

# The Sociocultural Trauma of Forced Migration and Displacement

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Trauma occurs when individuals or groups encounter a horrific experience that leads to enduring imprints on their consciousness and memory, and results in a crucial alteration in how they perceive their identity, social surrounding, and even their future. The concept of trauma is firmly connected to war, conflict, and forced migration. Refugees face catastrophic life events when everything breaks apart. In recent years, there has been an increased interest in exploring trauma from different approaches, including sociological ones. Therefore, this article aims to review, explore, and analyze the concepts of cultural trauma, collective identity, and social trauma regarding the issue of refugees' forced migration. The first part of the study focuses on reviewing related literature on cultural trauma and collective identity. Then, I investigate the concept of social trauma by considering forced migration, the host communities, the identity of forced migrants, and the role of the carrier groups. In this way, I attempt to present a comprehensive analysis of forced displacement from a sociocultural perspective.

Keywords: cultural trauma, social trauma, identity, forced migration, displacement, refugee, host community, final destination

## Introduction

As conflicts, wars, and depletion of economic conditions have contributed to vast and recurring forced migration, it would be helpful to examine this case from a sociocultural perspective. In this paper, I try to relate cultural trauma, social trauma, and the issue of forced migration. Trauma takes place when individuals or groups go through a dreadful experience that leaves profound traces in their awareness and memories. This leads to change in their perception of the future. Even though trauma is studied at a socio-cultural level, it is collective trauma that is studied rather than individual suffering.

From a cultural perspective, Alexander (2004) has stated that cultural trauma occurs when “members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways” (1).

In its broadest meaning, social trauma is characterized by humiliation and rejection in societal contexts (Bjornsson *et al.*, 2020). Social trauma primarily refers to the concepts of ‘struggle’, ‘suffering’, incidents associated with the cause of the pain, ‘sacrifice’, and a sense of accountability (Pedović, Hedrih, 2019). On a collective level, Hamburger has described social trauma as “the psychological and relational consequences of a traumatic experience in the frame of societal occurrences, where a social group is the target of a planned persecution” (Hamburger, Hancheva, Volkan, 2021).

Before discussing the concept of trauma on the collective level, I find it helpful to differentiate it from individual trauma. Erikson (1976) argues that individual trauma is characterized as being a “blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively”. Still, he distinguishes it from collective trauma which is a “blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality” (153-154). Collective trauma is also characterized by how it functions: “collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with trauma” (Ibid.). Both individual and collective traumas result from ‘shock’. In addition to being ‘personal’, the wounds are also ‘collective’ and ‘social’. Traumatic events on an individual and a social level may reinforce one another, heightening the shock and sense of loss. Therefore, one’s personal loss is closely related to that experienced by others (Eyerman, 2013: 43). According to Smelser, there is a tendency to describe collective trauma as ‘indelible’, such as national shame. If this representation is effective in establishing itself, memory does indeed take on the qualities of ‘indelibility’ and ‘unshakeability’ (2004: 42).

Smelser has described how collective trauma is inextricably tied to the identity of the traumatized group by stating that “collective trauma, affecting a group with definable membership, will, of necessity, also be associated with that group’s collective identity” (43). In one way or another, the collective identity of the group is affected by the acute event experienced by each individual. Collective identity emerges from the definition of the shared experiences and interests of the members of a social group. Since “identity involves a cultural reference” (Alexander, 2004:10), horrific events largely affect collective identities and participate in the emergence of cultural trauma.

From this perspective, migration, in its broadest context, could be voluntary or forced, for positive or negative reasons, or for economic and political reasons. Trauma needs to be examined in terms of social trauma and its relation to the identity of forced migratory groups and the host communities. When social groups suffer from wars and conflicts as forced migrants, then aspects, processes, and consequences of social and cultural trauma and their relation to identity are crucial concepts to be explored. Studying trauma from a cultural perspective along with the collective nature of identity is reviewed and analyzed following the principles presented by Jeffrey Alexander and his colleagues. The study emphasizes social trauma as a result of conflicts and wars, as well as social trauma as both a clinical and psychological phenomenon. It is the intentional persecution of a social group as a result of organized social violence or genocide. It affects not only the victims but also the environment they live in. Therefore, I review the related literature on cultural trauma including the causes and stages of cultural trauma formation, the role of the different sects in enhancing it, its basic relationship with traumatic persons who suffer from a state of conflict or war, and other root causes which have paved the way for the emergence of cultural trauma. Then, I move on to the concepts of forced migration and social trauma, I seek to analyze the relationship between forced migration and the emergence of social trauma. In this regard, the aim is to reach a uniform concept of sociocultural trauma

arising from forced migration. This is especially true in cases of displacement and asylum for vulnerable groups.

### **Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity**

The sociological approach to cultural trauma has acquired a new domination in addition to its psychological and medical interpretations. Here, I review Jeffrey C. Alexander's works which take a constructivist approach and Piotr Sztompka with his realistic view, in addition to the works of Ron Eyerman, Neil Smelser, and Bernhard Giesen. The authors examine 'culture classification', 'symbolic contamination', and 'collective memory.' They also recognize the role of 'institutional environments', 'carrier groups', and 'stratification hierarchies' as critical components in understanding the emergence and centralization of trauma narratives.

Alexander views cultural trauma as a national and collective phenomenon, not as an individual event. In *Cultural trauma and collective identity* (Alexander et al., 2004), Alexander's definition of cultural trauma implies that trauma does not have to be sensed or directly experienced by everyone in a community. Even though identification of a significant causal event or occurrence may be necessary, its traumatizing connotation should be defined and widely acknowledged by the group, as this process takes time, intervention, and exemplification. Through public contemplation and conversation, cultural trauma is comprehended and explained. Alexander adds a new dimension to the physiological definition of trauma by referring to its collectiveness. The effects of trauma extend beyond the individuals involved to the entire community as well. Trauma damages the bonds of society. However, Alexander has presented the psychological roots of the definition of trauma. Nevertheless, he insists that the cultural approach is heading in a new direction by undervaluing psychological definitions or what he refers to as the 'lay trauma theory'. This is a questionable issue since psychological trauma cannot be completely isolated from the current definition, and cultural trauma cannot be isolated from its psychological and classical aspects. In other words, individuals and their collectivities interact with different elements such as psychological, political, cultural, etc. Alexander claims that traumatic exposure should be limited to cultural trauma and that a traumatic event without a culturally applicable foundation is nothing more than naive objectivity. He states that "it is critical to the process by which a collectivity becomes traumatized" (2004:15). It is an interesting question that Alexander raises by asking how some events have left a minor impression on cultural memory compared to others, such as the Japanese atrocities at Nanking, for example. This concept extends to many crimes and enormities that have been committed all around the world. The concept of cultural trauma has been defined by Alexander from the beginning as encompassing society as a whole. Additionally, Alexander (2004) assumes that "trauma is not something naturally existing; it is something constructed by society" (2). In this context, traumatic roots in the consciousness of individuals can be viewed as psychologically, socially, and even culturally constructed. Alexander discusses how 'trauma processes' can strengthen the transition

to 'peace' (2020a). This is achieved by broadening the cultural meaning and 'emotional' affiliation among groups whose previous mutual animosity generated conflict both within and between nations. It is only through 'cultural performances' that collective trauma events become opportunities for rebuilding collective identities, in which hostility gives access to 'mutual identification'. Alexander has shown that in regards to the establishment of cultural trauma (2016), social groups, nationwide societies, and sometimes whole civilizations must not only acknowledge the existence of human misery, but also must assume a kind of ethical responsibility for that misery. Alexander argues that the misery of others reflects our own, and discusses the ways in which communities extend the scope of the 'we', thus providing the potential for rebuilding society to prevent a recurrence of this trauma. Furthermore, social clusters often refuse to understand the existence of others' suffering, or consider it the responsibility of others rather than of themselves. Failure to recognize and sympathize is the result of such denials. He has stated that "...it is the threat to collective rather than individual identity that defines the suffering at stake" (2016:14). In other words, he does not neglect 'individual suffering', but he considers it the duty of 'ethics' and 'psychology'. His concern is the possibility of traumas being gathered and formulated into a shared social identity. Alexander describes the psychological aspect of trauma by explaining how individual victims respond to traumatic harm with 'repression' and 'denial'. They gain relief when these psychological barriers are dissolved, and pain is brought to their awareness so they can 'mourn' (2016). He depicts the role of groups, not individuals, such as 'intellectuals', 'political leaders, and 'symbol creators' in deciding who are the heroes and villains, weaving these characters into stories aimed at 'third-party audiences'. Consequently, he has declared that the 'we' is constructed via narration and coding, and it is this collective identity that experiences and confronts danger. Even though he admits that trauma on an individual level is coupled with loss and pain, it is still regarded as an 'individual fact'. Moreover, in *Trauma: a social theory* (2013), Alexander expands the innovative social theory of trauma and employs it in a series of empirical enquiries into social suffering around the world. Alexander argues that traumas are not merely psychological, but are also collective experiences; trauma workings play a pivotal role in defining the foundations and results of crucial social confrontations. He describes how collective agency emerges or fails to emerge in response to the experience of social suffering. Religion, nation, race, ethnicity, gender, and class are some of the factors creating social misery. He observes that events are not naturally traumatic. Trauma is a socially constructed acknowledgement. Consequently, to rise to the level of trauma, social crises need to evolve into cultural dilemmas. This is because group suffering is viewed as a basic threat to collective identity. According to Gao and Alexander in *Remembrance of Things Past: Cultural Trauma, the Nanking Massacre and Chinese Identity*, such an incident was not perceived as collective trauma. So, the prospects for long-term psychological recognition and moral equality were not exploited, due to dilemmas of cohesion, binding, and collective identity (2012).

Piotr Sztompka's approach to cultural trauma and collective identity is more meaningful in the context of a realistic perspective. As described by Sztompka in his "*Collective trau-*

ma”<sup>1</sup> (Ritzer, 2007), traumatogenic changes have four characteristics: they are unexpected, extensive, distinguished by their peculiar nature, and they are viewed with suspicion<sup>2</sup>. Sztompka has also defined the sources of cultural trauma as the following: increased ‘intercultural’ interaction and confrontation among several cultures; the ‘spatial’ mobility of individuals who find themselves in an unfamiliar community as immigrants and refugees but also as travelers with business goals and tourists; the change of ‘fundamental institutions’ or authorities; and the traumatogenic transformation occurs at the level of attitudes, faiths, beliefs, and ideologies (595). According to Sztompka, collective identity is distinct from both personal and mass identities. Personal identity is the ‘self-defined perception’ a person has of belonging to a certain social group or structure. Still, mass identity is the aggregate of distinct individual identities found in each ‘collectivity’. Thus, it is a work of art or a ‘statistical average’ lacking ‘ontological hard reality’ (2004). In other words, it reveals that a specific group of individuals possess a certain kind of personal identity. Nevertheless, collective identity can only be created by the interchange of meanings in the ‘meaning industry’, including public discussion, creative activities, discussions, disputes, and the media. It arises as a record of shared social experiences through interpersonal encounters. Additionally, it is the result of social contacts as a chronicle of shared experiences and interactions. It exists less as a result of individual history and more as a result of society’s biography. From this perspective, he has stated that “collective identity can be seen as sedimentary rock built up of layers of social practices and traditions” (482). Cultural trauma starts with the disintegration of cultural standards, followed by individual confusion, and can lead to the loss of identity. Still, the proliferation of traumatic events in culture is addressed by a variety of coping techniques. If they are effective, trauma may become a mobilizing drive for human agency and a catalyst for creative social beings. Those changes need to be ‘sudden, comprehensive, fundamental, and unexpected’ (Sztompka, 2000). Mass traumatic events are first experienced individually, but “truly collective traumas, as distinct from mass traumas, appear only when people start to be aware of the common plight, perceive the similarity of their situation with that of others, define it as shared” (279). Furthermore, culture’s wounds are seen as the hardest to cure. There is also a possibility that cultural trauma could be used as a tool of ‘social becoming’. Nevertheless, this optimistic scenario<sup>3</sup> implies that despite its immediate negative, painful repercussions, cultural trauma demonstrates its beneficial potential as a force of social being.

Regarding Eyerman’s works, in *Memory, Trauma, and Identity* (2019a), he distinguishes between two types of cultural trauma. First, by referring to Alexander’s interpretive research perspective on cultural trauma, Eyerman claims that the latter can be considered a “tear in the social fabric, which requires interpretation and repair” (2008, 22). He also provides his own perception that is a bit contradictory to Alexander’s by implying

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1. The concepts presented in this article have been previously explained in Sztompka, 2000.

2. Sztompka declares here that Durkheim was the forerunner of this approach.

3. For more details please see:

- *Society in Action: The Theory of Social Becoming* (Sztompka, 1991).
- *The Sociology of Social Change* (Sztompka, 1993).

that the definition of cultural trauma is also a concept that “permits us to set borders around an occurrence that reaches back into the past and forward into the future” (164). Eyerman and Bartmanski (2019) have demonstrated how a specific war crime may develop as a cultural trauma capable of profoundly affecting entire populations. Consequently, the ‘denial of representation’ and a ‘lack of symbolic closure’ only serve to exacerbate cultural trauma (Eyerman, 2019f: 137). For example, there are cases of forced migration caused by war and crimes of aggression. In these situations, trauma manifests not only through the victimized people, but is also tied to the concept of ‘perpetrator trauma,’ which is also correlated with collective guilt. Eyerman illustrates this notion with what he defines as an ‘imparted military culture.’ his conclusion is that “Perpetrator trauma results from moral injury, an injury that entails humanizing one’s victim and recognizing that one has acted immorally toward another human being” (2019b:184). Eyerman also focuses on the role of collective memory. He explores how it is manifested in its ability to relate to a specific community in both space and time. He provides a narrative framework that functions as a collective story in which the individual is included and involved in addition to his biography. (2019e). His analysis has shown that collective memory is a ‘living force’ in the life of individuals and communities where it is rooted. Collective memory influences the way people and communities perceive themselves, influencing their perception of who they are and why they behave in a certain way (Eyerman, Madigan and Ring, 2017). Moreover, the stories and myths that crystallize as collective memory function as a basis for constructing identity through the media and related ritual behaviors. In the case of nations “there is no single collective memory; rather, there are many voices that over time achieve some cohesive clarity” (12). Eyerman observes that all allusions to trauma imply a strong sense of emotional engagement. The concept of cultural trauma needs to include rather than reject this emotional aspect, even though the original reason for the emotion can be genuine or imagined (2019d). He argues that: “Cultural traumas are not things, but processes of meaning-making and attribution” (93). Breese (2013) asserts that “collective trauma is primarily an emotional state, whereas cultural trauma is an emotional and cognitive process having to do with construction and contestation of meaning” (Eyerman, Alexander, Breese, 2013: 220). Cultural traumas represent deeply felt emotions and identities that are publicly declared and portrayed in ‘discursive processes,’ indicating an affective ‘communicative’ dimension that asserts sincerity. Furthermore, cultural trauma, as a discursive process resulting from massive conflict and revealing the strong emotional foundation that defines individual and collective identity, is both an articulation of this emotional grounding and a “working-through, a searching attempt at collective repair” (Eyerman, 2012: 579).

Neil Smelser (2004) addresses cultural trauma from a psychosocial and emotional perspective by describing the psychological conception of trauma before, during, and after Sigmund Freud. He explains the role of emotions in providing a link to the cultural and psychological aspects of trauma. He primarily describes the situation four months after the attacks of September 11, 2001. He illustrates how it is not easy to deliver a clear and comprehensive analysis of the attacks when they are still fresh in the mind. Yet, Smelser

argues that these attacks have the elements of the ‘quintessential cultural trauma’. Smelser finds one essential difference in the fact that cultural traumas are ‘made’, not ‘born’. He defines cultural trauma as the following: “an invasive and overwhelming event that is believed to undermine or overwhelm one or several essential ingredients of a culture or the culture as a whole” (2004: 38).

In Bernhard Giesen’s study (2004), the psychological aspect dominates throughout his work on the concept of trauma, with an emphasis in his *The Trauma of Perpetrators: The Holocaust as the Traumatic Reference of German National Identity* (112–154). Giesen focuses on identity formation and its subsequent change, and reveals that trauma affects not only victims but also the perpetrators who are considered traumatized individuals as well. This concept refers to the traumatized ‘perpetrators’ and their relationship to the next generation<sup>4</sup>, as well as how this new generation will have a different point of view or even an opposing one toward war and Nazism. Together with Seyfeert (2016), Giesen focuses on empty signifiers of collective identity that are produced precisely and principally as solved mysteries in public discourse, open discussion, and steady criticism. Imaginaries formed by such non-representational characters are responsible for maintaining collective identity as dormant. Squabbles and conflicts of opinion may lead to the rejection of a certain collective identity. The authors ask why we are willing to help other people in our country with public money and individual funds when disaster strikes but we are hesitant to help strangers in other countries. Why do we have faith in our neighbors but distrust strangers? Answers to these questions cannot be found in the force or threat of punishment if help is rendered. The collective identity is built and depicted through pictures and emblems (flags, coats of arms), ceremonies and monuments, legends, narrations, and songs. Accordingly, “in collective traumas, public communication assumes the function or role that consciousness plays in the individual” (Giesen and Seyfert, 2016: 118). Giesen and Seyfert write that it is only after, through a younger generation’s perspective, that trauma can be defined and organizationally addressed (2016).

### **The Social Trauma of Forced Migration**

Migration is strongly related to the concept of trauma and cannot be addressed until this context is understood. Refugees undergo a traumatic life experience in which their social and cultural environment, their family, and their identity fall apart. Forced displacement trauma has a psychosocial impact not only on the individual, but also on families, communities, and society as a whole. Consequently, social groups that have been through a traumatic experience are more dependent, passive, without guidance, distrustful, and skeptical (Hamburger, Hancheva and Ozcurummez, 2019). Somasundaram (2014) observed that social trauma is characterized by the disintegration of established systems, organizations, and traditional lifestyles, as well as the degradation of cultural and social rules, ethics, and social capital. Trauma based on racial and other forms of oppression undermines the individual’s

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4. Who could be their children in such a case?

and communities' feelings of safety and belonging in conventional society, as well as their sense of collective identity. According to Hillebrandt (2004), all man-made traumatizations are characterized by an unbalanced distribution of the participants in the traumatic situation's ability to have authority upon, or act over, another human being. I suppose, through the process of traumatization, at each stage, some traumatic aspects will appear. These aspects may differ from one stage to another before arriving at the final destination. Since this claim does not flow straight, trauma occur rapidly for some people even when there is no external displacement. This is due to the change in the social and other essential aspects of the community. For others, it may be fully manifested in transit countries. For some others, it was not even possible thanks to coping mechanisms. In this respect, Hamburger, Hancheva and Ozcurumez assume that traumatic experiences in refuge can be classified into three stages: pre-flight exposure to violence and/or loss of family members; a risky journey typically related to violence with separation from family members; and the resettlement phase, associated with uncertainty involving asylum claims and acculturation in the target country (2019). Foster also highlighted the role of social, historical, and political contexts in migration and acculturation (2005). This is done by observing that traumatic experiences can occur at various points in immigration, in the country of origin, during the flight to the new country, and while adjusting to it. Moreover, conditions such as lack of adequate financial resources, lack of support, and the stress of protecting their children can contribute to traumatic feelings that are more chronic in nature.

Ron Eyerman has stated that "in economic crisis as in war, one's personal loss is intimately tied to those suffered by others. The cumulative impact would only intensify the trauma, where a sense of belonging, a collective identity, is shattered along with individual identity" (2013: 43). Accordingly, to gain a better understanding of trauma, I will try to study it by analyzing forced migration trauma. My attention will be focused on different sections of the study. In other words, trauma can be experienced by refugees, their communities of origin, the host community, as well as the carrier groups involving both pro- and anti-migration movements. My intention is to provide a better understanding of social and cultural trauma and the identity of forced migrants by presenting different perspectives.

### *Forced Migrants and Identity Threatening*

Migration is fundamentally associated with communities experiencing an identity-threatening transition. When a host society receives migrants or external groups, it defines the identity of the latter in terms of language, race, ethnicity, or economic status. Through this process, historically arbitrary characteristics are transformed into primordial ones, becoming a kind of essence (Alexander, 2006). The conflict between refugees' cultural identity and their host culture is one facet of social trauma during the journey. Volkan (2004) argues that relocating from one country to another involves the loss of an individual's former identity, and that the displacement experience can be evaluated when the immigrants pass through or resist the mourning process. Chrysanthi Papadopoulou demonstrated through her work in refugee camps how 'ethnic', 'class', and 'group identities' disintegrate in refugee



cases (2019). All of these distinctions that could be enormously significant in the homeland lose relevance in refugee camps, and are overwhelmed by the dominant refugee identity (Hamburger, Hancheva, Ozcurumez, 2019). The agony of war and displacement is part of the brutal reality of a traumatized community. This reality is something they value as part of their identity and are unable to get over (Kanagaratnam, Rummens, Toner VA, 2020). Large-group identity challenges are exacerbated by mass forced migrations, both among refugees and in host communities. During the migration process, almost everything is shattered: social and cultural surroundings, family, and personal identity. In the absence of a clear identity for the forced migrants, refugees serve as a blank slate for the formation of the host country's culture (Hamburger, Hancheva and Ozcurumez, 2019). Refugees face challenges in preserving their cultural identities and networks (Watters, 2001). According to Maier and Straub (2011), the asylum seekers appeared to be hurled back to a biographical 'zero' point from which they had to essentially redefine their whole identity, as a result of tremendous stress and forced relocation. The degree of their trauma and loss was most likely beyond the ability of any individual, social, cultural, or religious idea to comprehend and integrate. There is sometimes a displaced perspective where they forget who they used to be. This is a kind of shedding of their pre-flight identity, and following a brand-new life path in the host community (Pearlman, 2018). Here we may ask about the role of the host community in reconstructing the collective identity of forced migrants. Then, how does this lead to the establishment of what could be identified as us and them? Anastasia Zissi (2019) highlighted the significance of identity as a process, and Porobić (2019) pointed out that, in migration, the process of transforming identity frequently begins long before departure (Hamburger, Hancheva, Ozcurumez, 2019). Persecution on ethnic or group grounds, for example, is a threat to identity. Migrants in general and forced migrants in particular, are forced to reconsider their identity; this can impact their collective perspective and their existence in the host community. Shame may arise as a result of the many types of torture suffered in the home country. However, it is often exacerbated by the painful asylum process and having to adopt a new frequently-devalued social identity as an asylum seeker (Theisen-Womersley, 2021). The process of migrating may be a humiliating experience in itself. Individual and social identities are at risk of being denied due to systemic trauma related to legal and cultural practices of exclusion (Goldsmith, Martin, Smith, 2014). Accordingly, the physical, social, and political isolation that is prevalent upon arrival contributes to reinforcing terrible feelings of invisibility and disconnectedness (Bhimji, 2015).

### *Communities of Origins*

Most displaced people have witnessed violence in their home country, including the loss of family members, horrific murders, the destruction of their property and employment, and persecution (Kanagaratnam, Rummens, Toner VA, 2020). As noted by Du and Wittmer (2020), loss attributed to the refugee experience encompasses not only the death of loved ones and the loss of residence, but also the instability of life and biography at the individual, collective, and generational levels. In this context, FitzGerald & Arar (2018)

argue how families should recognize the dangers of violence alongside the consequences of economic risks, such as losing financial assets if everyone flees at the same time. Additionally, it is not simply what is lost while leaving one's home that causes disruptions in familial and cultural systems, but also separations from family and ethnic groups in hazardous refugee camps throughout the migratory process (Lambert, Alhassoon, 2015).

### *Communities of Refugees*

The experience of war is often perceived and manifested collectively, involving the sharing of collective memories and identity, collective sorrow, and collective rage. According to Kanagaratnam, Rummens and Toner, forced migrants express their grief collectively, as a result of being part of a cultural community rather than as individuals (2020). When it comes to war, genocidal trauma does not only target a group but is also perpetuated by a social group. These are the victims' group and the attackers' group. Both groups belong to the same society, and are part of the same cultural environment. This leads to the destruction or at least drastically affects 'the nature' and 'character' of the society in which it occurs (Hamburger, Hancheva, Ozcurumez, 2019). In this way, Hamburger and his co-authors have described social trauma in terms that necessitate the participation of the 'social environment', implying that traumatized individuals are members of a social group that is being persecuted and has a defined, established identity. Additionally, both groups<sup>5</sup> usually belong to the same 'overreaching society' (Hamburger, 2017). Moreover, social trauma can exist and continue collectively, creating trans-generational effects such as post-traumatic stress, feelings-of-belonging difficulties, and the absence of social and political trust. Accordingly, it has been observed that trust, shame, and betrayal in interpersonal bonds are increasingly major concerns for refugees following their multiple trauma exposures during warfare, displacement, and resettlement (Murray, Davidson and Schweitzer, 2010). This can be related to the consequence of trauma for the community of refugees itself and the host community as well. From a collective perspective, there is a propensity within the community of displaced persons to equate patriotism with war-related sorrow, which can also be extended to disparaging individuals who are externally viewed as non-sufferers. Trauma can also be manifested through conflicts caused by disagreements between forced migrants. According to Kanagaratnam et al., disagreement is expressed regarding beliefs that certain people had not suffered from the war as much as others, or had not participated in and fought as much for 'the cause' as others (Kanagaratnam, Rummens and Toner VA, 2020).

### *Host Communities*

Trauma is not only the duration preceding and following migration but also the period following arrival in host communities. Hamburger and his co-authors have described this

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5. Attackers and victims.

period as being typically marked by social and political alienation, leading to detachment, abandonment, distrust, non-recognition, and denial, as well as being separated from the individual's collective and the whole of society (Hamburger, Hancheva, Ozcurumez, 2019). Many variables contribute to trauma in both the transit and host communities. Hamburger, Hancheva and Ozcurumez discuss the refusal of work permits, restricted access to health-care, living in camps and halls without privacy, the passiveness imposed by the asylum procedure, and the residential responsibility that is divided among family and friends. There are also the difficulties of adjusting to a foreign culture and lifestyle, as well as racism and general prejudice in the host country. Additionally, 'retraumatisation' can occur in both transit and destination countries (2019). According to Boulanger (2004), immigrants feel a loss of "contextual continuity" (355), which contributes to an unrecognized absence. Immigrants embrace components of the new culture to avoid anxiety and sadness, while portions of their self-experience inside the culture of origin detach and subsequently reappear in their social lives. The host society typically involves not only the larger society, but also the 'small community'. This is a reference to the previously presented concept of 'us' and 'them', or 'insider' and 'outsider'. For instance, Heins (2020) shows how both the Jewish and Muslim communities of Germany can be viewed from the perspective of migrants, and the complex stories he presents illustrate the difficulties of smaller communities within the larger ones, including their relation to the civil sphere. As a result, these difficulties highlight the existence of trauma at both the national and community levels.

### *Carrier Groups*

Refugees arrive in the host country, having hopes and fears regarding the new life they are about to begin in addition to their existing trauma caused by war and conflicts. Host communities include both pro-migration groups that assist refugees and support their efforts, and anti-migration groups that have fears and reservations about forced migrants entering their countries. A large part of this fear is caused by forced migrants coming from different ideological, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Heins argues that what is called the 'refugee crisis' has emerged due to the unprecedented number of migrants attempting to reach European countries. This term, according to Heins has been criticized by many supporters of the liberal immigration system (2020). It could be asserted that when forced migrants reach Europe and its partner nations, they are faced with those who feel an immediate need to assist as well as people and groups who are filled with resentment, anxiety, and mistrust toward them.

It is well known how international organizations such as the UNHCR and others aid refugees in camps with education, shelter, and health care. The political parties of some countries still tend to detach refugees from local communities. This is done by limiting legal work and isolating them in separate camps (Betts, Collier, 2017). For instance, W. Binder and A. Mijić (2020) discuss the 'welcome culture' during the 'Refugee Crisis' of 2015. However, in Austria, which is interested in the intake of refugees, the fear of immigration initially present in a number of Austrian federation states before becom-

ing a 'national issue' in 2017. It was fueled by right-wing politicians as well as by some mass media. In contrast, there are many attempts to integrate the refugees into Western countries' resettlement programs and help them to adapt to the new society. In the fall of 2015, the German government planned to maintain an open borders policy for a considerable number of asylum seekers. This was done with the help of crucial segments of civil society, who argue that there is strong opposition from social movements, political parties, civil associations, churches, and other institutions to attempts to marginalize and demean refugees and forced migrants. Furthermore, individuals who are not integrated into a pro-migration organization have also worked in opposition to the injustice and brutality shown to those who were forced to migrate (Heins, 2020).

Advocates for migrant rights, activists, doctors, social workers, journalists, lawyers, doctors, rabbis, priests, and regular men and women of conscience are all part of the solidarity efforts to support forced migrants and refugees. They provide support to marginalized groups who are viewed as outsiders in the community and to challenge the government policy against asylum seekers (Alexander, 2020b). Therefore, Heins states that "the refugee crisis in Germany in 2015 led to a split in the country between those who saw the admission of the refugees as a catastrophic deviation from the law and the most sacred values of Europe, and those who believed that they were witnessing an unprecedented fulfillment of the ideals of transnational civil solidarity" (2020: 40). This split between the pro- and anti-refugee movements has led to a crisis of multicultural 'welcome culture' (Heins, Unrau, 2018). Heins argues that it is significant to highlight that many of the 'welcome culture' advocacy groups and volunteers were either immigrants themselves who came to Germany or were of immigrant origin (2020: 40). Hence, as Eyerman observes, I can conclude that 'Carrier groups' are crucial to the trauma process in expressing claims and reflecting the needs and goals of the affected to a 'wider public' (2001: 3).

## Conclusion

The approaches to cultural trauma used by Alexander and his colleagues emphasize analyzing trauma from a cultural and collective perspective. However they do not completely disregard the value of the individual. Their approach emphasizes the role of emotion and memory. Furthermore, these concepts are deeply related to the situation of forced migrants who suffer from different types of trauma, including cultural and social trauma. The present study focuses on these concepts. Therefore, by employing a cultural sociology perspective, we can better comprehend the trauma and identity of forced migrants.

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## Социокультурная травма миграции и вынужденного переселения. Теоретический аспект

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Травма есть результат столкновения отдельного человека или группы людей с ужасающим опытом, оставляющим устойчивые следы в их памяти и сознании и приводящим к кардинальным изменениям в восприятии ими своей идентичности, социального окружения и будущего. Концепт травмы прочно связан с войной, конфликтами и вынужденной миграцией. Беженцы сталкиваются с катастрофическими жизненными событиями, вызывающими обрушение их привычного образа жизни. В последние годы

наблюдается резкий рост интереса к изучению проблемы травмы с опорой на разные подходы, в том числе и на социологические. Поэтому цель данной статьи — рассмотреть, изучить и проанализировать концепты культурной травмы, коллективной идентичности, а также социальной травмы в связи с проблемами беженцев и вынужденной миграции. Первая часть нашего исследования посвящена обзору базовой литературы по культурной травме и коллективной идентичности. Затем мы исследуем концепцию социальной травмы, рассматривая вынужденную миграцию, принимающие сообщества, идентичность вынужденных мигрантов и роль групп-носителей. Таким образом, в статье делается попытка предложить всесторонний анализ проблемы вынужденного перемещения с точки зрения культурсоциологии.

*Ключевые слова:* культурная травма, социальная травма, идентичность, вынужденная миграция, перемещение, беженец, принимающее сообщество, конечный пункт назначения