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Migrants and Citizens: Justice and Responsibility in the Ethics of Immigration. By Tisha M. Rajendra. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2017. Pp. 179. $25.00 (paper). ISBN: 9780802868824.

In *Migrants and Citizens*, Tisha M. Rajendra addresses a challenging, often painful issue facing developing countries and Western democracies alike, that of relationships surrounding immigration, a significant part of which is uncontrolled and undocumented. Rajendra's main argument is that those who wish to approach such relationships from a Christian perspective can arrive at a just resolution only by placing these relationships in historical context.

Immigration has become an essential part of the globalized world. Many of those who have tried to penetrate borders at their own risk in spite of border security and immigration policies have suffered and even died. Meanwhile, rules governing immigration and treatment of illegal immigrants have become the subjects of heated political debates. Attitudes toward immigration and migrants vary greatly in host countries and often produce inaccurate, false, and even diametrically opposed narratives (3–4). Rajendra argues that justice for migrants requires that inaccuracies be revealed and replaced with narratives "that more accurately capture the relationship between citizens and migrants" (4). With such a goal, she tackles discussions in the fields of philosophy and theology. She contends that philosophical ethics of migration can be divided into cosmopolitan ethics—that is, ethics emphasizing human rights as overriding the right of the nation-state to exclude migrants—and communitarian ethics—that is, those emphasizing the right of a political community to choose its own members. Both treatments of migration, however, fall short in terms of addressing issues of relationships and responsibilities between citizens and migrants (6). Rajendra also dismisses theological treatments of migration as commiserating with the suffering and hopes of migrants but failing to critically examine the balance of responsibilities between migrants and citizens.

Rajendra opens with the question, "What responsibilities do citizens have toward migrants and potential migrants?" She proposes that her work will offer "a new definition of justice that can respond to the relationships between citizens and migrants: justice as responsibility to relationships" (6). This is the core statement of the book. Rajendra demonstrates that while the concept of universal human rights and the related Christian ethics of preferential options for the poor—meaning that because those who are poor are especially vulnerable, their rights ought to be defended by those who are better off (23)—may work on a domestic level, these concepts are not helpful in the transnational context. Compassion for the poor and an ideal of universal rights are insufficient when it comes to defining the relationships and the scope of responsibilities between migrants and citizens, Rajendra writes (13–18).

To better understand the mechanisms of migration and the question of responsibilities, Rajendra suggests, we must look beyond poverty as the determinant behind emigration. Hence, she examines theories of migration, which she groups into agency-dominant, structure-dominant, and migration-systems theories (35–50). The first envisions migrants as rational actors choosing to move based on an assessment of costs and benefits. However, economics cannot entirely explain such decisions, especially given incomplete information available to those making the choice to stay or go. Structural theories take a more nuanced perspective on labor markets and the need of advanced economies for cheap labor. For Rajendra, such theories err in the direction of denying any individual agency. Migration-systems theory, by contrast, sees migrants as decision makers but views their actions as part of a larger historical context with specific traditional relations between host and

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source countries as mediating factors. (I would add that viewing migration systemically may better be categorized as a working approach and a set of tools for the study of migration rather than a "theory.") Migration, then, follows well-worn paths and is based on long-standing relations between countries; larger structures "condition" decisions by individual migrants.

In her critique of the existing theories of migration, Rajendra highlights a single aspect of these theories. This strategy helps her demonstrate that most of the theories borrowed from different academic disciplines, while focusing on certain specific dimensions of migration, do not capture the complex nature of migration as a two-way relationship between incomers and citizens. Rajendra selects the migration-systems theory as the most fruitful approach for understanding transnational migration. (45–46)

Having adopted the migration-systems approach, by which she attends to long-standing and significant exchanges of migrants between particular sets of countries (46), Rajendra considers three case studies connected with three kinds of foreign interventions that initiated migration systems: guest-worker programs in postwar Germany; migrations to Great Britain from its colonies and former colonies; and migrations to the United States from Mexico, caused by US companies' investments. Each case study is connected to a long history of exploitation that resulted in specific and bounded relationships of domination (49). In each case, Rajendra explores the relationships that emerged between citizens and migrants and that then are reproduced in the relationships between citizens and the descendants of those initial migrants.

Using the migration-systems theory, Rajendra shows that although migrants make their own, free decisions to migrate, hoping for the better lives of themselves and their families, these choices are made in the context of chosen and unchosen relationships and are historically embedded and conditioned (49). According to Rajendra, migration should be understood as "the result of both historical and current relationships between and among migrants and citizens" (51); hence migration is a relational reality. This understanding of migration changes the ethical questions raised by migration because it makes the host countries not "passive bystanders" to migration but rather participants in migration systems that originated in relationships of domination and exploitation decades or even centuries earlier (51–52). Thus, an ethics of migration should not only invoke the human rights of migrants but also specify who has the duty to protect the rights of migrants and why (52).

Migration-systems theory helps Rajendra to draw attention to her claim that some of the existing narratives of migration are incomplete, inaccurate, or even false. For example, she refutes those narratives that portray migrants as freeloaders sponging off a welfare state (54). Wrong narratives, she claims, lead to asking wrong questions and satisfaction with wrong answers. Hence, the next step, according to Rajendra, is "to replace the inaccurate narratives with fuller narratives" (54). Slightly rewording Jon Sobrino's operating phrase "honest toward reality" (54, quoting Sobrino, *Where is God? Earthquake, Terrorism, Barbarity, and Hope* [Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004]), she suggests the term "faithful to reality" as describing fuller, more accurate narratives (54). These more accurate narratives "are meant to offer a new way of thinking about the relationships between migrants and citizens" (55), based on the histories, present conditions, and possible futures of these relationships. Rajendra shows that when inaccurate narratives become the dominant social understanding of a certain group, a structural sin ("the sin that appears not in the human will alone but in the social institutions, ideologies, and practices") is at play (56).

Rajendra makes an original contribution to ethics by identifying how this structural sin conditions relationships into patterns of domination and exploitation and establishes social positions in which immigrants are portrayed as freeloaders, Latinos as lazy and irresponsible, and low wages paid to undocumented migrants as justified (56). To rectify this structural sin, she argues, the narrative of relationships between migrants and citizens "must not only consider histories of events,

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choices, and actions, but must also incorporate this way of thinking about social position" (58). Analyzing narratives about the migrant-citizen relationships in all three case studies from this perspective, she shows that political and cultural narratives of all three case studies are corrupted by structural sin, which created unjust and biased social positions in the past and that continue to affect current relationships. Hence, she contends, political communities have to figure out how to justly respond to these inherited relationships and to the choices made by their predecessors (75).

Having challenged citizens of host countries to recognize their historical privileges, Rajendra places theories of justice in a global perspective. She argues that the central question should not be who has which rights but who is responsible for protecting the rights of whom (76). To answer the latter with attention to moral and structural issues, she discusses the potentials of a contractarian approach, a deontological ethics, and a capabilities approach (77). She concludes that despite their methodological differences, the theories based on these three approaches emphasize two elements crucial for discussions of justice and human rights. First, they all posit the importance of universal moral norms—"a minimal set of social, material, and political goods that humans require in order to live a dignified life" (91). Second, all three approaches highlight the structural dimension of justice, by which Rajendra means that justice requires attention to restructuring institutions that perpetuate inequality (91). At the same time, Rajendra has to accept that none of these approaches can explain the circumstances by which migrants and citizens came to have specific system relations (91). Based on the connection between historically embedded relationships and responsibilities (92), Rajendra suggests a "theory of justice that responds to the relationships between migrants and citizens" (93).

For this she finds it helpful to consider the legal materials about the resident alien in the Hebrew Bible and the attitudes to strangers in the New Testament (reading the Bible as a unified text) and to see how the Biblical texts reveal a vision of justice (93–97). Rajendra shows that both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament define justice as a relational category (93–94). The Bible warns members "to avoid the temptation to exploit nonmembers" on the basis that they are nonmembers (99) and teaches that the most vulnerable groups must be protected. *Gërim* (non-Jews in a Jewish regime) were vulnerable "because they were living under political, social, and economic institutions not of their own choosing" (101), a situation similar to that facing modern migrants who live in their host countries. The web of relationships to *gërim* is even more complicated. Exhortations "to treat *gërim* with justice—and even love the *gërim*—are always followed by the reminder that the Israelites were once strangers themselves in the land of Egypt" (103). Drawing parallels to the relationships between migrants and citizens today, Rajendra states that "the key temptation for citizens today is to subscribe to false narrative, one that omits the origins of the relationships between migrants and citizens" and concludes that justice requires connecting responsibilities to accurate narratives (109).

Without attention to historical specifics of exploitation in real world cases, Rajendra argues, we too easily lose sight of the responsibilities engendered by past relationships. Universal values should not cloud specific obligations. The ethical imperative in the New Testament to extend hospitality to the stranger is also based on relationships. The dual identity of Christ—Jesus Christ as a stranger in his earthly life, and Jesus Christ as a host who welcomes his followers into the kingdom of God—provides, according to Rajendra's analysis, the foundations of Christian hospitality (110) and leads to another Christian statement: caring for the vulnerable as the Christian community cares for Christ (111). Although Rajendra identifies materials from the Hebrew Bible as a potential source for a Christian ethics of migration, she admits that this source is insufficient. The account of justice in the Hebrew Bible is based on a particular narrative of Exodus, which functions as the metanarrative; however, citizens of contemporary states do not have such shared metanarrative, or a master narrative (111–12).

In the final chapter Rajendra concludes that answering ethical questions about which responsibilities citizens have toward migrants and potential migrants and what the basis of these

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responsibilities should be requires not only new narratives but also "a new account of justice that allocates responsibilities rather than merely human rights" (114). Based on an understanding of historically embedded relationships, Rajendra suggests a practice of "navigat[ing] between universal and particular commitments" including "unchosen relationships and institutions" (114). Since narratives can be more or less faithful to reality, the responsibilities are allocated by complex narratives about relationships. Assessing narratives concerning the responsibilities is a task of justice (122–23). Rajendra admits that "any narrative necessarily includes some details and omits others" (127) and hence has limitations. She stresses that "[d]ominant narratives often obscure the experiences and insights of those on the margins of society, including migrants, precisely because the structures of sin that benefit the powerful often obscure the narratives of those who are exploited" (128). She insists on new stories incorporating the socially and politically ignored—histories of colonialism, guest-worker programs, and foreign investments — in order to challenge the dominant narrative that migrants are the needy and poor beneficiaries of the generosity of citizens (129).

Rajendra argues that citizens' responsibilities toward migrants should be grounded in concrete historical relationships and connected narratives. These narratives admit that citizens benefit from the participation of undocumented migrants in the labor market. Unjust guest-worker programs of the past should require citizens to think more carefully about present policies. Hence, for example, US policy and public opinion should reflect the fact that US investments into Mexican export-oriented factories disproportionately benefited American citizens over Mexicans (130–38). If citizens recognized these relationships, they might see migrants from former colonies as fellows. Rajendra constructs a beautiful and logical concept of justice as responsibility to relationships. Is this concept possible in practice? Rajendra gives an answer of sorts to this question: "Perfect justice … will only come with the fullness of the heavenly city. By contrast, the earthly city is characterized as only a shadow of the perfect justice of the heavenly city. Meeting all of our responsibilities … might prove impossible. But the effort extended in discovering reality through relationships is the work of solidarity, and it is the only way to attain even the imperfect justice that is available in the earthly city" (145). Here she echoes Martin Luther's thesis that in this earthly city, "the Law and Gospel are distinguished in their essential character: the one promises, the other commands."[1] While states command that people respect borders and laws regulating migrations, faith-based organizations with their social services extend solidarity to migrants, and this social service is not just charity but also responsibility based on the love of God. Solidarity, therefore, holds out the—perhaps slender—hope of deeper understanding of a responsibility between citizens and migrants in the name of justice.

Migrants and Citizens: Justice and Responsibility in the Ethics of Immigration contributes a fresh approach to framing and reconstructing the narratives of immigration—this difficult and contested reality of our days. It helps readers to grasp the complexities, controversies, and interdependencies of our globalized world and offers a route to more responsible and more just relationships.

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1 "The Distinction between the Law and the Gospel: A Sermon by Martin Luther, January 1, 1532," trans. Willard L. Burce, *Concordia Journal* 18, no. 2 (1992): 153–63, at 157.

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