Harvard law school when the dean refused to grant her a degree, she was unable to find a job because law firms were averse to hiring women for anything other than secretarial work. At Harvard she has been one of just nine women in a class of 500.

Bader Ginsburg eventually found work as a co-founder of the A.C.L.U. Women's Rights Project, bringing cases to an all-male Supreme Court which centred on a simple constitutional premise; that men and women were equal under the law.

She is a trailblazer perhaps by necessity as much as design. A Jewish woman shut out from a society which privileged the WASP male above all others, Ginsburg was one of many who were radicalised by the 'separate spheres' hegemon which dismissed women's capabilities as individuals and denied them the opportunities afforded to men.

In her interview with *EUI Times*, Bader Ginsburg answers questions sagely and with wry humour, often referring to court cases from decades ago. Tiny in stature, her gaze is kindly but sharp and her replies punctuated with long, thoughtful pauses.

Reflecting on a lengthy career challenging gender discrimination, she is stoic when she speaks about pro-

Ruth Bader Ginsburg is Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. She delivered the annual Ursula Hirschmann Lecture on Gender at the EUI on 2 February.

“In the U.S., anti-discrimination law began with race [...] What happened was that the race cases helped the gender cases.”

gress made thus far and the hurdles that remain. She tells *EUI Times*, “There’s still a long way to go but what has come down, is what I call the ‘separate spheres’ arrangement of the laws, and people thinking that, in the words of a Motown opera “That’s the way women are!”. What is gone for the most part, are the explicit stop signs. Those barriers are gone. The notion is to let people do whatever their God given talent lets them do, and not have any man-made, artificial barriers to stop them from aspiring and achieving.”

That said, many of the causes Ginsburg has fought for remain deeply unsettled today. In particular, abortion provision has never ceased to be a burning hot potato in both the US and Europe. In Spain in 2014 the government was forced to back-track on proposals to dramatically tighten its abortion laws. And in the US, the number of abortion clinics in some states has dwindled; in five states — Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming — just one abortion clinic remains. The situation is best exemplified by Texas, which is attempting to pass a law that may close three-quarters of the state’s clinics. The U.S. Supreme Court will rule on the constitutionality of the law later this year.

Ginsburg has long pointed out the class implications of these developments, with sparse abortion provision disproportionately affecting poor and ethnic minority women, who must shoulder the additional financial costs of travel across greater distances.

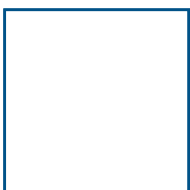
In her 2016 Ursula Hirschmann lecture at the EUI, given as a conversation with EUI Law Professor Ruth Rubio Marin, responding to a question on the role of courts in

initiating social change, Ginsburg offered the view that the Supreme Court is fundamentally a ‘reactive institution’. She does not believe that deep social change can arise alone through the Supreme Court, which after all is ‘an undemocratic body’. As such, she is critical of the landmark *Roe v Wade* (1973) ruling which enshrined the right to an abortion in the U.S constitution under the 14th Amendment. Firstly because it was based on a right to ‘privacy’ and so is more about a doctor’s freedom to practice than women’s bodily autonomy. Secondly, because it has mobilised pro-life activists to an unprecedented degree and provided them with a single, conveniently identifiable target.

Propelling Ginsburg’s career has been the belief in the reciprocity between gender and race-based discrimination, and the pragmatic faith in the possibility of the U.S Constitution to prevent these. The post-war feminist movement which emerged in the US was bound up closely with the African American civil rights movement which pre-empted it. Both located oppression in structural factors and both used litigation methods to attack inequalities.

This represents a cleavage between the European and American narratives of women’s rights. Ginsburg points out, “one big difference between the experience in Europe and America is that in Europe, it has always been gender not minorities. In the U.S, anti-discrimination law began with race. So the laws were set up to ensure African Americans were not denied opportunities. Women were made part of our famous Title VII law [a federal law that prohibits employers from discriminating against employees on the basis of sex, race, colour, national origin, and religion]. They got into the law as a result of an amendment by a member of Congress from Virginia. He wanted to defeat the law. His notion was if we have women [included], people will realise the law is ridiculous and the whole law will fall. What happened was that the race cases helped the gender cases.”

Ginsburg stresses the common cause that united African American and white women, both groups labouring against the same fetters. “I will give you an example of the first Title VII case to be brought to the Supreme Court. *Ida Phillips against Marriott*



Co. The company had a rule; we won't hire mothers of preschool children. That case was taken up by the NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People]. The plaintiff was a white woman but the NAACP realised that striking down that kind of restriction would be enormously beneficial to African American women in the job market. So breaking down the traditional separate jobs for men and women has been very helpful to all women."

But the women's liberation movement of the 1970s aimed at more than just the dissolution of the separate spheres ideology. So can feminism still make the radical critique it once did? Can it still invoke the emancipatory vision of social relations it once looked towards? Ginsburg replies with uncharacteristic promptness. "Yes, I think it holds most hope for the world, if countries allow women to do whatever their God given talent enables them to do. I think we will all be better off if women can contribute."

Ginsburg is a firm believer in an inherent solidarity between women; women at the top should fight for women at the bottom so that all (including men) will ultimately reap benefit. She falls short of making overt criticism of a system which imposes the inequalities between women in the first place. In this, it is possible to find the lingering residue of the aspirations of liberal second wave feminists in America. But in the 2010s, when women increasingly occupy the elite positions in corporate hierarchies that were once denied to them, and can therefore be considered complicit in the economic oppression of women beneath them, can we assume the same levels of solidarity between women today?

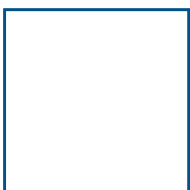
Class divisions of course were never absent from the second wave feminist movement in which Ginsburg was involved. The movement in America has historically faced criticism for having a middle-class bias which confined the concerns of poor and black women to the fringes. Ginsburg believes addressing these persistent inequalities will take time, and that change will be incremental. "It won't happen overnight. But I can see even in the different generations in my own family. It used to be women shouldn't work when they were married. The next step was, it's good to

have two incomes in a family if you want to do well for your children, but she has to do all the 'woman-y' things. She has to take the children to their medical and dental check-ups, buy their shoes, have dinner on the table at 7pm. Some women saw something wrong with that arrangement. Their complaint was, he should do more than take out the garbage."

Ginsburg believes that eroding gender roles can benefit men as well as women given the constraints they impose upon male behaviour, especially in relation to family. She continues, "At the same time, some men realised when their children were grown that they had very little part in raising them and they came to regret that. So I see in my own children, that men are doing much more in the way of childcare than they used to." Famously, Ginsburg's husband Marty, supported her unwaveringly throughout her career.

Bader Ginsburg may be of an old-school liberal feminist bent, reasonably emphasising women's assimilation into once male-dominated boardrooms and law firms, but she is also quietly radical in her sensitivity to what it is to be poor in a system run by the rich. She remains keenly attuned to the class dimensions in the fight to secure women's rights. Her words of advice for young feminists today have a deep and universal poignancy to them. "First, appreciate that no doors are closed to you if you have the talent and the will to aspire and achieve. And the second, remember the women who are less fortunate than you. Don't be satisfied for example, that you, a woman with a good income, knows that she can have access to an abortion if she wants one when poor women are not in that situation. You should be fighting to establish rights for everyone, not just those who can pay."

You can watch the full interview with Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg [here](#).





War and Peace: Women's Roles in Conflict and Peacemaking

Is the world safer for women now than one hundred years ago? From trench warfare to the advent of drones, the last century has seen enormous shifts in the nature of armed conflict. The means by which humans ultimately contest power may have changed in form, but they are still founded upon a grimly basic logic of coercion.

With this in mind, Jennifer Welsh is ambivalent about how much safer women are today than their foremothers. Welsh is Professor of International Relations at the European University Institute (EUI) and a Senior Research Fellow at Somerville College, Oxford. She is organising and chairing a panel at the 2016 State of the Union on 'Women in conflict and peace-making'.

Sexual violence against women emerges as the overarching danger faced by women and girls in armed conflict. Welsh tells EUI Times, "This type of violence has become a weapon of war in a way that didn't exist to the same degree one hundred years ago. Today armed groups use this weapon strategically, for very particular ends."

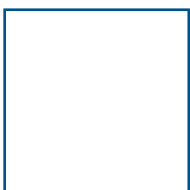
Welsh traces the prevailing spectre of sexual violence to specific changes in how wars are fought today. "Two facts are worthy to keep in mind during the State of the Union. First, we see over the course of the last century a dramatic decline in the incidence inter-state violence and a relative growth in the frequency of civil conflict. Indeed, the vast majority of today's wars are civil wars. Second, the types of armed groups have evolved, as have their objectives and tactics. One particularly striking feature of

contemporary conflict is the presence of non-state armed groups who prey deliberately on civilians – including upon women – as integral parts of their campaigns to spread terror."

"While I wouldn't want to suggest complete historical novelty, these changes are important to acknowledge. Many of today's conflicts are also what we refer to as 'asymmetric': one side is materially much more powerful than the other. In this case, the weaker side resorts to non-traditional means of combat, often in contravention of the law of armed conflict. The use of indiscriminate explosive weapons, hitting a market or a school, or the raping of a civilian population – these tactics can instill fear and assist in victory. It's not to say these crimes didn't occur before – they did – but they come into much sharper relief in the some of the conflicts we've seen in the past two decades such as, for example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq or Syria."

Yet this kind of debate opens a sprawling can of worms. In recent years, there has been a tendency for military intervention to be justified by world leaders on the grounds of protecting women's rights. This was evident in the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as more recently in debates about how to confront the threat of ISIS.

In many ways, this tendency echoes Europe's colonial past where colonial expansion was justified by a narrative that depicted a barbaric and misogynistic 'Muslim world' in contradistinction to a liberal and enlightened West. This has in turn fuelled calls to 'civilise' Islamic states in order to make them 'safe' for



Jennifer Welsh is Professor and Chair in International Relations at the EUI and a Senior Research Fellow at Somerville College, University of Oxford.

“One particularly striking feature of contemporary conflict is the presence of non-state armed groups who prey deliberately on civilians – including upon women – as integral parts of their campaigns to spread terror.”



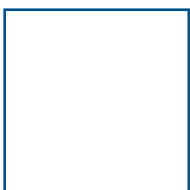
Jennifer Welsh

women, in line with Western norms. The argument goes that this so-called ‘imperial feminism’ uses a rhetorical commitment to advance women’s rights as a pretext for military intervention, which is actually driven by economic and geopolitical imperatives. Welsh demurs from this explicit critique of humanitarian intervention but concedes that there are often ulterior motives behind the progressive rhetoric expressed by Western state leaders.

“I think Afghanistan is a very good case to examine, because the justification for involvement evolved over time. At the beginning there was a very expansive version of what the Western intervention was all about. It was certainly about addressing the security threat that Al Qaida posed, given that Afghanistan was the place from where that threat arose. But there was also a more hubristic vision for what intervention could accomplish. In the midst of rooting out Al Qaida, Western leaders also promised their respective populations that they would remake Afghan society, and that success would be defined against standards of democratisation and rights promotion – including the promotion of women’s rights. Very

quickly, however, as the interveners became bogged down, the more expansive justification was chipped away at and the underlying security imperative was revealed.”

She continues, “I think it is right to ask penetrating questions about why Western countries intervene. But I’m not willing to go as far to say that the commitment to addressing grave injustices is always purely rhetorical. In the case of Afghanistan in the early years of intervention, many actors pursued – in addition to a security rationale – a genuine desire to address poverty and injustice; one can see this in the aid budgets and aid programmes of Western donors. In other cases, Western actors have argued that the injustices perpetrated against women not only infringe on political or economic rights but also constitute grave and serious violations of physical integrity that require some kind of response. When acts harm women’s physical integrity in a systematic and large-scale manner, I would be prepared to say the demand of third parties that rights be defended is not imperialistic. Whether a military response to such acts is always justified is another question.”



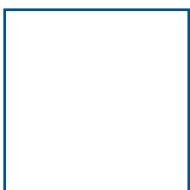
“The starting premise is that we don’t want to only consider women as victims. Women have historically played many roles in the course of armed conflict – not just as victims of violence, but also as combatants, as supporters of the war effort, and as political leaders deciding upon war or peace.”

Looking to the 2016 State of the Union, Welsh tells EUI Times that it is an especially ‘opportune moment’ to reflect upon Europe’s successes in advancing women’s rights as well as addressing the challenges that persist. She asserts that “Europe is a great environment in which to ask how our efforts to bring about change at a formal or legal level translate into day-to-day practice.” Certainly the last few decades have seen enormous shifts in women’s representation in both Europe and beyond, as well as legal changes to enhance their social and economic opportunities.

The particular panel that Welsh is chairing aims to broaden how we think about women’s participation in conflict. “The starting premise is that we don’t want to only consider women as victims. Women have historically played many roles in the course of armed conflict – not just as victims of violence, but also as combatants, as supporters of the war effort, and as political leaders deciding upon war or peace. There are also fascinating histories about how women have participated in non-violent resistance. Today, in the new kinds of conflicts we face, women are also being recruited to play their part in the modern ‘battlefield’. On the other end of the spectrum, we want to look at the degree to which, and the ways in which, women are involved in peace-making – not just in terms of peace negotiations but also in terms of transitional justice and the rebuilding of post conflict infrastructure.”

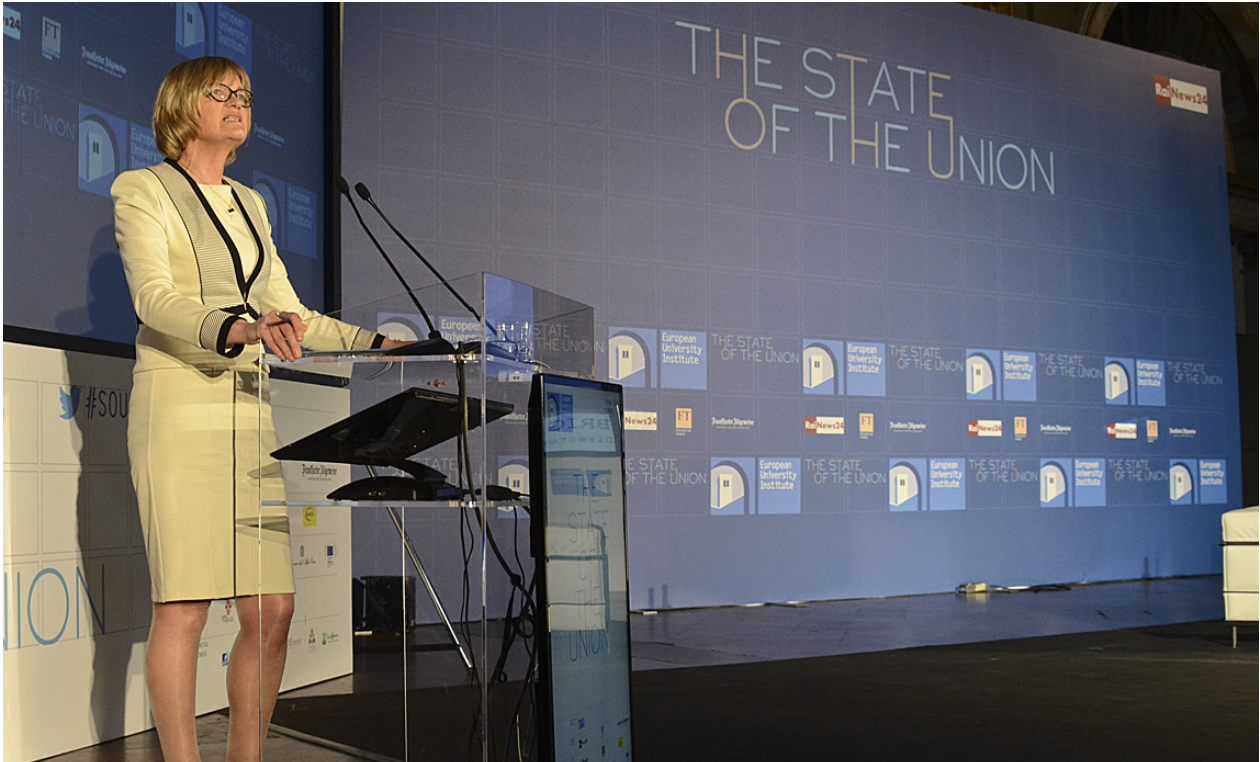
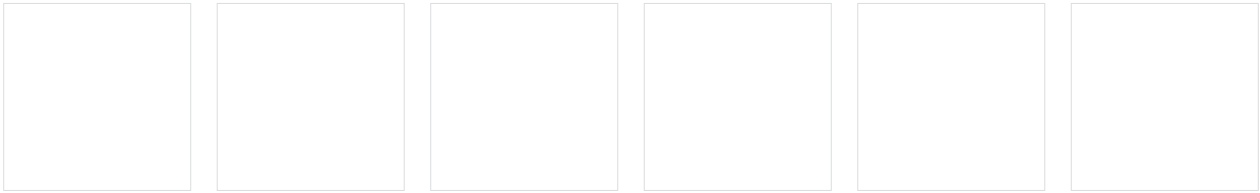
With respect to the broader theme of the 2016 State of the Union, Welsh emphasises that Europe should not be seen as exceptional nor European women as especially privileged. “There are still very important gaps and issues which are worthy of focus, which allow us not to treat Europe as a special case but rather to understand how Europe might be more similar to other parts of the world. If we consider the persistence of sexual violence, the participation of women in senior leadership positions, or the role of women in politics, there may be less that distinguishes Europe than we might think.”

Speaking to EUI Times, Welsh offers a poignant and trenchant reminder that securing women’s rights remains perennially difficult in a world plagued by war and conflict. The ways in which women are affected by war in the 21st century emerges as a complex and oblique picture, a shifting vision of agency and vulnerability. The message remains that the struggle to safeguard women’s rights does not begin and end on battle lines but its terrain provides an excellent locus for enquiry.





Women in Leadership

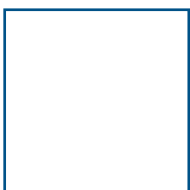


Brigid Laffan, Keynote Address, State of the Union 2015

Women may hold up half the sky but they hold up barely a ceiling tile when it comes to the FTSE 100's boardrooms. Less than one in 10 executive directors at Britain's top companies is a woman, research has revealed, and the situation is even bleaker in Germany and France. In Europe's top 100 companies, men hold 89% of executive committee jobs while women hold 6% of staff roles.

So what can be done to address this imbalance?

Professor Brigid Laffan, Director of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) and Director of the Global Governance Programme at the European University Institute (EUI) believes that mandatory quotas are an important tool in addressing the most egregious gender disparities, at least in the short term.



Brigid Laffan is Director of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, and Director of the EUI's Global Governance Programme.

Speaking to EUI Times, she explains “When you look at banks, stock exchanges and big companies we see that women are underrepresented in two ways; on boards at the non-executive level, and as senior executives. Now what do you do about that? All the change initiatives appear to have come from government, regulators and civil society pressure. So then the question is, is it necessary to have quotas? Affirmative action has always been a contested issue among both women and men. I would not favour the establishment of quotas as a permanent response. Quotas have a very important role to play in a transition phase where you indicate clearly that the status quo is unacceptable and you must make progress. [They] ensure you begin to get more diversity.”

Laffan is keen to stress the global dimensions to the gender gap at an elite level. “There are a lot of very big differences across the world. You get more women in the boardrooms of the rich world and fewer in Asia and other emerging economies. In China and Brazil it is extremely low. So it’s not just about what happens in the established economies but also the emergent economies.”

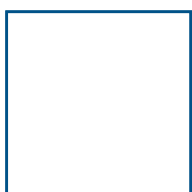
Laffan believes that the gender disparity derives at root from the fact that women have children. Or more specifically, from the failure of many employers to allow employees to adapt their work around family life. “We know that in a significant number of disciplines women are out-performing their male counterparts, but women are almost absent from the senior echelons.”

As such, for Laffan the problem is less tied up with gender and more with failure of businesses to make these necessary adjustments for family life. “I don’t see it as just a gender issue, I see it as a family issue.” She continues, “There are particular pressures on women. I think we can still do an enormous amount of work on flexibility, on stopping the clock, so if a woman takes extended maternity leave, it is seen as part of career progression. The provision of crèches helps. But it also requires an agreement within families that child rearing is not just the preserve of mothers.”

“I would not favour the establishment of quotas as a permanent response. Quotas have a very important role to play in a transition phase where you indicate clearly that the status quo is unacceptable and you must make progress. [They] ensure you begin to get more diversity.”

However, in an age of austerity in which the GDP of European economies is stagnating rather than increasing, how likely is it that these adjustments can be made by companies feeling the financial pinch? Laffan concedes that the task of adapting work to fit around the needs of family is tricky but nonetheless essential. “I accept the challenges, I don’t think you can say it’s easy. But if companies cannot call on all of the human capital that exists in society, that’s also a problem for productivity. Contented employees tend to be highly motivated, highly committed and highly productive. I’m not saying there are magic formulas but certainly there are ways of ensuring women and men have choice.”

In many ways, Laffan’s sentiments more generally reflect some of the changes that have taken place in the priorities of the feminist movement since the 1970s. Though never a homogenous movement, the efforts of second wave feminists were propelled largely by a radical ideological critique of existing gender and economic paradigms. A force that was marginal and countercultural, the call for gender equality has now become normalised and institutionalised. Indeed in



recent years, western societies have seen the rise of 'corporate feminism' which stresses women's assimilation into the institutions once considered central to their oppression, epitomised in Sheryl Sandberg's 'Lean-In' philosophy.

A Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, Sandberg has drawn criticism from some feminists for claiming in her 2013 book *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*, that the gender gap in part owes itself to women holding themselves back from leadership roles through their own socialised behaviour. But more fundamentally, many point out that contrary to Sandberg's starting premise, securing gains for women in the corporate elite does not necessarily translate into gains for women as a whole. So how far do we actually need a radical reshaping of our current economic structures in order to truly advance women's rights?

Laffan is deeply sceptical about the radical economic potential of feminist critiques today. She declares flatly, "I don't think feminism on its own is going to radically alter the economic structure of the world. The pressure of climate change is more likely to have a profound influence. And nor do I think all issues are economic. Social norms, culture plays an important part. This is not simply a matter of material drivers on their own, there are deep historical factors at play."

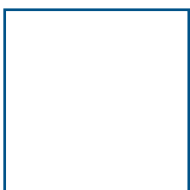
For Laffan, radical change, if by that is meant revolutionary change, is neither feasible nor desirable. "I don't pin my hopes on a radical change in the economic system. For men and women, the rising inequalities in the world are very serious but that is not just a question of gender, even if women find themselves more disadvantaged than men when it comes to economic power."

Pragmatic in her reflections on the trajectory of feminism over her career, Laffan explains, "Looking back I don't think we had a political programme in the 1960s and 1970s that was capable of getting the support of a majority of women in our societies. We had an important role in changing institutions, but we were a relatively small, restricted, elitist group of women."

Ultimately Laffan is optimistic about the prospect of change to come, as well as social and economic advances secured so far. "There's no doubt there has been a very significant increase in women's financial and economic power because more women now work. That's a very significant and important change. Women are now powerful income earners, although there are income-gender gaps."

She adds, "I know my two daughters live in a world which offers them many more opportunities than even I would have had. We now have Christine Lagarde as head of the International Monetary Fund and the head of the Fed [Federal Reserve] is a woman [Janet Yellen], and that's a major breakthrough. No longer are those global financial institutions entirely in the hands of men."

It remains clear that although women are still underrepresented in the world's corporate elite, change is slowly underway. Given the immense shifts noticeable over even a single generation, there is ample reason to remain optimistic that gender parity in the world's leading institutions will be imminently realised.





Faculty Transparency in Governance

Deirdre Curtin



Deirdre Curtin

A recent arrival to the EUI and RSCAS as a Joint Chair Professor of European Union Law, Professor Deirdre Curtin works on the perennial dilemma of how to reconcile transparency with governing institutions' operational need for confidentiality.

"My ongoing research relates to the relationship between national security and a fundamental right of privacy in the European and global context. The role of judges has become very important both at the national and the European

level. But what does that mean in practice and what is the interaction with new data protection legislation and international agreements? It's fascinating in a wider governance perspective."

Recently Curtin has focused on the operations of the European Central Bank (ECB). Few EU institutions have elicited such rancour from Europe's citizens as the ECB. Its new 1.3 billion euro Frankfurt headquarters were the target of violent protests involving over 1000 people in March

last year, while during the tense Greek debt negotiations in summer of the same year, former Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis accused the ECB of 'liquidity asphyxiation' over its refusal to provide short-term lending.

While ostensibly an apolitical body, it has in recent years become a highly politically potent symbol of the European Union's apparent crisis of legitimacy. Inextricably associated with the austerity policies that followed bailouts for Europe's struggling economies in Ireland, Spain, Portugal and Greece, the ECB's role in European governance is often ambiguous.

As Curtin tells EUI Times, "It's unheard of for central banks to have protestors burning cars outside their very visible new building. Its role in the Troika in particular has led to a lot of agitation."

She explains further, "I take a critical approach [to the ECB]. They keep a lot secret and they are relatively unchallenged. They have a lot of discretion."

Deirdre Curtin is Joint Chair Professor of European Union Law in the Departments of Law and the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the EUI.

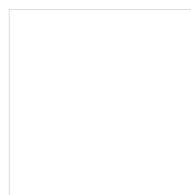
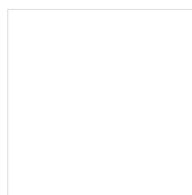
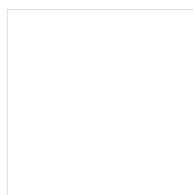
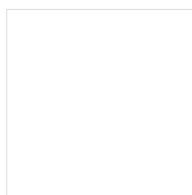
For Curtin, the ECB is interesting because it is an institution which has evolved particularly rapidly. She elaborates. “The issue really is the way in which [the ECB] gets more power. It has grown over time. It was set up to do monetary policy only and it has subsequently acquired a significant banking supervisory role over a very large number of national banks (currently 129). Even national central banks under its supervision appeal for improvements in the transparency of the ECB’s activities.”

For Curtin, one central problem with the ECB is the secrecy with which it conducts its operations. It is opaque both operationally and in terms of actual institutional complexity. She adds, “One of the issues with the financial crisis...was the refusal by the ECB to engage at the national level even after the necessity for confidentiality had gone, years later. The way the Troika came about and operated in practice was problematic from the perspective of democracy.”

Curtin’s research therefore places her at the centre of animated debates on the future of the European project, and specifically the ECB and the scope of its powers. If the EU fails to be accountable to its citizens, addressing its crisis of legitimacy is impossible. ■



Faculty Migrant Maternity Vanessa Grotti



Vanessa Grotti

The European migration crisis which has exploded with such violence in recent months has prompted deep introspection from academics and policymakers. From the dead bodies on the shores of Greek islands to the living bodies of those detained at land borders, the crisis is played out under the overarching shadow of life and death.

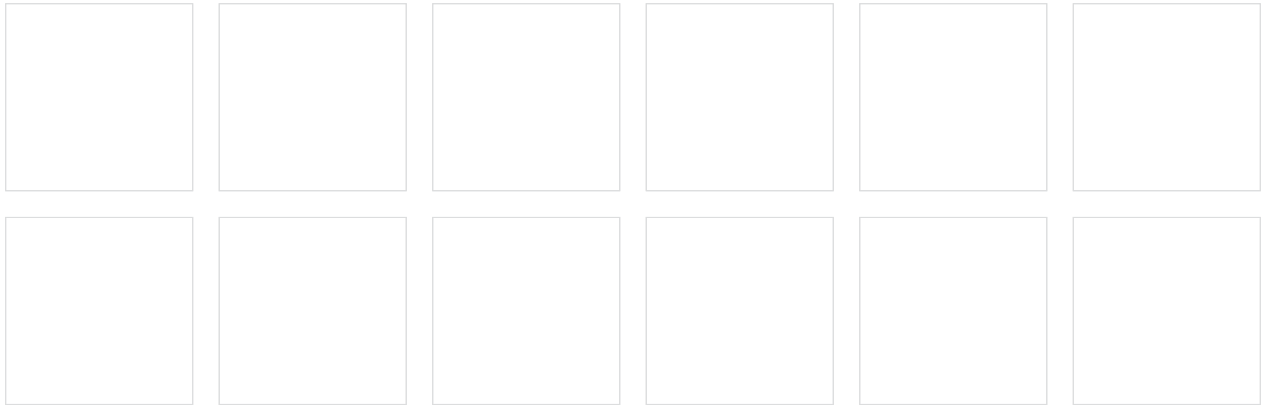
Professor Vanessa Grotti is looking at one of the crisis’ forgotten actors; pregnant women. They are a steadily increasing category

but remain an under-studied phenomenon according to Grotti. “Pregnant women are a complicated category; those who are adults are liable to be prosecuted for being undocumented in certain countries. But pregnancy means that they can be classified as vulnerable and subject to special rights for a limited time. Many fall between categories [of refugee and migrant]. They raise a lot of tensions.”

Grotti is a medical anthropologist working on the maternity care

Vanessa Grotti is a part-time professor at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. She is the Director of the ERC project ‘Intimate Encounters in EU Borderlands: Migrant Maternity, Sovereignty and the Politics of Care on Europe’s Periphery’-EU BORDER CARE (2015-2020).





received by undocumented pregnant migrants in EU borderlands. “The places that have been forgotten”. Awarded her PhD from Cambridge University in 2007, she recently joined the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) as Part-time Professor to lead a project entitled *‘Intimate Encounters in EU Borderlands: Migrant Maternity, Sovereignty and the Politics of Care on Europe’s Periphery’*.

Grotti has over a decade’s experience doing ethnographic research, mostly in South America. She was attracted to the theme of migration in Europe after a stint observing maternity wards in French Guiana, a French overseas department, where she witnessed the ways in which hospital bureaucracy rigidly upheld a European framework of borders. She recalls, “65% of the women who give birth there did not have French identity papers or entitlement to French social security. Even to get a blood test you need to have proper papers and be inserted into the system. I got interested in the obsession the hospital staff had with migration.”

Her research rests at the intersection of humanitarianism and colonialism. “It’s very clear that healing goes with civilising. Historically it always has done; the two go hand in hand because medicine is based on technology, progress, and rationalisation. On organising where you think there is no organisation.”

She adds, “Caregiving is often hierarchical. If you help someone, you deprive them of agency. It is asymmetrical.”

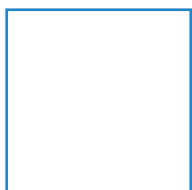
Indeed one of the noteworthy developments of the migration crisis is the way in which military enforcement has merged with caregiving. Grotti explains, “You have maternity wards run by NGOs installed on ships controlled by the Italian navy and soldiers working alongside NGO workers, in a blend of helping and enforcing.”

As such, Grotti warns against a simplistic dichotomy of force and care, emphasising how border enforcement and humanitarian agencies often work together during search and rescue operations. For example, portable maternity wards on board

Italian naval vessels. “It seems to be black and white. Those ‘nasty’ border officers working for Frontex and the good people from NGOs, but in reality they often work hand in hand.”

At the same time, against the tragedy of death is the sudden, joyous intrusion of birth. Grotti declares “You have muscular soldiers crying holding little babies saying ‘finally we have some life to save us from this death’. That’s why working on this subject is nice because it raises such strong emotions. In these peripheries, in Sicily and Greece, they have to deal with dead bodies all the time and suddenly a baby comes along. They have a strong healing power, which I didn’t expect because I didn’t find that in South America. It is touching that these people have this strong attachment to helping women give birth.”

Straddling grand themes of life, death and the tenacity of the human body, Grotti’s research touches on some of the most elemental aspects of Europe’s migration crisis. Its impact extends far beyond the European peripheries in which it is based. ■





The Gendered Dimension of the Refugee Crisis



Anna Triandafyllidou

Women and girls are both among the most vulnerable parts of the asylum seeking populations seeking refuge in Europe these last months, but also crucial actors in the future socio-economic integration of their families at destination.

Under conditions of civil war and protracted violence that affects civilians, women are among the first that need to flee as they run the risk not only of getting caught in enemy fire but also of becoming victims of sexual violence, themselves and their bodies incarnating the ethnic or religious group that has to be suppressed not just in the battlefield but also physically and emotionally through rape. These risks are magnified when a regional conflict escalates as it is happening today in the Middle East, causing a massive outflow of people in search of international protection.

The composition of the asylum seeking flows that cross from Tur-

key to Greece has been rapidly evolving through 2015. While in spring 2015 it was mainly men who were fleeing the conflict, by October 2015, 1 in 5 asylum seekers was a child and in December 2015 1 in 3 was a child. The rise in children refugees testifies to the rise in families and single women who flee the conflict. Among the asylum seekers registered in Greece during December 2015, 1 in 5 was a woman while men were only 45% of the total according to the UNHCR data.

Already in September 2015, the [UN Women](#) agency had called for action to protect women and girls who are fleeing their homes and are exposed to violence and abuse along their journeys. More recently there has been a call for increased attention to incidents of trafficking among populations seeking international protection travelling through the Balkan route from Greece to Germany and other northern European countries.

While being among the most vulnerable parts of the refugee populations, women are especially important for the future integration process of these refugee populations. They play an essential role

in keeping the family together and helping the integration of children in school life. Thus any refugee integration policies have to pay special attention to the appropriate integration of women refugees providing language learning classes and helping them with their first reception problems. Actually native women can provide for mentorship accompanying and advising the newcomers into the practical details of their new lives including grocery shopping, school routines, getting around in the neighbourhood, and necessary paperwork for the family.

Facing the refugee crisis requires a gender-sensitive approach to people in transit: There is an urgent need to ensure that no young girl or woman falls victim of abuse or trafficking on their road to safety. Also any preparation of their integration into the society of settlement and the labour market requires a special attention to the role of women as mother and spouses and agents of integration for the whole family. There is a need to reach out to the women through culturally and religiously sensitive information and mentoring, to enable them to recreate their homes at destination. ■

Anna Triandafyllidou is Robert Schuman Chair Professor at the RSCAS and Director of the Global Governance Programme's Research Strand on Cultural Pluralism.



Time for Rights for Paid Domestic Workers in Europe

On International Women's Day, the world celebrates women's achievements, stories and courage in all social fields. More than anything, attention should be given to the difficulties faced by women from underprivileged backgrounds, as the women labourers' whose deaths are sadly the event that marks the date of 8 March.



Sabrina Marchetti

ers in their host countries.

This is the case, for example, in the EU countries which do allow residence permits for labour migrants that want to work in this sector, such as the

Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Finland, and so forth. In other countries, the United Kingdom for instance, migrants in domestic work are legally bound to their employers and are not allowed to change employment, even in case of abusive situations.

In recent years, under the motto "domestic work is work!", activists and scholars have fought against the inequalities in this field and have finally achieved some important results for the recognition of rights and social status to domestic workers. The accomplishment that probably speaks out most is the proclamation of the ILO Convention n. 189 (and Recommendations n. 201) on "domestic work as decent work"

It is in this perspective that I find of the utmost importance to draw attention to the ongoing international campaign for the improvement of labour rights for women (and men) employed as domestic workers. Women's rights are particularly relevant to them not only because this is indeed a particularly feminised labour sector (more than 80% are women globally), but also because the activities that they carry out are so strongly linked to the role traditionally assigned to women in caring for their families and homes.

Despite their fundamental role in society, domestic workers suffer from very precarious labour conditions, low pay, exposure to physically onerous tasks, long

working hours, and lack of social protection. The situation is worsened for migrants, who are typically paid less and left with the most arduous jobs. More than anything, migrant domestic workers are penalised by migration policies which, in different ways from country to country, restrict their access to regular employment, thus pushing them into the precarious condition of undocumented or temporary migrants. This combination of discriminatory labour and migration regimes, which adds to a general worsening in the social status of such feminised and racialised jobs, gives shape to a very vulnerable and inequitable position for migrant domestic work-

Sabrina Marchetti is Research Associate at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies Global Governance Program in the Cultural Pluralism research area. From 2016 she will direct the ERC funded project 'DomeQUAL'.

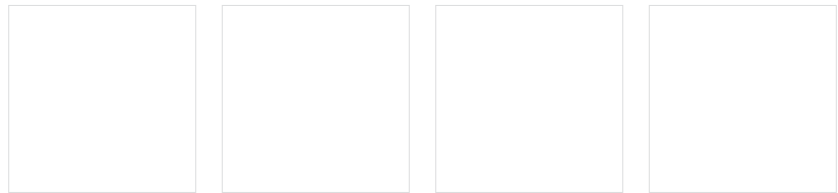
in 2011. The Convention has been ratified so far by 22 countries around the world which are therefore committed to equality between domestic workers and all other workers.

The situation however remains appalling, also in Europe where, as explained above, migration and labour policies often converge in creating vulnerable conditions for this category. An important positive sign has been the recent launch of a report on domestic workers' rights currently discussed at the European Parliament, in the Committee for Women's Rights and Gender Equality. As Kostadinka Kuneva, the Greek MEP rapporteur on this issue, [says](#) "If we regulate this profession, we will be able to reduce trafficking and the abuse of women". In facts, labour rights, especially in the care of migrants' work, are critical to defend women against violence and abuse in general.

Let us then conclude on these words, as a wishful proposition for the 2016 International Day of Women and the improvement of all women's lives. ■



Gender Exploitation in the Agricultural Sector



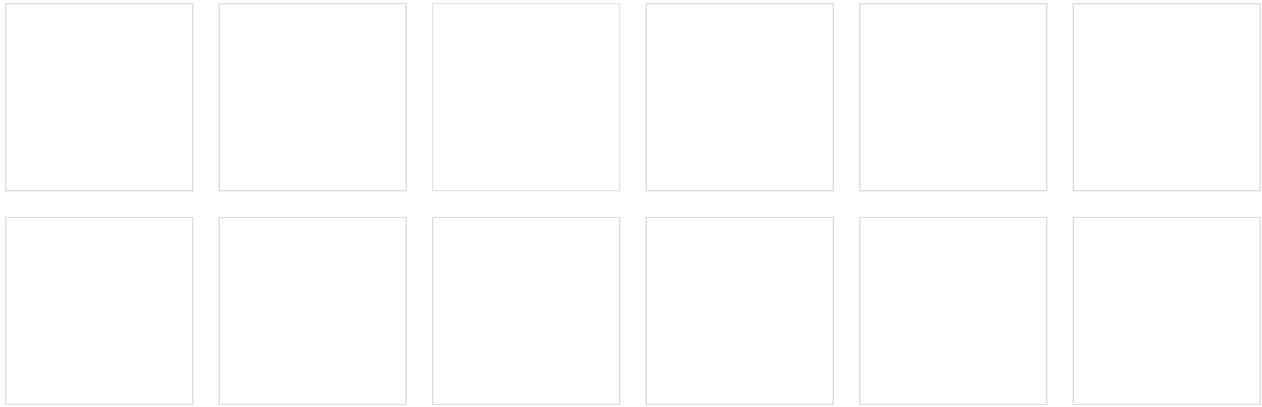
Letizia Palumbo

It is no secret that in many European countries, fundamental production sectors, such as agriculture, rely on the exploitation of migrant workers. Not just undocumented third country nationals, the exploitation involves above all refugees, asylum seekers and EU citizens. In many Regions of Italy, such as Sicily (especially in the eastern part of the island), we see a particular reliance on Romanians, most of whom often—as the case of the greenhouses in the area of Ragusa —are women.

The case of Ragusa is emblematic of how Romanians are frequently denied real access to rights and social justice and exposed to exploitation and severe abuse, revealing that in the EU, mobility is highly stratified and functional to labour market dynamics. Most of the Romanians working in the agricultural sector in Ragusa have either no employment contracts at all, or contracts in which the number of working hours stipulated is lower than effectively performed. They work excessive

Letizia Palumbo is Research Associate at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies Global Governance Program in the Cultural Pluralism research area. She is affiliated with the DemandAT research project. She is also a Post-doctoral Researcher in Comparative Law at the University of Palermo.





hours (up to 10–12 hours a day) at very high temperatures in the summer, breathing in toxic pesticides, for a pay of 15–25 euro per day. Moreover, many workers live, often with their families, on these farms in crumbling buildings, isolated deep within the countryside. In such a situation of invisibility and isolation, in which anything can remain hidden, labour exploitation is often accompanied by sexual blackmail towards female migrant workers by their employers.

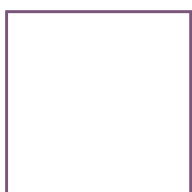
Several conditions contribute to create a context of exploitation and abuse. First of all, the reasons which lead people to emigrate: unemployment and poverty back home and the need to send money home for the family's survival. However, the legal framework against labour exploitation in Italy is also wanting and there are no incentives for agri-food companies and producers to implement fair working conditions. There is also a lack of welfare support for migrant workers and their families. The sum of these factors renders migrant workers particularly vulnerable to situations of

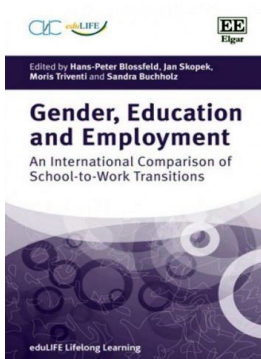
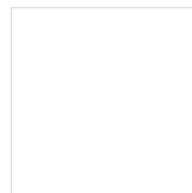
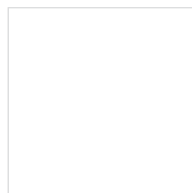
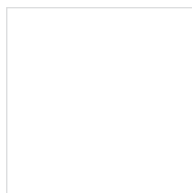
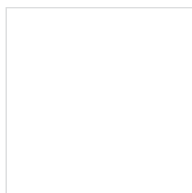
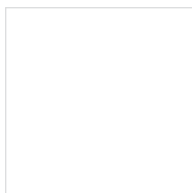
exploitation; situations from which they can hardly escape due to the lack of alternative employment opportunities.

The implementation of concerted measures of various natures, according to a holistic approach, is in fact necessary to address and prevent cases of severe exploitation and abuse in the agricultural sector. These can include, for example, actions to foster a certification of quality for firms which promote fair working conditions. Such initiatives could also be supported at the European level by linking agricultural subsidies to the development of a certification of fair work and compliance with work and social welfare legislation for the entire production and supply chain.

However, unfortunately, in Italy both national and local institutions seem to devote attention mainly to the phenomenon of illegal gang-mastering (*caporalato*). This approach has turned out to be inadequate not only because in many areas of Italy, such as Ragusa, cases of illegal gang-mastering are not present, but also because this phenomenon

constitutes just one link in a long chain of labour exploitation. In this light, the exclusive focus on illegal gang-mastering risks driving attention away from the root causes of serious labour exploitation in agriculture and, thus, also from the development of efficacious measures to combat and prevent it.





Gender, education and employment: An international comparison of school-to-work transitions.

Hans Peter Blossfeld, Jan Skopek, Moris Triventi and Sandra Buchholz (eds). (Edward Elgar, 2015)

“Across all modern societies, women have caught up with men in terms of education” Jan Skopek, co-editor of a new edited volume on gender

comparisons in the labour market and member of Professor Hans-Peter Blossfeld’s research team at the EUI SPS Department, tells *EUI Times*.

With this in mind, you would be forgiven for thinking that it follows therefore, that women would also be taking up jobs with higher authority and income.

But according to a new book *Gender, Education and Employment; An International Comparison of School-to-Work Transitions*, this has not turned out to be the case. Edited by Professor Hans-Peter Blossfeld, Jan Skopek, Moris Triventi and Sandra Buchholz, the book assesses the differences in the employment patterns of men and women in European societies. It finds that while women may be as well (even better) educated than men, they still occupy jobs that have lower income and authority. Against the context of postindustrial change, the book reveals that women’s educational advantage has not fully translated into better job prospects.

According to Skopek and his colleagues, this can be traced to the persistence of gender segregation, or “the fact that men and women pursue different subjects. But there are also other things, for example, discrimination. But this is very hard to show.” While many studies have addressed the issue of gender differences, they have mostly analysed the entire labour force. As Skopek explains, this book instead adopts a life course

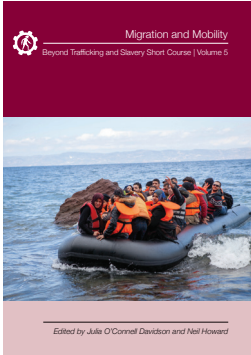
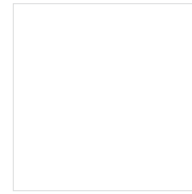
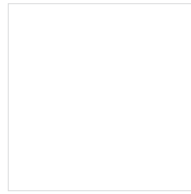
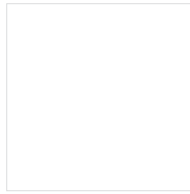
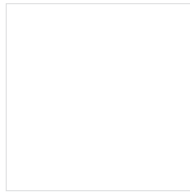
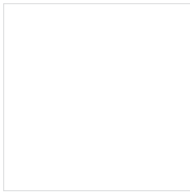
approach and looks at men and women as they first enter the labor market following their school years.

One of the most intriguing findings concerns the labour market opportunities for women in post-socialist countries such as Estonia and Russia. Under the Communist regime, women and men enjoyed more equal labour market opportunities. But after labour market liberalization following the fall of the Iron Curtain, women’s career prospects dramatically declined relative to men. Family policies introduced in the post-socialist period, according to the book, in fact reinforced traditional family formation patterns and encouraged mothers to stay at home.

Also noteworthy is the book’s finding that contrary to popular belief, although Scandinavian countries do tend to be highly egalitarian, Southern European countries are among the few countries in which there is a female advantage in terms of income and authority in the job market. Conversely, Scandinavian countries display a female disadvantage in the jobs that men and women enter at early stages.

Gender, Education and Employment; An International Comparison of School-to-Work Transitions therefore offers a compelling analysis of gender inequalities in the labour market. Comparing a diverse range of European societies, the book is an important contribution to research on why men still out-earn women, and continue to occupy higher-authority positions. Its findings are testament to the complexity of cultural, historical and political influences in determining men and women’s economic statuses.





Beyond Trafficking and Slavery.

Julia O'Connell Davidson & Neil Howard (eds).
(Open Democracy, 2015)

Trafficking, forced labour and slavery have emerged as major issues in today's global milieu. It is near universally accepted by governments,

NGOs and civil society that they have no place in societies which profess to be advanced and democratic. But how best to interpret the causes of, and eradicate these phenomena is much less agreed upon.

Neil Howard, a Marie Curie Fellow at the EUI is one of seven academics who have compiled an e-syllabus entitled *Beyond Trafficking and Slavery* to offer a trenchant criticism not only of exploitative practices, but also orthodox interpretations of their cause.

Speaking to *EUI Times*, Howard explains, "We came together frustrated at the fact that dominant scholarship and media usage of scholarship does not focus on exploitation in a politicised fashion. It has very narrow, themed critiques and not systemic analyses of why these things happen. We critique the structures of capitalism, patriarchy and white supremacy."

Available to [read on the Open Democracy website](#), Howard hopes that the e-Syllabus will be accessible to a broad section of academics, activists and practitioners. He adds, "We wanted to change the dominant narrative and put critical scholarship in the public domain in order to politicise the common narrative that explains this phenomena." The e-syllabus hence aims to bridge the gulf between academic research and political activism, and to resonate with readers from a plurality of backgrounds.

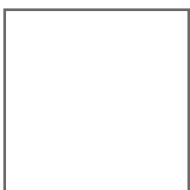
The academics have all conducted extensive empirical research with children and adults who have been subject to the exploitation labelled as forced labour

and trafficking. Their aim is to amplify the voices of those who are often left out of discourse on trafficking, or have their agency removed through predominating 'victim' tropes.

In *Beyond Trafficking and Slavery*, gender additionally emerges as a crucial theme. In the mainstream media, women are often portrayed in sensational ways as young, innocent and uniquely susceptible to forced prostitution. As Howard outlines, "in a very basic way, we problematize notions of vulnerability that reduce women (or womanhood) solely to vulnerability and hold women in the position of classically patriarchal passivity. So that includes the iconography of women in chains and bondage which denotes passivity and plays into patriarchal orientalist fantasies. We emphasise women's agency and their collective organisation."

Likewise, Howard emphasises that men are also exploited in gendered labour, and that the gender dimensions of exploitation are more expansive than sometimes perceived. "Gendered exploitation includes care work and household reproduction. These gendered construction of capitalism goes far beyond notions of sexual slavery", he points out.

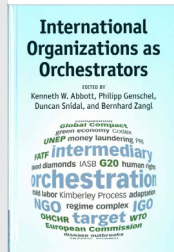
Beyond Trafficking and Slavery therefore offers a spirited contribution to current debates on forced labour and exploitation in the world. Providing analyses that contest dominant narratives adopted by media and policymaking organisations, the e-syllabus also affirms the holistic importance of gender in understanding these phenomena.



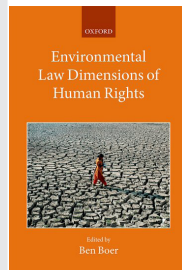
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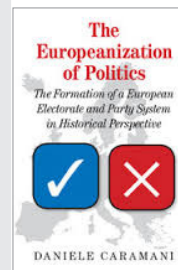
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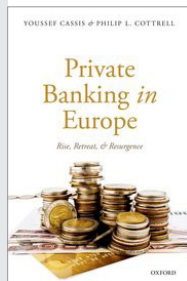
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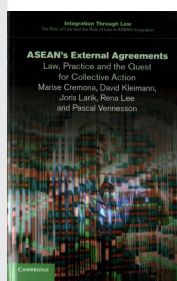
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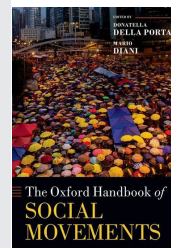
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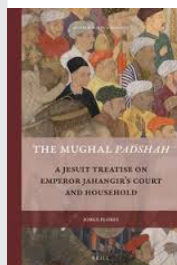
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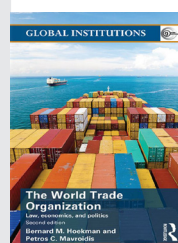
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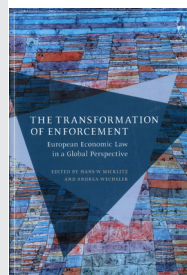
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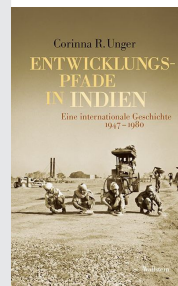
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