

**Doing and Undoing a Gendered Tradition:  
Structures, Hierarchies and Constructed Identities in Berlin Voluntary  
Refugee Work as Interpreted by Volunteer Coordinators**

Thesis Abstract by  
*Jayda Bubeloff*

This paper highlights the multi-faceted ways refugee volunteer work follows a gendered continuum in terms of structures, hierarchies and identity construction. Through interviews with volunteer coordinators and managers in voluntary refugee work, a) their understandings of gender informing roles and engagement and b) their commitment (along with their organizations') to addressing imbalance become apparent. In comparisons between refugee and non-refugee volunteers, interviewees help to construct a counter-narrative to public description on male refugees and seek to challenge role-norms, while simultaneously defending them among non-refugee women. Research findings show essentialist reasoning for current gender structures, a problematic organizational hierarchy requiring auditing, and opportunities to reproduce or reject prototypical gendered identities.