Edited by Victoria Hudson and Lucian N. Leustean

Religion and Forced Displacement in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia

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Cover photo: Virap. The Armenian-Turkish border is visible only a few meters away, a symbol of the interplay between religion and forced displacement.
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Abbreviations

AAC	Armenian Apostolic Church
ADRA	Adventist Development Relief Agency
AGBU	Armenian General Benevolent Union
AMAA	Armenian Missionary Association of America
ARP	Armenian Redwood Project
ART	Armenia Inter-Church Charitable Round Table Foundation
BOC	Bulgarian Orthodox Church
CCME	Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe
CCSAI	Centre for Coordination of Syrian Armenian Issues
CFR	Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (Serbia)
DECR	Department of External Church Relations (Russia)
DP	displaced person
DPR	Donetsk People's Republic
EHO	Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization (Serbia)
EU	European Union
FBO	faith-based organisation
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
GOC	Georgian Orthodox Church
IASFM	International Association for the Study of Forced Migration
ICMW	Integration Centre for Migrant Workers (Greece)
ICMW-ERP	Integration Centre for Migrant Workers – Ecumenical Refugee Programme (Greece)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	internally displaced person
IOCC	International Orthodox Christian Charities
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Service
LEPL	Legal Entity of Public Law
LPR	Lugansk People's Republic
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NK	Nagorno-Karabakh
OCG	Orthodox Church of Greece

OCU	Orthodox Church of Ukraine
RA	Republic of Armenia
RNGO	religious non-governmental organisation
ROC	Russian Orthodox Church
RRF	Refugee Relief Fund (Greece)
SARF	Syrian Armenian Relief Fund
SOC	Serbian Orthodox Church
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UOC-MP	Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate
USA	United States of America
USCIRF	US Commission on International Religious Freedom
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WCC	World Council of Churches

Acknowledgments

1 Religion and Forced Displacement in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

An Introduction

Victoria Hudson and Lucian N. Leustean

Abstract
This is the introductory chapter of the book which summarises the key themes of investigation. It addresses the role of religion in the interplay between human security and forced displacement by focusing on religious mobilisation in relation to statehood. It provides an overview of the book's structure.

Keywords: religion, human security, forced displacement, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, overview

Introduction

At first glance, religion and forced displacement seem to have little in common. Religion, in its lived or institutionalised forms, focuses on the transcendence and the other-worldly. By contrast, forced displacement is about the tangible movement of people across geographical boundaries. However, one needs only turn to the foundational texts of some of the world's religions to find accounts of displacement, along with their wider humanitarian impact. Exodus (*Shemot* in Hebrew), the second book of the Old Testament, recounts the plight of the Israelites who were led by Moses out of bondage in Egypt to the Promised Land. The Gospel of Matthew in the Christian Bible details how Jesus fled as a child to Egypt to escape King Herod, who sought to have him killed. In Islam, *hijrah* denotes the migration of the Prophet Mohammed and his followers from Mecca to Medina

to escape persecution in 622. In each case, the experience of emigration and the associated humanitarian hardships constitute a part of formative narratives of the respective religious community.

The themes of forced displacement and migration are no less topical today. In spring 2013, a coalition of leading faith-based humanitarian organisations and academic institutions responded to the call of António Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by drafting the document 'Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders' (UNHCR 2013). The affirmations draw upon the sacred texts of Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim and Jewish traditions, aiming to inspire leaders of all faiths to 'welcome the stranger' – whether that be a migrant, refugee, internally displaced person (IDP) or other stranger – with dignity, respect and loving support. They were also published in Arabic, Chinese, French, Hebrew, Russian and Spanish, and designed as a practical tool to foster support for displaced people across the world. Signed by more than 1,700 religious leaders, the publication of the affirmations indicates the growing awareness among policymakers at both the UN and national levels of the need to take the religious factor into account in relation to displacement.

Despite an increasing number of statements from religious leaders in support of displaced populations, the applicability of religious freedom has remained widely disputed. The 2019 report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF 2019a) points to numerous instances when restrictions and persecution on religious grounds have compelled people to flee their homes, often becoming refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs. Such infringements include oppressive monitoring, harassment, arrest and detention, sexual assault and rape, fines, arson, restrictions on religious rituals (especially those relating to death and funerals), violence and killing, and pressure to recant. Such persecution may be directed not only at marginalised faiths, their organisations and adherents, but also at those who try to support them (through advocacy, for instance).

Simultaneously, charity and compassion are central elements in the core teachings of all world religions. This informs a duty and will to extend assistance and care to those in need, including those displaced by conflict. Indeed, religion, in its diversity of manifestations, has responded in a plethora of ways to migration and migrants, and the associated issues of human security. Yet the intersection of religion, forced displacement and human (in)security has thus far remained under-researched in the scholarly literature (Barnett 2013; Beckford 2015; Betts and Loescher 2010; Bloch and Donà 2019; Buzan et al. 1998; Christiansen 1996; Ferris 2005 and 2011; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2011; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. 2014; Frederiks and

Nagy 2016; Geddes and Scholten 2016; Levitt 2007; Saunders et al. 2016; Waever 1995; Walker et al. 2012; Warner and Wittner 1998; Wellman and Lombardi 2012; Wong 2014).

This book examines the relationship between religion, forced displacement and human security in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, with a focus on religious diplomacy as an intermediary force in relations with states and peoples. Despite an increasing number of publications on religion and migration (Hagan 2008; Hollenbach 2014 and 2019; Mavelli and Wilson 2016; Phan and Padilla 2016; Schmiedel and Smith 2018), most studies focus on predominantly religious actors and humanitarianism (Addy and Prosvirnina 2020; Brown and Yeoh 2018; Leustean 2019, 2021a, 2021b; Prodromou and Symeonides 2016). The book explores twelve case studies in the region, namely Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. These country case studies reflect the diverse nature of the interactions at the religion-displacement-human (in-)security nexus, and show how these themes may be explored from a broad spectrum of perspectives, ranging from the historical to the contemporary, whether approaching with a wide field of vision or taking a magnifying glass to specific aspects of religious reactions to population displacement. In each case, as an emerging literature on the 'political science of religion' has shown (Fox 2001; Philpott 2009; Grzymala-Busse 2012; Kettell 2016; Potz 2020), the response of religious organisations and actors is to be considered within the wider context of the political and societal dynamics at play in the country concerned, thereby taking into account not only patterns of religion-state relations but also the deeply rooted influence of religion at individual and institutional levels.

Each chapter engages with four key themes, namely: 1) the circulation of ideas on human security between religious and secular courts; 2) religious strategies in relation to violence, tolerance, transitory environments and resettlement; 3) religious support, protection and mechanisms towards displaced populations, and 4) channels of religious diplomacy advancing human security. The issues of large-scale population movements and human security also cast an enquiring light on the constitutional-legal and symbolic standing of religion in the respective society, and on relations between majority and minority faiths within a country.

The book argues that states do not always act as providers of human security, and do not always meet the needs of those touched by the experience of migration or forced displacement. In such cases, religious actors, as representatives of civil society and often closer to the grassroots level, can be well placed to serve their community. Religious feeling offers a

motivating sense of duty to help, although whether that assistance is extended inclusively to all in need or primarily to members of the same faith community varies across cases. Religious organisations often have recourse to networks and information about people's needs on the ground that make them well suited to intervene in humanitarian crises. As all the case studies show, religious networks benefit not only populations in need but ultimately the local populations. More broadly, the social mobilisation of religious communities reflects and advances social progress (Davie et al. 2018), as evident in all predominantly Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Geographies of religion and displacement

Recorded since biblical times, large-scale population migration is far from a new phenomenon, and has always posed challenges to the polities affected, whether they be the country of origin or the destination country. What is more, a glimpse at human history suggests that the triggers that have long catalysed population movements – flight from conflict and insecurity, the search for better living conditions and environmental crises – will not cease to be relevant any time soon. Addressing the consequences of migration, both positive and negative, can optimally be achieved by examining and learning from previous experiences. Hence, a study of this theme is extremely pertinent today. The contributions in this study take a broad approach to religion, examining not only the narratives and actions of state-sanctioned religious bodies, but also religiously motivated organisations and faith-based communities.

With the exception of Greece, which was drawn into the European Community in 1981 to prevent its embracing a communist experiment, all of the case-study countries were part of the Soviet bloc, either as part of the USSR proper (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan) or as satellite states in Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Poland and Serbia).

In line with the atheist ideology of communism, which held religious faith to be a false consciousness, religious organisations were repressed during the socialist period. Although Stalin eased restrictions on religion in 1943 to help shore up the war effort against the forces allied with Nazi Germany, its social role was often compromised as its representatives and organisations were closely monitored and often co-opted by the state security agencies. Nevertheless, in some countries, religious organisations played an important

role in the movements that ultimately helped topple the communist regimes and the Soviet Union itself.

Since the collapse of communism, the paths of the successor states have diverged. Some states have 'joined the West', embracing (nominally at least) liberal democracy and the concomitant religious pluralism as part of their membership of the European Union. For other states, EU membership remains an aspiration for now, but the various forms of partnership promoted by the union seek to draw these states into its normative orbit by holding out the prospect of accession to encourage an inclusive liberal approach. The promotion of religious freedoms is an intrinsic part of this influence. For others still, EU membership remains a more distant prospect, although that is not to say the bloc does not exert normative power over religious relations there. Other states remain further down the spectrum of authoritarianism.

While migration and forced displacement are issues that have always faced humanity, and have been recorded in relation to religion since the earliest times, this book discusses these issues as they present in recent history; the times of state (re-)formation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, during and after the Second World War and, particularly, in the immediate wake of the collapse of the communist system in the early 1990s and as the consequences of this paradigm shift have continued to play out in recent years.

During the period under study, migration and forced displacement have manifested themselves in a wide range of contexts, although not every country case study endeavours to trace all waves of population movement over this period. While flight from persecution, conflict and associated insecurities remains the major push factor driving large-scale population movements, such as the IDP crisis in Georgia, the contributions here suggest that another major trigger of displacement is change to state borders, or of political authority within existing borders. Indeed, while population exchange agreements facilitated large-scale population movement between Bulgaria and its neighbours, the penetration of the Russian Empire into Central Asia brought soldiers and Russian Orthodox clergy to that region in the nineteenth century. As Russian authority became more entrenched there, managed migration programmes under the Stolypin agricultural reforms of the early 1900s, and the Soviet-era *tselina* (Virgin Lands campaign) and industrial programmes brought workers from around the Soviet Union to Kazakhstan to further economic development and political objectives. Forced migration was also used as a political tool in the USSR, with entire ethnic groups suspected of disloyalty deported to Central Asia and Siberia.

The dissolution of empires has often left once privileged nationalities outside their perceived ethnic homeland. Dissatisfaction with new minority status, coupled with a fear or reality of persecution or discrimination, lead Muslims to leave newly independent Bulgaria for areas still under Ottoman control. Similarly, following the collapse of the Soviet regime and the independence of Kazakhstan, the direction of migration has reversed, with many ethnic Russian citizens of Kazakhstan returning to their perceived homeland. Likewise, large proportions of certain ethnic and religious minorities, including Jews, German Lutherans and Catholics, have left Russia for ethnic homelands since independence.

These years immediately following the end of the USSR also saw migration triggered by secessionist conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Georgia and Armenia. Furthermore, even decades later, the reverberations of the changing conjunctures of global power of the early 1990s can still be detected in the bloody conflicts in the Middle East, including Syria, and Ukraine. Each of these provoked waves of migration and associated issues, which are addressed in the Armenian, Greek, Ukrainian and Russian case studies. Meanwhile, the end of the bipolar stand-off has accelerated globalisation, in the form of increased permeability of borders, greater ease of travel, and growing awareness of opportunities and standards of living elsewhere thanks to the media. These factors have also contributed to increased migration for reasons of economic (in-)security, which forms the focal point in the Moldova and Uzbekistan chapters.

Forced displacement and human security: Why religion?

The experience of migration often entails significant impacts on the human security of those involved. Although human security has always been the ultimate concern for individual human beings, this fact has not always been reflected in the scholarly research agenda. During the Cold War, the imperative to manage the risks associated with the bipolar nuclear stand-off meant that states were considered the main actors in international politics, and thus analyses focused on their behaviours and motivations. As the threat of nuclear annihilation receded after collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, the focus of the scholarly agenda broadened beyond a preoccupation with states to include the (in)security of the human beings, groups and communities living in and across them. Furthermore, rather than focusing narrowly on existential military-type threats of physical harm, the broader agenda also acknowledges that

individuals and groups may experience insecurity in relation to other spheres of life.

> Human security is a human right; it refers to the security of people and communities, as opposed to the security of states. Human security recognises that there are several dimensions related to feeling safe, such as freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom from indignity. (Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict n.d.)

Thus, the broader research agenda also embodies the recognition that security threats lie not only in existential danger and violence, but also include a more comprehensive range of risks to the safety and well-being of human beings and their communities. This broader range of threats may pertain, for instance, to the economic, political, health, food, environmental and other dimensions of human existence. Given this book focuses on religious groups, it is also worth mentioning the parallel term 'community (in)security', which relates to the threat of harm based on group or identity characteristics, which, the UN Development Programme notes, 'can exist at all levels of national income and development' (UNDP 1994: 23). In this vein, according to the UN *Human Development Report 1994*, human security implies not only 'safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression' but also 'protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life – whether in homes, jobs or in communities' (ibid.: 23). Clearly, then, freedoms and security in relation to religious beliefs and practices are relevant objects of the human security of individuals and groups.

The acknowledgement that there is more to security than mere survival and the absence of the threat of violent harm has implications for the consideration of forced displacement. The UN *Global Trends* report defines forced displacement as occurring 'as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations' (UNHCR 2018: 2). The International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM) takes a slightly broader definition, focusing not only on refugees and IDPs displaced by conflict, but also acknowledging natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects as factors compelling people to leave their place of habitual residence. Yet Alden Speare has argued that

> in the strictest sense migration can be considered to be involuntary only when a person is physically transported from a country and has no opportunity to escape from those transporting him. Movement under

> threat, even the immediate threat to life, contains a voluntary element,
> as long as there is an option to escape to another part of the country, go
> into hiding or to remain and hope to avoid persecution. (1974: 89)

Given that this strict definition would tend to exclude much of what is
typically described as 'forced displacement', it is rather less useful for under-
standing the dynamics compelling migration. However, it does encourage
one to move beyond thinking of migration in dichotomous forced-voluntary
terms, and acknowledge that factors driving migration entail a spectrum
of compulsion, ranging from violence and existential risks, to poverty, and
to discomfort in the face of less tangible forces at play in society, such as
social ostracism.

This range of push factors is borne out by the examples in the present
book. The deportations and exile of individuals and whole ethnic groups
in the USSR probably meets – assuming there was no chance of escape
– Speare's above definition of forced displacement. One should also ac-
knowledge the possibility that even apparently voluntary migrations, such
as the movements of labour migrants from peripheral villages in search
of a higher standard of living, may also be driven be a certain amount of
family and community pressure, not to mention the desire to participate
in the consumption-driven lifestyles touted as the epitome of success in
the global media.

Broadening our focus in the study of forced displacement inevitably
runs the risk of losing conceptual integrity and clarity, and, worse still, of
detracting from the traumatic severity of the experiences of those fleeing
persecution or driven from their homes. However, one should also bear in
mind that often, prior to experiencing existential threats, forcibly displaced
people are often likely to have faced insecurity in relation to their socio-
economic position, suffered infringements of their enjoyment of rights and
freedoms widely considered universal, such as the freedom to hold and
practice the faith of one's choice, and experienced discomfort resulting from
the mis-recognition of their identities. History's experience shows that such
'lesser' privations often pave the way and facilitate more severe repressions,
and serve to create a climate of fear among those affected. Indeed, the UN
Development Programme states that human security entails the notion that
'people can exercise [their] choices safely and freely – and that they can be
relatively confident that the opportunities they have today are not totally
lost tomorrow' (UNDP 1994: 23). Hence, individuals and groups should not
have to have fled the gravest kinds of insecurity to be considered through
the prism of forced displacement.

As this book demonstrates, religion, human security and displacement intersect in a wide variety of ways. Persecution on religious grounds as a driver of displacement is explored, although it is observed that religion is less commonly the sole motivating factor, and is rather part of a broader picture of exclusion along the lines of pillorised cleavages, including ethnicity and socio-economic status.

Large-scale migration may impact upon the religious composition of a state, as was detailed in the chapters on Russia and Kazakhstan, in particular. Reactions to such demographic change vary. In independent Kazakhstan, where the presence of a large proportion of Orthodox citizens of various nationalities is a long-established fact, the multireligious character of the society is drawn upon by the Kazakhstani authorities to bolster a Eurasian identity and promote the country as a harmonious example of multi-ethnic success to others. Conversely, in cases where there are actually relatively few migrants, some opinion-forming actors react negatively to changing demographics and use their media outlets to shape public perceptions, stoking public fears and xenophobic attitudes.

Religious and faith communities and their representatives may number among the opinion formers addressing the issues of migration and migrants within a polity, and on the international stage (e.g. Pope Francis as detailed in the Poland chapter). The analyses presented here indicate that the stance taken by religious actors may also vary, with some urging solidarity with migrants, and others taking a more sceptical position (e.g. Bulgaria, Poland, Moldova). Exclusionary attitudes towards in-coming migrants may be fuelled by fears of their engaging in proselytism and missionary activity among the indigenous population, or by anxiety that the mere presence of 'others' and indicators of their practices and symbols will pose a threat to the integrity of the identity of the 'local' population. By contrast, in Kazakhstan, the large-scale emigration of ethnic Russians and other nationalities is a rather sensitive topic, and tends not to be addressed in the official public discourse of representatives of the Kazakhstan Metropolitan District of the Russian Orthodox Church.

A number of the chapters detail the responses of religious groups to the insecurity caused by forced displacement and/or migration. In the case of Serbia, for instance, religious groups, and Protestant evangelicals in particular stepped in to help where the state was unable to respond adequately to alleviate the plight of refugees. Similarly in Ukraine, various branches of the Orthodox Church engaged to assist those fleeing the conflict in the Donbas region in 2014-2015. Meanwhile, the Armenian Apostolic Church has come under criticism for its lack of public stance and the ineffectiveness of its humanitarian response.

Conversely, in some cases, religious bodies may also assist people with migration. Such examples seem to be far fewer in number, but were reported in Kazakhstan, where the Orthodox Svetoch foundation helps ethnic Russians study in Russia, and Baptist communities reportedly help whole families of adherents emigrate to the USA.

Religious belonging and faith may also be strengthened by the experience of migration, with churches and mosques serving as community hubs for diasporic groups, even in cases of voluntary or labour migration, as adherents strive to build a meaningful place for themselves in their new environment. On the other hand, in cases when migrants are scattered, migration away from their faith community may also cause participation in religious life to wane.

How religion interacts with statehood in relation to displacement

In relation to displacement and human security, religion engages with the state in a wide range of ways, often symbiotically, sometimes supplementing or standing in for state responses, and sometimes challenging definitions of belonging to the national community. Traditional thinking on security assumed – however inaccurately – that states protected the citizens within them. More recent theorising, however, acknowledges that states may also sometimes be a source of threat to their citizens and residents. State failure to protect religious freedoms adequately may, often in tandem with other forms of discrimination and exclusion, incite a desire to migrate.

More directly, states may be active instigators of displacement and migratory movements, as in the case of the Soviet Union, which deported religious believers to remote areas of Central Asia and Siberia, with tragic humanitarian consequences. The deportation of entire ethnic groups (Chechens, Germans, Koreans, for instance) to these regions, and the managed population movements which formed part of Soviet agricultural and industrial programmes, also served the goals of political expediency by increased ethno-religious heterogeneity. Conversely, in the case of Bulgaria, bilateral population exchange agreements concluded with Turkey, Greece and Romania served political goals by the furthering of religious homogeneity.

Alternatively, states may find themselves thrust into the position of reacting to migrations triggered by external factors. They may find themselves in a situation where they are unable to discharge a duty of care towards those affected, and in such scenarios, the response of religious organisations may include measures to strengthen human security by providing food, clothing,

medicines, etc. (e.g. Serbia). More broadly, religious organisations may help meet community security needs by providing a setting that helps preserve collective identities among the diasporic population (Moldova).

Rather than a purely reactionary role, religious organisations may also proactively strive to shape state policy on displacement and other humanitarian issues. By contrast, in Kazakhstan, where the out-migration of significant numbers of nationalities traditionally professing Orthodoxy (above all Russian, Ukrainian, Belarussian) is politically rather sensitive, and church representatives have tended to take a discrete approach. Yet religious bodies are not simply one lobbying voice among others. Frequently, a religion may enjoy – whether officially or not – a privileged status reflecting its special role in the nation's history, culture and identity. This may be reflected in the constitution, as in Armenia where the Armenian Apostolic Church is anchored as a 'preserver of Armenianness and the Armenian people', or other legal acts on religion, such as Bulgaria's 2002 Religious Denominations Act, which explicitly underlines 'the special and traditional role of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in the history of Bulgaria'. Analysis reveals that church-state relations have various shades, with the Greek Orthodox Church, for instance, being enshrined in the constitution, despite secularism being proclaimed. Given this close proximity of ethnicity, religion and national identity, adherents of other faiths and belief systems may be suspected of divided loyalties. Hence, missionary activity, proselytism and 'poaching for souls' are frequently cited as issues of concern for religious authorities in the case study countries. Thus, migration policies allowing the in-migration of foreign missionaries and religiously framed NGOs may be an object of scrutiny by religious organisations that are already well entrenched in the society in question.

Despite the state-religion symbiosis that exists in a number of the case study countries, official attitudes do not tend to divide religions neatly into state-sanctioned and unapproved ones. Indeed, while in the West the religious stand-off is often perceived to be between Islam and Christianity (or, often more accurately, secularism), in the region under study, the cleavages fall differently, and often between what is considered 'traditional' and non-traditional religion in the particular case. Differences here often fall along denominational lines within the broadest categories of faith groups. For instance, in Russia, Islam, in the form of the Central Spiritual Administration of Muslims, at least, numbers among the 'traditional religions' along with Russian Orthodoxy, Judaism and Buddhism. These 'traditional confessions' enjoy certain rights and privileges, unavailable to many Christian denominations, including Protestant groups, Roman Catholics and even Old

Believers. Muslim countries may differentiate between 'traditional' Islam, and Sufism and Salafism. Meanwhile, in majority-Muslim Kazakhstan, Russian Orthodoxy is considered one of the traditional religions. In the separatist-controlled regions of Ukraine, Dmytro Vovk observes the presence of a third category of 'some tolerated religions, which are neither encouraged nor systematically oppressed so long as the authorities do not suspect them of disloyalty', alongside the favoured Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, and other, repressed faiths.

By contrast, when it comes to engagement to address humanitarian issues, even within the same states, faith groups differ with regard to their level of activity. This book details the activities of a number of small, but very dynamic evangelical groups in providing aid, and one need only think of the Caritas foundation to understand the scale of action by the Roman Catholic Church, while *zakat* (charity) is one of the five pillars of Islamic faith, with mosque communities serving as hubs for humanitarian aid. Such work occurs either in concert with states or otherwise. By contrast, as Roman Lunkin notes, the Orthodox Church, across a range of countries, has traditionally not been so active in this regard. However, perhaps observing not only the success of humanitarian missions of other faiths, but also the influence and access such engagement may yield, the Orthodox Church now seeks to expand its humanitarian role. The Russian Orthodox Church, for instance, founded a Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Ministry and has formed policy documents in this sphere.

An under-studied area: The religion-displacement-human security nexus

Thus far, the nexus of religion (religious agents and organisations, believers, religious identities), displacement and human (in-)security has barely come under the light of scholarly analysis. Indeed, as Tony Perkins, chair of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, noted in observance of 2019 World Refugee Day, although '[s]ix of the countries among the top ten from which refugees have fled have appeared for years on USCIRF's lists of the world's worst religious freedom violators, [...] this enormous driver of the global displacement crisis gets precious little attention' (USCIRF 2019b). This lacuna follows logically, perhaps, from the 'notable secularization of humanitarian action' (Hollenbach 2019: 47) that occurred during the twentieth century, when responses to those suffering forced displacement – and other humanitarian crises – became more institutionalised.

The requirement to provide for humanitarian needs was enshrined in international law, and 'neutral' secular relief agencies were tasked with much of the responsibility for carrying out the activities necessary to alleviate humanitarian suffering. Faith-based organisations have continued to play a role and have often worked together with the large, secular relief agencies, but, as David Hollenbach (2019: 47) observes, 'the principles and policies of humanitarianism were increasingly articulated in secular terms'.

Furthermore, with regard to the post-communist region, as Ansgar Jödicke observes in Chapter 2, not only was religion muted as a societal actor during the communist era, militant atheism also dominated in the social sciences. The collapse of the Eastern bloc and its ideology spurred a growth in interest in faith-related issues, but it has taken time for the growing empowerment of religious actors in the humanitarian sphere, and particularly in regard to matters of displacement, to filter through into scholarly analyses. Where the conflicts in the wake of the end of the Cold War have provide grounds for academic research on the theme of forced displacement and human security responses, scholars of the region under consideration have not always demonstrated interest in the religious aspects of this phenomenon. Jödicke attributes this to two key reasons, namely the focus on the resolution of existential issues over marginal ones, such as, apparently, religion, and, following from this, a reluctance to draw attention to potentially divisive topics.

The situation experienced a step change in the 2010s, when the migration crises proved to be a catalyst for public debates on the religious identities of migrants, and provided ample opportunities for engagement by religious actors, whose activities have grown in magnitude and confidence. Consensus has coalesced around the significance of religion in relation to human security, including forced displacement and migration. This has been reflected in the appearance of scholarly and policy-oriented publications testifying to the need to consider the factor of religion as a vital force in society that is not, as it once seemed, destined for the dustbin of history. However, although the need for religion and secular authorities to work together and learn from one another in addressing human security issues is widely proclaimed, Jödicke has nevertheless observed a dearth of empirical analysis, particularly in relation to the region under consideration here.

Beyond the choices and preferences of individual scholars, a number of factors may be highlighted as contributing to this state of affairs. Firstly, there is the availability of relevant information. With regard to the Russian Orthodox Church, at least, it is not church policy to provide information on social and charitable work carried out in individual parishes and eparchies,

and thus their reports on this topic are sparse and superficial. Furthermore, where information is published, it is not always available in English or another widely spoken international language, thereby reducing the pool of analysts to whom it is readily accessible. Indeed, a number of the contributions present in this book contain statistical information not known to be previously available in English.

Another key issue hampering research on religious belonging and migration concerns difficulties with gathering data. Religion is not always recorded in population surveys (as under the communist regime), or the question may be optional (as has been the case in the Bulgarian census after 2001), which increases the margin of error. Furthermore, the circumstances of forced displacement can often be chaotic, and thus counting the numbers of those involved can be difficult, and mis-counting or double-counting can easily occur even with the best of intentions on both the part of the recorder and the respondent. In such scenarios, enquiring after and recording religion may also be considered too partisan, or not a priority in the face of existential need. Where people are fleeing persecution, pinning down markers of difference might stoke fears of the information being used against them at a later date, and motivate mis-reporting.

Even outside of crisis moments, discrepancies in the data may emerge. For instance, the lack of cooperation characteristic of administrative culture in Moldova (and surely elsewhere) means that different state institutions employ different methodologies to determine the number of Moldovans abroad, thereby leading to divergent data sets. Similarly in the case of Ukrainians fleeing the conflict in the Donbas region for Russia, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports a rather different figure to that of the Federal Statistics Service, with both diverging from the numbers provided by international organisations. Additionally, the Russia-Ukraine border has long been rather porous and diffuse, and not all persons displaced from Ukraine registered as asylum seekers, refugees, or displaced persons, instead simply applying directly for citizenship or a permanent residence permit. For its part, the Ukrainian government has not provided statistics on those displaced across the Russian border since part of it is under the control of pro-Russian proxies.

Sometimes, the nature of the migration regime in question means that migrants remain invisible in the statistics, thereby affecting their reliability. In the case of circular migration, whereby migrants retain official residence in their home country but travel abroad to work, perhaps seasonally or for short periods of time, they may not be counted as having emigrated despite spending most of their time abroad. Conversely, individuals with

dual citizenship or foreign passports do not tend to be classed as migrants as they cannot be separated statistically from 'local' citizens of the country concerned. Andrei Avram points to the example of Moldova, whose citizens cannot work in the EU without a permit, but who are eligible for Romanian passports which they use when working in European countries, rendering them simply Romanian for recording purposes. In the case of Uzbekistan, citizens need an exit visa to leave the country. This requirement does not include travel to CIS countries, however, so people migrating to these countries are not counted in official statistics. Besides these issues, there is also the matter of undocumented migration, which, given the bureaucratic obstacles, is rather widespread.

In order to gain more accurate data and the insights about population movements this would entail, it is clear that more sophisticated approaches to data gathering are required. These would need to take into account the way people live their lives in reality. This in turn requires political will, and cooperative efforts on the part of the relevant national authorities, and with international partners.

The country case studies presented in this book present insights into the nature of the interaction between religion, displacement and human (in-) security. They highlight a wide range of push factors inciting migration, including flight from the threat of violence, conflict and socio-economic exclusion. The cases indicate that approaching migration in terms of a forced-voluntary dichotomy misses much of the complexity driving decisions to leave one's home. Persecution on religious grounds may constitute a motivating factor, although it is often accompanied by other concomitant forms of exclusion and discrimination. Religion is also present on the other side of the equation, with insecurity resulting from displacement and migration being met by charitable activity by religious organisations, often stepping in where state-lead responses have failed to adequately meet people's needs. Displacement may also alter the role played by religion in the lives of those affected, either centring it as a hub of support and community identity, or, conversely, where geographic distancing weakens those collective ties. Beyond practical activity, religious actors and organisations often serve as opinion formers, whose mouthpieces may shape the attitudes of citizens and governments. Such advocacy may be characterised by solidarity, or scepticism towards migrants. Either way, it is clear that in many of the countries covered here that a particular 'national' religion has a privileged status – officially, or de facto – which gives it a favoured position in interactions with the state and may shape how the state approaches other faith groups.

It seems inevitable that the issues of forced displacement and migration will continue to attend human history, even as states wrestle with their triggers and consequences. Although as yet under-studied, space has opened upon for the consideration of the role of religion in these processes. The analyses presented in this book underscore that the nexus of religion, displacement and human (in-)security is diverse, and undergirded by multifaceted relations of power. In the region under focus here, religion is in most cases on the ascendant after decades of repression under socialist atheist regimes and therefore warrants particular research to explore how these dynamics unfold as religion – its agents, organisations and networks – continues to consolidate its place in these societies.

The book's structure

The contributions in this book indicate that the intersection between religion, displacement and human security is diverse and goes beyond the familiar 'religious repression as a cause for displacement' and 'religious charitable responses to displacement' dichotomy, although these issues clearly retain importance. In addition to their capacity for effective agency, faith-based organisations and networks have huge potential for shaping public opinion. The book brings together authors from a range of disciplinary backgrounds, including religious studies, law, international politics, sociology and regional studies, showcasing the variety of analytical lenses through which the intersection of religion and displacement can be explored.

At the outset, Ansgar Jödicke provides an overview of the current stand of the research on the role of religion in the context of humanitarian aid, with a focus on the post-communist region. The chapters that follow are structured along lines of country case studies, with each contribution both demanding and reflecting in-depth, contextualised local knowledge, and the capacity to work with sources in the national language(s). With regards to methods, in addition to a range of secondary sources, which often make insights presented in the local languages available to a wider English-speaking audience, the chapters draw upon quantitative and qualitative primary source materials. Input from quantitative sources most commonly entails syntheses of statistical data from surveys and censuses concerning religion and displacement in the countries concerned. Qualitatively, the book also benefits from interviews with eye-witnesses and relevant experts and practitioners in the case study countries.

The book is divided into four sections, namely Eastern Europe, Russia and Ukraine, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The section on Eastern Europe examines selected countries in the region which have been directly impacted by the refugee crisis. Daniela Kalkandjieva provides insight into the multifaceted experience of migration in the case of modern Bulgaria, revealing how the religious factor has played a diverse role in relation to migration. Labelling refugees exclusively on religious terms has led to an increase in xenophobic discourses and right-wing nationalism. In the chapter on Serbia in the 1990s, Aleksandra Djurić Milovanović and Marko Veković examine how the state and various Protestant evangelical communities responded to the forced displacement in the wake of the civil war. Focusing on the migration crisis that faced Greece following the conflicts in the Middle East in the 2010s, Georgios E. Trantas and Eleni D. Tseligka explore the response of the Orthodox Church of Greece and its NGOs. They note the contradictory expectations the country faces as an EU member state, which is called upon to reflect humanitarian considerations whilst also safeguarding the external borders of the union. In the chapter on Moldova, Andrei Avram explores the role of the two parallel Orthodox churches there in developing the country's post-Soviet identity, and their work responding the mass emigration of working-age citizens. He shows that the massive emigration of the Moldovan population has been reflected in the ways in which both churches tackled humanitarian programmes. Top clergy under the jurisdiction of Moscow have condemned the refugee crisis, appealing to local population and influencing party politics. Maria Marczewska-Rytko traces the history of population movement in twentieth-century Poland. She notes the important difference between the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis, and clerics and lay members of the local church in Poland.

The section on Russia and Ukraine compares the two countries. In his chapter on the Russian Orthodox Church, Roman Lunkin observes trends in migration and the condition of religion-state relations in Russia. He examines the social-humanitarian activity of the Orthodox Church, and notes how migration has changed the religious environment in Russia. He points out that a wide range of religious communities are involved in humanitarian programmes advancing religious and ethnic identification and having an impact on religious diversity. Dmytro Vovk analyses deportation and forced displacement in the unrecognised Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and examines relations between religion and political agents in the breakaway

republics. He shows that the religious factor has been present in two ways: first, religious communities have provided support for internally displaced persons; and second, religious discourses have regularly been politicised. The chapter on Ukraine should be read together with the chapter on Russia to understand similarities and differences among the ways in which religious and state authorities engaged with populations in need. For example, the exact number of displaced populations and currently present on the territory of both countries remains controversial with parallel figures advanced by state authorities and international organisations.

The section on the Caucasus examines Georgia and Armenia. Focusing on the population of IDPs that appeared in post-Soviet Georgia as a result of the conflicts in the two breakaway territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali, Tornike Metreveli examines the institutional dimensions of religious responses to the humanitarian situation to suggest that more could be done by religious agents to alleviate the plight of forcible displaced citizens. The Georgian case stands out as the country experienced three waves of internal forced displacement. Each wave has shown that religious identity and state-building processes have been interlinked. Jasmine Dum-Tragut highlights the specificities of the case of the influx of ethnic Armenian refugees from war-torn Syria, and examines the response to this crisis by the Armenian Apostolic Church, which has traditionally considered itself the 'preserver of Armenianness and the Armenian people'. She argues that state authorities and the Armenian Apostolic Church, the predominant religious confession, could benefit from the experience of religious minorities in addressing humanitarian issues.

The section on Central Asia investigates three countries in the region affected by migration. Examining demographic and migratory trends in Kazakhstan since the times of the Russian Empire, Victoria Hudson explores the discursive and practical response of the Kazakhstan Metropolitan District of the Russian Orthodox Church to the mass emigration of ethnic Russians citizens of Kazakhstan to Russia since independence. Indira Aslanova focuses on the repression and migration experiences of ethnic population who converted to Christianity in Kyrgyzstan. In the last chapter, Rano Turaeva examines the legal landscape governing internal and external migration in post-Soviet Uzbekistan, pointing to the role of Islam and mosque communities in addressing some of the resultant human security needs.

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