Internalized Borders: Immigration Ethics in the Age of Trump

Kristin E. Heyer
Boston College, MA, USA

Abstract
The Trump administration’s immigration measures and attendant dehumanizing rhetoric have fanned the flames of nationalism and sown fear in communities. Its internal enforcement strategies are bolstered by manipulative narratives that perpetuate myths and reflect facile analyses of complex dilemmas, focusing on symptoms rather than causes of migration. Reducing immigration questions to the locus of border crossers alone eclipses from view transnational actors responsible for economic instability, violent conflict, or labor recruitment, and also eclipses their accountability. Recent developments in migration ethics help illuminate significant historical and structural contexts of migration as well as models of justice and norms for negotiating duties of reception that better reflect such relationships. Attending to underlying fears and idolatries that contribute to exclusionary dynamics also emerges as critical for advancing just policy reforms and cultivating civic friendship moving forward.

Keywords
civic friendship, immigration, migration ethics, social sin, structural justice, Donald Trump

Significant changes wrought by President Donald Trump during the first year of his presidency directly reflect his campaign rhetoric that casts immigrants and refugees as threats to the United States. Trump campaigned on promises to

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Corresponding author:
Kristin E. Heyer, Theology Department, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, USA.
Email: kristin.heyer@bc.edu
deport undocumented immigrants and secure the border with Mexico, a country he charged with sending its criminals, drug dealers, and rapists. Anti-immigrant sentiment helped elect Trump: the most consistent chant at his rallies was “Build the wall!” Trump moved swiftly to make good on campaign promises, issuing executive orders within the first few weeks of his presidency that called for constructing a wall at the United States–Mexico border, a selective travel ban, and expansion of the nation’s detention capacity and expedited removal practices.\(^2\) While the courts contest elements of the orders’ legal legitimacy, enforcement raids have ensued in at least twenty states. The administration’s internal enforcement measures and accompanying rhetoric have fanned the flames of nationalism, sown fear in immigrant communities, and eroded civic life.

Key elements of the administration’s enforcement strategy appear out of step with realities on the ground. The “Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements” order includes a series of mandates aimed at obtaining “complete operational control” of the entire 2,000-mile southwestern border. This centerpiece initiative has been broadly criticized based on escalating cost projections, efficacy as an enforcement tool, its necessity given other enforcement tools, personnel and technologies, and its deleterious effect on binational border communities, property rights, and the environment.\(^3\) The US government already spends more on federal immigration enforcement than on all other principal federal criminal law enforcement agencies combined.\(^4\) Between 1986 and 2008, the Border Patrol’s personnel increased by 500 percent and its budget by twentyfold, and whereas hundreds of miles of border walls were constructed, the number of unauthorized migrants grew during the same period from three million to twelve million. Despite such measures, the likelihood of a migrant ultimately crossing the border never dropped below 95 percent.\(^5\) Moreover, since 2008 the United States has witnessed a dramatic decline in the undocumented population, by contrast, and a growing


percentage of border crossers have originated in the Northern Triangle countries of Central America, fleeing pervasive violence and seeking not to evade arrest, but to request political asylum.\textsuperscript{6} Trump’s border wall plan is opposed by a median of 76 percent across 37 countries surveyed, with 94 percent opposition in Mexico. Trump’s related policy stances on withdrawing from international trade agreements and restricting entry into the United States by people from select Muslim-majority nations have been met with similar opposition.\textsuperscript{7}

The executive order also gives wider latitude to enforcement officials, expanding those targeted for deportation to include anyone whom immigration officers judge to pose a risk to public safety or national security.\textsuperscript{8} Whereas the Obama administration initially deported those immigrants who had committed minor offenses—and went on to deport more immigrants than all twentieth-century administrations combined—it altered its policy to target primarily those convicted of serious crimes or who had violated deportation orders. By September 2017, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents had made 43 percent more arrests since Trump took office compared to the same period the previous year; whereas deportations were not on track in late 2017 to exceed the previous year’s numbers, ICE took into custody nearly three times more removable noncitizens without criminal records than during the same period in 2016.\textsuperscript{9} The United Nations’ migration agency reported significantly fewer people attempting to cross the Mexico–US border in the first seven months of 2017 than the year before, yet 17 percent more migrant deaths were reported at the border during the same period.\textsuperscript{10} Historically, stricter immigration policies have driven people to take more dangerous routes, in part because such policies fail to mitigate factors propelling most migrants to attempt the journey.\textsuperscript{11}

Mexican deportations of Central Americans have markedly increased since the country implemented\textit{ Programa Frontera Sur} in 2014, with little deterrent effect and reports of exacerbated human rights violations of migrants in transit through

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{6} Warren and Kerwin, “The 2,000 Mile Wall in Search of a Purpose.”
\item \textsuperscript{11} Amanda Holpuch, “Migrant Deaths at US–Mexico Border Increase 17% this Year, UN Figures Show,”\textit{ The Guardian}, August 5, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/05/migrants-us-mexico-border-deaths-figures.
Mexico to the United States who have been targeted for kidnapping and extortion by criminal gangs and government officials.\textsuperscript{12}

President Trump inherited an outdated immigration system issuing from decades of congressional inaction. The failure of Congress to protect even so-called DREAMers brought to the United States as youth is ostensibly what led President Obama to implement the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program as an exercise in prosecutorial discretion.\textsuperscript{13} Given the Trump administration’s termination of the program and stated demands for its reinstatement, prospects for viable paths to citizenship for those not detained or deported look increasingly dim. Increased enforcement measures have contributed not only to upticks in detentions of noncriminals and border deaths, but also to heightened mental health risks in immigrant communities\textsuperscript{14} and threats to familial well-being on both sides of the border, as Guadalupe García de Rayos’s deportation revealed.\textsuperscript{15} Increased fears of detention and deportation have deterred immigrants from attending routine medical appointments or lodging domestic violence reports, threatening the wider common good.

The administration’s internal enforcement strategies focus on symptoms rather than causes of migration. The measures are framed by narratives that perpetuate myths about responsibility for irregular migration and genuine threats to national security, reflective of enduring interpretive frames.\textsuperscript{16} Employing symbolic resources has long played an overt role in the politics of migration.\textsuperscript{17} Reducing immigration matters to the locus of border crossers alone eclipses from view transnational actors responsible for


\textsuperscript{13} DACA is an Obama Administration initiative that has granted work authorization and a two-year reprieve from deportation to roughly 800,000 unauthorized immigrants who came to the United States as children since its launch in 2012. The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was first introduced in 2001 (and resurfaced in 2006, 2007, 2010, and 2013) and would have provided a pathway to lawful permanent residence for young unauthorized immigrants brought to the United States as children under certain conditions.

\textsuperscript{14} Beyond the physical and social manifestations of stress exhibited by immigrant family members in the face of increased deportation threats, for undocumented youth in particular, fear and stigma management become a “second border” that reinforces legal exclusion. See Roberto G. Gonzalez, \textit{Lives in Limbo: Undocumented and Coming of Age in America} (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).


violent conflict, and economic instability or climate change—much less blame for these factors. This note will attempt to recontextualize immigration, scrutinizing dominant narratives, delineating historical and structural contexts of migration, and profiling models of relational justice. It concludes by probing underlying fears and idolatries contributing to exclusionary dynamics.

**Narratives of Misdirection and Exclusion**

Trump’s internal enforcement steps follow from the politics of exclusion peddled throughout his campaign, when appeals to economic and cultural anxieties were often cloaked in nativist rhetoric. His administration’s ongoing negative portrayals of undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers reflect false assumptions and facile analyses of complex challenges.

Trump billed his initial immigration order as a measure to “Make America Safe Again,” following from the law and order mantle he adopted to distinguish his candidacy. This framework casts unauthorized immigrants as willful lawbreakers, posing national security threats. Yet recent studies indicate higher rates of immigration correlate with lower rates of violent and property crime. The rule of law rightly occupies a privileged place in the United States, yet a lack of accountability that marks Border Patrol procedures and the lack of due process afforded immigrant detainees belie this rationale. The Department of Homeland Security’s significant backlogs and priority “rocket” dockets in immigration courts give rise to concerns the removal system is both inefficient and lacking in adequate safeguards. In the case of increasingly employed expedited forms of removal, absent a courtroom and administrative judge or viable avenues for review, the rule of law lies within the hands of ICE or Customs and Border Protection officers alone, “who serve as both prosecutor and judge.”

Attorney General Jeff Sessions framed expanded prosecution procedures for immigrants in similar terms of threats to law and order, warning of death-dealing cartels, profiteering coyotes, and document-forgers who seek to overthrow our system of lawful immigration, and “turn cities and suburbs into warzones” as they rape and kill “innocent citizens.” His totalizing and binary language was vividly

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19. Legal reform reports have criticized aspects of the US immigration laws at odds with this complement of features: their retroactivity, inconsistent application, lack of proportionality, procedural unfairness (e.g., the effects of availability of legal counsel), and failure to comport with basic due process norms. See Donald Kerwin, “Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty in Service of the Human Person,” in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, ed. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gerschutz (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2009), 93–122 at 111.

dehumanizing: “Depravity and violence are their calling cards, including brutal machete attacks and beheadings. It is here, on this sliver of land, where we first take our stand against this filth.”21 His expansion of felony charges and funding cut threats to sanctuary locales22 follow through on Trump’s promises of an indiscriminate deportation force.23

Related reporting requirements that perpetually showcase instances “where immigrants and refugees pose a threat to society or impose costs” fuel a criminal narrative. Such reports may increase public awareness of specific crimes, yet “releasing them devoid of contextualizing information such as overall crime rates or comparable data on citizens... skew public perceptions of immigrants, both legal and unauthorized.”24 Hence the ongoing function of law-and-order rhetoric is ensured through these efforts to hone anti-immigrant propaganda machinery and single out behavior of a particular group of people, devoid of wider context, which some have compared to Breitbart News’s “Black Crime” section.25 Inside the United States as elsewhere, terrorist attacks are seized upon to feed a conflation of migration with terrorism.26 Senator Rand Paul called the Tsarnaev brothers “refugees coddled by the United States,” and as a candidate Trump was quick to call for a complete shutdown of Muslims entering the country in the wake of the San Bernadino attacks in 2015.27 Trump has continued to collapse such distinctions to sow isolationism and xenophobia, with his pardon of

Sherriff Joe Arpaio sending a message of impunity for law enforcement and symbolizing the centrality of law-and-order bravado to his immigration narrative. Another script from Trump’s migration and trade platform casts newcomers as economic threats, a perception historically fueled in times of economic downturn. Beyond studies that show immigrant laborers provide a net benefit to the US economy—recent estimates indicate that DACA beneficiaries alone would contribute $460.3 billion to the US gross domestic product over the next decade—the detention industry profits from irregular migrants, further confounding the “economic threat” frame. Share prices for privately held corrections firms, GEO Group and Corrections Corporation of America, rose over 100 percent in the wake of the 2016 election, given Trump’s avowed commitment to increase incarceration of immigrants. The administration has called for nearly doubling the number of immigrants detained to 80,000 per day, and in April of 2017 the White House approved plans to construct a $110 million detention center operated by GEO near Houston. Detainees in GEO’s Adelanto Detention Center in California staged a hunger strike and a sit-in in the summer of 2017 to protest unsanitary conditions and poor medical care; three detainees had died in the previous three months. The burgeoning immigrant industrial complex raises serious questions about the financial stakes in the broken immigration system, diminished public oversight, and accountability.

The administration has connected economic anxieties with anxieties over cultural shifts, shaping a particular vision of “America First” that casts newcomers as threatening to the nation’s identity. Tapping into the related anti-immigrant sentiment has provoked the demonization of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. Bias-related hate crimes surged following the election. Where appeals to nostalgia or anxieties about


rapid cultural and demographic changes may have remained more hidden or coded in
the recent past, Trump’s collusion with white nationalists has brought overt racist and
xenophobic fears into the open. Some contend Trump has surrounded himself with
high-level advisers who embrace a “clash of civilizations” paradigm, explaining the
restrictionist logic that informs his approach to migration policy and international
affairs in terms of the importance of threats to culture rather than political ideology.33

Representations of the outsider as a social menace have been reinvented in moments
of national crisis, with the general pattern evidencing xenophobia’s productive func­
tion in the national imaginary. Portrayals of immigrants as public charges or of a dan­
gerously porous border have long shaped US society’s collective imagination. In the
2016 presidential campaign, Trump consistently played upon the fears of cultural dis­
placement of white working-class voters. Such voters who reported often feeling “like
a stranger in their own land” were 3.5 times more likely to favor Trump than those who
did not share such concerns.34 His campaign performed strongest among those who
reported that their ancestors are “American.” Robert Jones has argued Trump success­
fully converted white evangelical Protestant “values voters” into “nostalgia voters” by
naming and elevating their anxieties about the country’s recent demographic and cul­
tural shifts (“Make America Great Again” as restoring cultural displacement and eco­

33. Todd Scribner, “You Are Not Welcome Here Anymore: Restoring Support for Refugee
Resettlement in the Age of Trump,” *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 5 (2017):
263–84 at 263, https://doi.org/10.14240/jmhs.v5i2.84.
34. Daniel Cox, Rachel Lienesch, Robert P. Jones, *Beyond Economics: Fears of
Cultural Displacement Pushed the White Working Class to Trump* (Washington, DC:
Public Religion Research Institute, May 9, 2017), https://www.prri.org/research/
white-working-class-attitudes-economy-trade-immigration-election-donald-trump/.
2016); Jennifer Rubin, “What the End of White Christian America Has to do with
com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2016/09/16/what-the-end-of-white-christian-america-has-to-do-
associations between whiteness, Christianity and being American.” Recent studies show African Americans and Latinx are significantly more likely than white respondents to understand American identity as defined by its “balance of assimilation and migration-driven diversity” and that the two are not mutually exclusive. Some sociologists warn that seemingly innocuous dialogue about preserving national culture has enabled exclusionary and essentializing discourses to circulate: despite layered forms of belonging, hybrid identities, and migrant activism, “the specter of difference and the migrant as other continue to dominate social and political debates.” In the case of the current administration’s rhetoric, nativist understandings of identity have been thinly veiled at most.

Conversations about who we are as a nation, the kind of society we wish to share, and the role of civic ideals, histories, and traditions in our understandings of our national identity are worth engaging. Frameworks raising security and economic questions also entail legitimate concerns, yet employed on their own they serve to distort and eclipse fundamental features of the whole picture. Fear of difference is relatively easy to mass market and shapes society’s imagination in powerful ways. Encounters with reluctant or desperate migrants signal significant dissonance between these exclusionary frameworks and the inhumane impact of recent rhetoric and measures alike. Tucson’s Bishop Gerald Kicanas lamented that during the attorney general’s visit to Nogales, Sessions neglected to hear border narratives of immigrants fleeing impossible situations, risking dangerous border crossings “in search of protection and a new life.” At his border mass in Ciudad Juárez, Pope Francis bade listeners to measure the impact of forced migration not in numbers or statistics but with concrete names and stories, evoking a counter-narrative to those dominating the airwaves:

They are the brothers and sisters of those expelled by poverty and violence, by drug trafficking and criminal organizations. Being faced with so many legal vacuums, they get caught up in a web that ensnares and always destroys the poorest. Not only do they suffer poverty but they must also endure these forms of violence. Injustice is radicalized in the young; they are “cannon fodder,” persecuted and threatened when they try to flee the spiral of violence and the hell of drugs, not to mention the tragic predicament of the many women whose lives have been unjustly taken.

Attentiveness to such experiences can help unmask operative narratives. Probing the complex realities behind deceptive sound bites also expands consideration beyond individuals who cross borders to consider the global contexts that compel migration.

**Structural Contexts and the Demands of Relational Justice**

Trump’s restrictionist measures and rhetoric do not convey a sense of the complex roles historical relationships, transnational politics, and economic globalization play in contemporary migration. Understanding immigration as “individual actions of emigrants,” wherein individuals are the primary site for enforcement and responsibility, has become increasingly incompatible with transnational politics and economies.⁴³ Developments in social sciences and migration ethics help reorient analyses away from stopgap efforts and toward contextual assessments of what patterns of migration reveal and demand. Understanding the geopolitical structures and systems that generate and sustain migration impact culpability and warranted responses alike.

Typically, established communities and migrants are “bound together by history, politics and economics even before the act of migration bridges the distance of geography.”⁴⁴ Dynamics of employer recruitment, for example, tend to be shaped by prior bonds impacted by colonialism, military invasions, or economic ties. Saskia Sassen also highlights the increasing significance of today’s “multiplying global imaginaries, which are partly a function of Western economic and media dominance and have their own way of constructing bridges.”⁴⁵ In the case of the United States, the renewal of mass migration in the 1960s ensued amid its expanded economic and military activity in Asia and the Caribbean and its critical role in the development of a world economic system. Both helped create conditions that mobilized people into migrations as well as the formation of unintended bridges to the United States. Sassen argues these patterns indicate that measures thought to deter emigration from developing countries, such as foreign investment or the promotion of export-oriented growth, “seem to have had precisely the opposite effect, at least in the short and middle run.”⁴⁶ Miguel De La Torre emphasizes the ongoing legacy

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of nineteenth- and twentieth-century US foreign policy, expansionism, and neoliberal economic strategies—with attendant narratives—in generating migration flows from Latin America. Writing about the European context, Marianne Heimbach-Steins notes colonial structures shaped not only long-term international political and economic relationships that have inhibited equal participation, but also culturalist patterns and ideologies of domination that continue to influence migrants’ exclusion and power asymmetries.

Sassen’s latest research links deeper dynamics of debt servicing and extraction to new migratory flows. She argues that given “predatory” forms of advanced capitalism, opaque transnational networks, and a global governance system geared to aiding corporations, migration is far more complex an issue than one concerning nationalism versus globalism. Concerned with emergent migrations, she traces how such factors have expelled communities from their habitats: in the case of Central American minors entering the United States, she probes root causes behind proximate violence broadly construed, to rapidly escalating urban gang activity due to the destruction of small-holder rural economies resulting from land grabs and mining. Luis Jesús Paz Acosta recently lamented that to be young in El Salvador today is nearly a death sentence. Getting to the roots of such violence—without simply blaming corrupt police and criminalizing traffickers, or keeping gang violence “local” without interrogating its transnational dimensions and origins—traces systemic flows to their source. She links other emergent patterns of displacement (such as the Rohingyas fleeing Myanmar and migration toward Europe originating in several Middle Eastern and African countries, but also forms of mass incarceration and the warehousing of able-bodied unemployed persons in ghettos and slums) in terms of thoroughgoing “expulsions.”

Systemic approaches to recontextualizing migration(s) illuminate the shortcomings not only of reductive protectionist responses but also more receptive responses to immigrants that prioritize hospitality over structural justice or remain narrow in moral

47. Miguel De La Torre, The U.S. Immigration Crisis: Toward an Ethics of Place (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016), 151-52. He personally reflects, “I am in this country following my sugar, tobacco and rum” (158).
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concern. Tisha Rajendra’s work effectively critiques Catholic social thought’s over-reliance on neoclassical migration theory and attendant “supply side cures,” indicating how migration systems theory more accurately reflects a social anthropology and the macrostructures that directly impact migration patterns (quasi-colonialism, labor recruitment) alongside mesostructures (social networks). She forwards the importance of relational justice for overcoming tendencies to misdiagnose migration tensions as residing between migrants’ freedom and political communities’ self-determination alone. She develops an ethic of responsibility that integrates universal norms with contextual, relational realities to counter the weaknesses of reigning theories of justice with respect to their abilities to respond to the particular relationships that drive migration. Hence systemic perspectives also signal the inadequacy of certain categories of analysis themselves.

Whereas communitarian and cosmopolitan models tend to focus on rights to movement and reception alone, categories like justice-in-relation, the global common good, or restorative justice contextualize the individual acts of migrants and underscore social dimensions of justice and sinful complicity alike. Relational frameworks rightly signal it is not merely those who overstay visas or unscrupulous employers who bear responsibility for an undocumented presence; they orient analyses toward root causes of displacement and shared accountability. Several authors have generated criteria to help communities negotiate relative duties to migrants. Applying the Kew Gardens principles and elements of the just war tradition, David Hollenbach offers norms that help account for histories of relationship and complicity.

53. De La Torre argues that the virtue of hospitality “masks the complicity caused by the consequences of empire building ... it would historically be more accurate to speak about the responsibility of restitution.” De La Torre, The U.S. Immigration Crisis, 159. See also his Trails of Hope and Terror: Testimonies on Immigration (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009), 9–14.


of intellectual or psychological proximity to need to include “moral proximity,” he suggests countries that have gained economically from their colonies or with histories of military involvement in another nation “have special obligations to people in flight from that nation.”\textsuperscript{59} Beyond particular duties to refugees from wars in Vietnam and Iraq, Hollenbach notes benefits gained by the United States through its dominant role in nations like Guatemala, Haiti, and the Philippines also lead to particular duties to those countries: such duties “include making significant contributions to the development of these countries and admitting migrants in ways that will benefit both the migrants and those remaining in their home countries.”\textsuperscript{60} Existing economic relationships also confer relative duties for Hollenbach, indicating that guest workers who “contribute through their work to the life and well-being of the society they have entered” should be welcomed as citizens.\textsuperscript{61}

In terms of familial relationships, Victor Carmona’s retrieval of Aquinas’s order of charity for determining a nation’s duties to immigrant families offers another application of relational justice to migration ethics.\textsuperscript{62} Carmona proposes that Congress grant priority to regularizing undocumented Mexican immigrants who belong to mixed-status families “out of a sense of beneficence toward the US citizens who love them.”\textsuperscript{63} Drawing upon the priority Aquinas grants to kin’s claims, Carmona argues that the mixed-status relationships that developed as a result of US recruitment of undocumented labor and the nation’s “back door preference system” make regularization claims on the commonweal.\textsuperscript{64} Beyond general duties of justice, he draws attention to violations of “the particular duties that Americans and undocumented immigrants from Mexico owe each other as husbands and wives, parents and children, and employers and employees,” undermined by Congress’s “impartial, nationally blind admission policy.”\textsuperscript{65} The Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) program might have offered a mode of honoring these relational duties. Hence migration occurs within relationships—historical, geopolitical, familial—that issue responsibilities. Dominant theories and policies too often bypass or obscure these dimensions of relational justice.

**Confronting Underlying Idolatries: Social Sin and Immigration**

Beyond identifying structural forces demanding relational justice, probing the migration question entails interrogating more ideological dimensions of social sin that

\textsuperscript{59} Hollenbach, “Borders and Duties to the Displaced,” 160.


\textsuperscript{61} Hollenbach, “A Future Beyond Borders,” 232.


\textsuperscript{63} Carmona, “Theologizing Immigration,” 377.


\textsuperscript{65} Carmona, “Theologizing Immigration,” 380–81.
harden resistance to newcomers. Another mode of misdirection propagated by the new
administration has been its effort to undercut a Catholic normative position on immi-
grantion. Former White House Chief Strategist Steve Bannon publicly criticized the US
bishops’ defense of immigrant rights as mere economic self-interest in the face of
decreasing members, distinguishing the immigration issue from “matters of doctrine” to
undermine the authority of their opposition to the administration’s measures.66 Such
charges reveal ongoing efforts to “drive a wedge in the Catholic church, keeping white
Catholics who voted for Trump afraid and politically mobilized, while squelching the
power of an emerging generation of Latino Catholics who threaten his end game.”67

By contrast, the long-standing doctrinal body of migration teaching protects the
rights to remain and to migrate. Rooted in biblical injunctions to welcome the stranger,
its robust human rights tradition, and concern for global solidarity, the Catholic social
tradition “recognizes that the wellbeing of the person is tied to both the good of the
bounded community and a prior recognition of a meaningful global citizenship through
membership of the universal human family.”68 In sharp contrast to dominant discourse,
sovereignty and hospitality are understood in the tradition to be mutually implicating:
legitimate sovereignty must be exercised in reference to the universal destination of
created goods and a “requirement to regulate borders according to basic conditions of
social justice.”69 In various encyclicals, Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI widened
analyses of migration to treat deeper roots of displacement such as food security, global
inequality, and governance.70

66. Speaking on CBS’ “60 Minutes,” Bannon noted, “But immigration policy is not about doc-
trine. It’s about the sovereignty of a nation. And in that regard, they’re just another guy with
an opinion.” Steve Bannon, “Steve Bannon Says Catholic Church has ‘Economic Interest’
in ‘Unlimited Illegal Immigration,’” interview by Charlie Rose, 60 Minutes, September 10,
67. John Gehring, “Steve Bannon Tries to Drive a Wedge in the Church: Amateur Theologian,
org/bannon-tries-drive-wedge-church.
68. Anna Rowlands, “After Lesvos and Lampedusa: The European ‘Crisis’ and Its Challenge
to Catholic Social Thought,” Journal of Catholic Social Thought 14 (2017): 63–85 at 71–
72, https://doi.org/10.5840/jcathsoc20171416.
69. Rowlands, “After Lesvos and Lampedusa.”
70. See, e.g., Pope John Paul II’s discussion of isolationism, imperialism, neocolonialism, the
arms trade, and harmful forms of economic development that prevent pursuit of an interna-
tional common good protective of people on the move in Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (December
enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html; his discussion of food security and violent
conflict threatening rights to remain in his “Migration with a View to Peace,” (message,
2004 World Migration Day); and Pope Benedict XVI’s treatment of global inequalities and
underdevelopment in relation to migration in his “One Human Family” (message, World
Day of Migrants and Refugees, September 27, 2010), https://w2.vatican.va/content/
benedict-xvi/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20100927_world-
migrants-day.html.
Pope Francis’s gestures of solidarity with migrants have been central to his papacy, from his repentance in the “graveyard of wrecks” of Lampedusa to his lived example returning from Lesbos with refugee families. His theological and pastoral emphases are well suited to addressing systemic and ideological barriers to justice for immigrants: he underscores structures of injustice that treat migrants like pawns on a chessboard and repentance from harmful idolatries with a re-cognition of our fundamental relatedness in light of the harm borders wreak. On Lampedusa he lamented the pervasive idolatry that facilitates migrants’ deaths and robs us of the ability to weep, a theme he revisited in Manila and then Juárez, insisting “only eyes cleansed by tears can see clearly.” Amid his admission that even he remains “disoriented,” he did not merely condemn “the world” for this indifference and its consequences, but repented: “Forgive us Lord!” whether for being closed in on our own well-being in a way that leads to anesthesia of the heart, or making global decisions creating situations that lead to these tragedies.

Hence, as Anna Rowlands puts it, Francis juxtaposes the “disorientation of the settled in relation to the orientation of the displaced,” grounding the disorientation “not only in a classic account of the Fall, but also in the particular conditions of late modernity,” such as cultures of well-being that insulate and breed indifference. Isolation from immigrants’ realities allows citizens to commodify, politicize, scapegoat, or ignore them. Intersections of structural injustice with harmful ideologies have also concerned Pope Francis with respect to the global economy. In Evangelii Gaudium he warns that our “economy of exclusion and inequality kills.” Idolatries focused on having over being impede solidarity with immigrants as much as nationalistic ones. Not only harmful structures and practices but certain attendant ideological currents of neoliberal globalization—fatalistic understandings of the “price of progress” or “Market Fundamentalism”—configure coordinates for what becomes normal or conceivable. The tendency within and beyond US culture to understand the freedom of the markets as a categorical imperative rather than instrumental good can contribute to the “expulsions” traced above. Pope Francis connects this logic of exclusion based on materialism to perceptions and treatment of migrants as disposable.

71. Francis, “No Border Can Stop Us from Being One Family.”
Idolatries of security and invulnerability also facilitate susceptibility to exclusionary temptations. Roberto Goizueta’s reflections on how fear and self-loathing cause individuals to avoid the wounds of others illuminates the depth and lure of such dynamics. He notes we construct identities, institutions, and belief systems to shield us from the “terrifying truth” that our lives are ultimately not in our control.\textsuperscript{78} Susanna Snyder’s work has shown how an isolating ecology of fear conditions responses to migration “crises” in virtually every world capital, illuminating the dynamic via strands in the biblical tradition rooted in ecologies of fear and of faith.\textsuperscript{79} An idolatry of security and culture of comfort conspire to desensitize and to estrange those settled from those driven from home.

Given the nonvoluntary dimensions of social sin, Christian migration ethics entails not only negotiating relative duties of reception, but also addressing more diffuse and complex structures and ideologies that abet complicity in injustice and apathy. Whether in forms of fear-mongering narratives, cultural superiority, or profiteering, social inducements to personal sin in the immigration context abound. Portraying immigration through a lens of individual culpability alone obscures these multileveled, subtle dynamics at play.\textsuperscript{80}

\textbf{Civic Friendship and Political Justice}

Given the reach of exclusionary global dynamics and these isolating, insulating temptations of civic life heightened in times of flux, migration ethics will need to treat not only the implications of political and economic structural shifts, but also attend to shaping attitudes and tutoring affections to negotiate shifting identities. Jonathan Haidt’s insights about the moral challenges spurring anti-globalist movements as well as about the role nonrational factors play in the apprehension and pursuit of goods more broadly alert us to the importance of cultivating civic friendship and healing broken communities.\textsuperscript{81} Religious practices, narratives, and symbols hold potential to (re)shape believers’ moral imagination and counter the collective delusion that we are not responsible. The \textit{mitzvah} of loving the stranger, the Christian counternarrative of subversive hospitality, and the Buddhist teaching of “interdependent co-arising,”

\textsuperscript{79} Susanna Synder, \textit{Asylum-Seeking, Migration and Church} (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 85–87, chap. 7. See also Jorge Castillo Guerra, “A Church without Boundaries,” 49–50.
meaningfully challenge outlooks shaped by economic functionalism or xenophobic resistance.\textsuperscript{82} The work of many Latinx theologians charts a path away from harmful frontier myths and forward toward an ethics of encounter and accompaniment.\textsuperscript{83} Some religious institutions have embodied commitments via offering sanctuary and education to undocumented immigrants.\textsuperscript{84} Cultivating empathy and civic virtue will require we resist “the pervasive distortions that cloud our moral imagination,”\textsuperscript{85} re-contextualize migrations, and draw near to the realities of immigrant communities marked by vitality and precarious vulnerability alike.

Trump’s migration rhetoric and policies are of a piece with a “growing tendency to replace collaboration for the international common good with pursuit of an illusory understanding of national self-interest,” due to cultural backlash against unfamiliar intrusions or responses to economic suffering.\textsuperscript{86} Beyond manipulative narratives, senses of real and perceived loss—and accompanying grief and resentment—foster receptivity to exclusionary rhetoric and measures. Addressing not only nativism and debasing rhetoric, but also deeply seated fears perhaps complicates the path forward. Ali Noorani captures the unexpected nature of the challenge immigrant activists faced in recent legislative battles: most waged a political battle, attempting to change minds with data, and neglected to appreciate that the country was having a cultural debate about identity and values.\textsuperscript{87} Given the deepening tribalization of partisanship and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{83} Roberto Goizueta, \textit{Christ Our Companion: Toward a Theological Aesthetics of Liberation} (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009).
  \item \textsuperscript{84} For example, Loyola University Chicago’s Stritch School of Medicine became the first medical school in the United States to openly welcome applications from DACA recipients in view of its values affirming universal human dignity and social justice. In its 2018–2020 classes Stritch has 28 students currently enrolled in the DACA program, among more than 100 DACA students matriculated across the university’s various schools. See Mark Kuczewski and Sunny Nakae, “Universities Seek DACA Recipient Strategies: Support, Advocacy for Medical Students,” \textit{Health Progress}, July–August 2017, https://www.chausa.org/publications/health-progress/article/july-august-2017/universities-seek-daca-recipient-strategies. For a discussion of broader outreach to undocumented students across the network of Jesuit colleges and universities, see Terry-Ann Jones and Laura Nichols, eds., \textit{Undocumented and in College: Students and Institutions in a Climate of National Hostility} (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017).
  \item \textsuperscript{85} Charles Strain, “No More Deaths: Border Enforcement and Moral Devolution,” in Collier and Strain, \textit{Religious and Ethical Perspectives on Global Migration}, 273–96 at 282.
  \item \textsuperscript{87} Noorani, \textit{There Goes the Neighborhood}, 23–25.
\end{itemize}
segmented social media feeds, the need to rebuild public trust and a shared sense of community cannot be underestimated or bypassed.\textsuperscript{88}

Understanding immigration dynamics as related to unjust international political and economic divides also requires nations to share accountability in the wake of the Westphalian model's "partial eclipse" and to convert from opportunistic patterns of interdependence. Migrant deaths in the Arizona desert and Mediterranean alike make poignantly clear the stakes of nations failing to understand themselves as collectively responsible for these shared challenges. Given the systemic culpability emphasized herein, some have proposed an "instability tax" be levied upon private and governmental entities that destabilize migrant and refugee-producing regions—whether hedge funds profiting off of commodity-trading in African minerals or weapons manufacturers profiting from selling arms to the Middle East, or multinationals who profit from degrading or destabilizing poor nations.\textsuperscript{89} Structural analyses suggest that US migration policy should consider its economic and political complicity in generating migrant flows rather than prioritize merit-based points systems or perpetuate amnesic scapegoating. A retreat from shortsighted and enforcement-only approaches should entail policy steps toward offering undocumented immigrants a viable path to citizenship (with a "clean" DACA reinstatement in the interim, if needed); adjustments of visa caps to reflect actual labor needs; continued recognition of family relationships; unlinking health, education, and public safety from immigration status;\textsuperscript{90} expansion of refugee caps; reform of judicial review and discretion in removal practices; extension of Temporary Protected Status where home country conditions warrant; the establishment of responsive immigration integration measures;\textsuperscript{91} and meaningful global financial reform.

Expedient political rhetoric masks wider complicity, abets human rights violations, and betrays the nation's founding principles. The deportation and deportation-by-attrition efforts the new administration champions may be only beginning to unfold. Immigrants themselves "announce an important moral message," witnessing both to imbalances and abuses and to transformative possibilities worthy of the unity of the human family.\textsuperscript{92} Pope Francis's preference for bridges over walls and unwavering attention to ideologies that inhibit kinship offer a way forward.

\textsuperscript{88} Noorani, \textit{There Goes the Neighborhood}, 235.


Author biography

Kristin E. Heyer (PhD, Boston College, 2003) is professor of theological ethics at Boston College. Her research focuses upon migration, moral agency, and Catholic social ethics. Her recent books include the coedited volumes *Public Theology and the Global Common Good: The Contribution of David Hollenbach* (Orbis, 2016) and *Conscience and Catholicism: Rights, Responsibilities and Institutional Responses* (Orbis, 2015), as well as the monograph *Kinship across Borders: A Christian Ethic of Immigration* (Georgetown University Press, 2012).
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