


The effects of displacement on rural women's lives: The case of Ukraine and the book of Ruth

**Author:**Sidney K. Berman^{1,2} **Affiliations:**¹Africa Evangelical Church, Shashe, Botswana, South Africa²Research Institute for Theology and Religion, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa**Corresponding author:**

Sidney Berman, sidneybrmn.sb@gmail.com

Dates:

Received: 10 Aug. 2022

Accepted: 03 Feb. 2023

Published: 08 May 2023

How to cite this article:Berman, S.K., 2023, 'The effects of displacement, food crisis and a crippled economic production on women: The case of Ukraine and the Book of Ruth', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 79(3), a8013. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i3.8013>**Copyright:**

© 2023. The Author. Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

Read online:

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

As of the time of publication of this article (March 2023), Russia's invasion of Ukraine has caused a European refugee crisis, death and displacement of countless Ukrainians, worldwide food shortage, fuel crisis, and inflation. By comparing the Ukrainian example and the Book of Ruth, this article demonstrated that the effects of forced migration, food shortage and arrested economic productivity are tilted against women. This results in sudden additions of responsibilities of family headship and breadwinner, inability to provide meals for the family, and difficulty to re-establish a livelihood due to the double burden of care. The methodology of the article was qualitative and gendered. In its interpretation of the biblical text, it was also allegorical and literary while for gathering the Ukrainian data, it was textual. One of the key findings of the study was that during displacement and crisis, women, unlike their male counterparts, tend to carry the family with them wherever they go, which means that women by far bear greater burdens of these variables. The discussions in the sections of the article merged the gendered situations, mindsets and events of the Book of Ruth with those of the Ukrainian context.

Contribution: Using the examples of the Russo-Ukrainian war and the character of the biblical Book of Ruth, this article examined the effects of displacement, food crisis and arrested economic production on women. This topic is aligned with the journal's focus on religion, gender equality and environmental preservation, all of which fall within the journal's scope.

Keywords: Ukraine; war; Book of Ruth; displacement; women; food crisis; double burden.

Introduction

Ukraine is touted as one of the breadbaskets of the world. Likewise, the setting of the *Book of Ruth* in the Hebrew Bible starts and ends with Bethlehem which, of all Israelite places, means 'house of bread'. Yet, lo and behold, the two places suddenly become lands of famine! The reader of this article must hope that just as Bethlehem started with a drought and ended with a full-blown return to agricultural prosperity, Ukraine will very soon return from drought to agricultural wealth. This is crucial because:

Together with Russia, the country [Ukraine] accounts for around a third of the world's total wheat and barley exports. Other grains and sunflower oil are some of Ukraine's major exports too. With the Russian invasion still taking over the country, it is practically impossible to export these items - leading to fears of a food crisis around the world as well as in Ukraine (Euronews 2022).

As of now, the world is reeling from food shortage caused by the crippled economies of Ukraine and Russia that resulted from war between the two. In Ukraine and Bethlehem, women are at the centre of the displacement and food crises. As is evident in Ruth's intensive labour for the sake of her family, because women are directly responsible for the family's meals and day-to-day survival, they work more than men both when there is a food crisis as well as daily to prevent a food crisis (FAO.org 2021a). Moreover, during displacement, women tend to shoulder the responsibility of keeping the family intact because they must continue to care for the children, the sick and the aged, while the men tend to separate from the family either to join the political turmoil or to find greener pastures for the family. This care responsibility creates a double burden for women which cripples their livelihood. Another factor that disadvantages women is that men tend to die ahead of women due to various reasons, regardless of whether it is during a period of war, peace, epidemic or prosperity.

Note: Special Collection: Religion and Theology and Constructions of Earth and Gender, sub-edited by Sophia Chirongoma (Midlands State University, Zimbabwe) and Linda Naicker (University of South Africa, South Africa).

These factors mean that currently and historically, women all over the world have borne and bear the greatest burdens related to family headship, breadwinner status, crop and food processing, meal preparation and feeding a displaced family. The displacement of women, the lack of access to land, shorter lifespans for the men, and the food crises in Ukraine and Bethlehem are therefore more burdensome to the woman. Therefore, as the proverb goes, whoever feeds the woman feeds the family; to attend to women's plight during displacement would go a long way in solving the food crisis among the displaced.

Finally, this study features sexual exploitation, abuse and/or sexualisation of foreignness as a matter of concern regarding the displaced woman's safety and wellbeing, and relates such a feature to the fact that land and wealth are largely in the possession of men. This problem exists both in the narrative of Ruth and in the Ukrainian context of displacement. The study finds that because of this gendered disparity, displaced women is more likely to be sexually exploited or to engage in survival sex when they need economic assistance.

This article is comparative of the Ukrainian and Ruth contexts. It starts by presenting its gendered methodology, then goes on to present the theoretical framework. Next, the article summarises the story of Ruth and situates it within the conceptual framework of the study. In the findings and discussions sections, the article merges a literary interpretation of the narrative of Ruth with related contemporary gender specific problems. The topic focuses on crisis with its subsequent displacement, disruption of life, food shortage, arrested means of economy, and women's efforts at survival as identified in Ruth and the Ukrainian situation. The key findings are that during crisis, female headship of families escalates, women tend to carry the family alone and thus become breadwinners, and the effects of traditional exploitation of women become more devastating. Furthermore, the article confirms, in the light of the narrative of Ruth, the critical role that women play in crop production and food security as exemplified in the Ukrainian context.

Methodology

The qualitative method employed in this article falls broadly under the category of textual study (Mouton 2001:167). In the context of this definition, text can be oral, written, or audio-visual (Mouton 2001:167). Texts were chosen purposively towards examining the variables of displacement, food crisis, the Russo-Ukrainian war, the war's gendered effects on women, and the *Book of Ruth*. The data on the Ukrainian situation were taken from academic articles, book chapters, written news websites, and in one instance, a news video clip. These data are categorised and analysed in the article according to uniquely feminine patterns of social problems as identified in the story of Ruth and women's plight universally. This means that the article is comparative of the Ukrainian situation and the *Book of Ruth's* context as far as women's plight is concerned. The premise of this critical

analysis is the argument that the feminine nature of the problems is not natural or God-ordained, but is artificially created and maintained through patriarchal socialisation (Cf. Dube et al. 2021:6). The methodology of this article means that the text of Ruth is also used as a tool of analysis, because the gendered experience and social difficulty suffered by Ukrainian women are classified under and merged with those of the female characters of the *Book of Ruth*, thus confirming a gendered pattern.

As for interpreting the text of Ruth, the article employs an allegorical and contextual interpretation which is integrated into the narrative literary method (Cf. Tsoffar 2007). This means allegorising the text to the context of the researcher or of the researcher's choice. Thus, the researcher is reading the *Book of Ruth* with a specific context of the researcher's choice as its starting point, which in this occasion is the Ukrainian crisis (Cf. Ukpong 2004:24). Understandably, interpretations whose starting points are not the Bible but the reader's social location have found a home in the literary narrative method such as liberation theologies, feminism and/or womanism, postcolonial hermeneutics and others (Dube 2005; O'Connor 1998:327; Schüssler-Fiorenza 1999:97). These interpretations resist the Bible where they perceive it to be perpetuating injustice or to easily lend itself to oppressive readings.

The narrative literary method examines the text as it stands, and does not need to investigate the historical world behind it. The approach emanates from the proposition that the text is complete in its literary form, and was originally not written for expert interpreters (Bowman 1995:17). The method is advantageous for quickly availing the devices that any reader needs in order to extract the narrative's message as it relates to the purposes of his and/or her reading, for indeed the present researcher seeks to compare the narrative of the *Book of Ruth* with the current context of Ukrainian women at the least convenience to his and/or her potential audience.

Displacement, food crisis and crippled economic production within a gendered theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this article is feminist and liberationist. It has its roots in the women's liberation movement of the 1970s which later developed various strands because of the diverse contexts of women (Cf. Jackson & Jones 1998:6). In particular, this utilises Ferrant, Pesando and Nowacka's (2014) concept of double burden, applying it on the reciprocal crises of displacement, food crisis, and crippled economic productivity. According to this concept, women, in contrast to men, are burdened with care for children, the sick, the aged, the differently abled, orphaned relatives, and other dependents (Cf. Ferrant et al. 2014). Women carry these dependents along during all forms of displacement. The concept of double burden originates from feminist-oriented studies of paid and unpaid labour markets

which investigated the impact of domestic responsibilities on women's livelihoods (Cf. Elson 2007:7–14). In the present study, using a comparison of the contexts of the Russo-Ukrainian war and the famine in the *Book of Ruth*, these responsibilities were shown to have a devastating impact on women as opposed to men during food crisis, displacement, and ceased economic production.

Indeed, the impact of these factors is skewed against women in contrast with men, leading to increased responsibility for the family and desperate decisions and/or lifestyles by women (Cf. Naicker 2021; Mtshiselwa & Ndikhokele 2016).¹ Although hunger, displacement and ceased economic production do not coincide as the triggers of the Ukrainian and Ruth crises, the three variables will be identified in such crises at one point or another for the woman; one factor invariably attracts the other two. Under difficult circumstances, travel means flight and displacement, hunger develops into famine, and the woman's fight for her family's survival aggravates her situation. In the midst of it all, however, migrants tend to look back with the intention to engage in return migration in the event that circumstances stabilise where they regard to be their home (Naicker 2021:7; Snow 2017:58). This often spells indefinite or protracted instability.

The article compares the two contexts of Ukraine and the *Book of Ruth* with the hypothesis that flight, famine and arrested economic productivity are reciprocal crises, and tend to be severely prejudiced against women. This theoretical framework covers major consequences of these variables that women face such as attempts to resettle the family, stigmatised gendered foreignness, sexual risk (i.e., 'sexualised foreignness'²), newly acquired 'breadwinner' status, female headship of the household, and more strenuous gendered roles. This article occasionally reports some incidences where Ukrainian women faced comparable attitudes, treatments and experiences to those that Ruth faced as a hungry foreign Other. They too face forced travel, food crisis, failure to farm or produce food, inability to make a living, and Othering. Indeed, the label 'Other' can be applied to them along the same lines that Sarojini Nadar argues, namely that the Other is everyone who perceives himself and/or herself or is perceived to be different from another (2009:393).³ The following literature review section lays the foundation for how the Ruth narrative's and Ukrainian contexts will be compared in the article.

Literature review

The book of Ruth: Displacement, land, labour and gender issues

Concerning the analysis of the *Book of Ruth*, the article extracts from it, at a literary narrative level, similarities between the

1. These studies compare the Ruth context with that of poor landless South African women, whereas the present article demonstrates how Ukrainian women (still) face multiple gendered disadvantages despite being from the global north and having superior access to land.

2. Cf. Ruth Tsoffar's (2007:1) perspective of the problems faced by the 'Other' who has travelled due to hunger.

3. In that paper, Nadar encouraged Caucasians to utilise their own contexts to demand justice and liberation.

plights of the female characters of the Book and those of displaced Ukrainian women. The *Book of Ruth* can be summarised as presenting the struggles to survive of two economically handicapped women companions, one a Moabite and the other an Israelite. The story starts with a series of fast paced events that befall a bigger family group, but the group quickly downsizes to make Naomi and Ruth the heroines of the story. The story is set largely in ancient Israel during the period of the judges, although the actual writing of the book is best placed in the post-exilic period. Ruth Tsoffar (2007) summarises the strong reasons for this date, namely:

[V]ocabulary and style; the idyllic representation of the genealogy of David; and evidence of legal customs such as the levirate marriage, gleaning in the fields, and the redemption of the land (p. 2).

However, even more compelling is the stance that the narrative was made to counter the post-exilic mindset of forbidding mixed marriages which was established by Ezra and Nehemiah, and to demonstrate how God-ordained such unions could be (Tsoffar 2007).

Because of the richness of its content, this biblical book has been analysed from a myriad of perspectives. Sidney K. Berman (2014:123) notes that the book can be grouped with narratives that present the motif of hunger, while Ruth Tsoffar (2007:1), presenting a title of '*The Trauma of Otherness and Hunger* [...]', interprets the book from the integrated perspectives of trauma, survival, hunger, feeding and reproduction. Linda Naicker (2021) takes further the sexualised nuances of Ruth's vulnerability by exploring the concept of survival sex, comparing Ruth's plight with those of South Africa's poverty-stricken women. Thus, the narrative lends itself perfectly to the present comparison of Ukrainian women's and Ruth's and Naomi's struggles in environments of food crises.

The narrative of the *Book of Ruth* can be summarised as follows. During the period of the judges, the family of Naomi, Elimelech, Mahlon and Kilion flees famine in Bethlehem and goes to sojourn in a foreign land – Moab. Elimelech the husband and father dies, so Naomi the wife and mother is left with the two sons. She raises them, and when they are old enough, they marry Moabite women. The extended family lives together in Moab for about 10 years, and then the two sons and/or husbands die. The three women start off to return to Bethlehem, Naomi's home, but on the way, Naomi pleads with her daughters-in-law to stay in Moab, return to their mothers and find new husbands. They plead back in disagreement, but Orpah ends up surrendering, whereas Ruth is relentless until Naomi surrenders. Thus, Orpah remains in Moab, while Ruth returns with Naomi to Bethlehem in Israel.

In Bethlehem, all evidence demonstrates that Ruth's refusal to part with Naomi was so that she could take care of Naomi. While at it in the task of gleaning for grain, Naomi devises a plan for her concerning how to ask for marriage from the

man in whose field she was gleaning, who happened to be her relative and eligible to marry her. The plan works, and Boaz makes arrangements to secure marriage to Ruth, thereby permanently solving the problem of hunger in their lives. The additional but very significant benefit of this fight for survival is the birth of Baby Obed who, although comes from Ruth's womb, is ascribed to Naomi by all involved. The benefits keep expanding, for Obed's son will produce Israel's messiah, David, the monarch whose reign God said will last forever (2 Sm 7:16).

The *Book of Ruth* persistently presents scenarios in a household where women, rather than men, are compelled to take responsibility over the family during a food crisis. Sometimes it becomes female headship (1:22), and at other times they take responsibility because of traditional gender roles. Female headship happens first with Naomi who remains to raise her two sons when her husband, Elimelech, dies (1:3). The sons grow up and marry, but instead of taking care of their mother and wives, they too die after 10 years (1:5). That means, because Naomi's strength is lessening due to old age, she is being taken care of by her daughters-in-law. Once again, this is female headship, although it will have to be speculated whether all three or one of them were the breadwinner(s). Finally, in a more leisurely setting, the burden of women raising the family happens again following the birth of the baby, Obed, who will be 'nursed' by Naomi, although we know that Ruth will certainly breastfeed him (4:16). Naomi takes Obed onto her lap at the onset of her nursing role for him. That means the biological father will not concern himself with the feeding, babysitting, provision of healthcare, and other matters of raising a child.⁴

Whereas the *Book of Ruth* reports scenarios where women in the household outlive their male counterparts, we can only speculate whether or not it was the trend during those days or that deliberately the narrator means to hint at such a trend. However, it is coincidental that this article addresses a contemporarily common occurrence worldwide, which is that the household's women tend to outlive the men. Thus, whereas the men are the default heads of the families, sooner or later, the families are going to be headed by the women or the women will be the breadwinners. In the *Book of Ruth*, Boaz is older than Ruth, and is likely to die earlier than her; in 2:16, he calls her 'my daughter'. Likewise, Ukrainian women are the care-takers of the family due to various reasons.

International shortage, inflation and the influx of refugees

Ruth Tsoffar calls the Ruth scenario '*the trauma of Otherness and hunger*' (2007:1). While the above discussion elaborated the position of the *Book of Ruth* in the framework of this study, the current one situates into the study the Ukrainian context with its crises of refugees, food shortage and instability. The Ruth biblical narrative presents scenarios of Othering caused by hunger and migration, while the Russo-Ukrainian war

4.The husband will probably sponsor it, although in many families today, he is either incapable or too neglectful for it.

has caused a similar scenario for Ukrainians in Europe. The war has produced the latest European refugee crisis. By shutting down farming, food production and exportation by Ukraine and sometimes Russia, the Russo-Ukrainian war has caused shortage of food and other commodities all over the world.⁵ Thus, instead of exporting as usual, some countries, especially Ukraine's neighbours, have been either hoarding or directing some food items towards relief for Ukrainian refugees. There is food shortage worldwide, and 'women continue to bear different and additional burdens of war' (UN Women 2022). The United Nations (UN) is working hard to ensure that the food reaches them. The number of displaced people from Ukraine, the majority of whom are women and children, keep rising significantly (UN Women 2022). These are people who fled to neighbouring countries while others are displaced within the country.

Rosie Frost, writing for *Euronews*, reports on the worldwide effects of the Russo-Ukrainian war with these words:

Ukraine is known as one of the bread baskets of the world. Together with Russia, the country accounts for around a third of the world's total wheat and barley exports. Other grains and sunflower oil are some of Ukraine's major exports too. With the Russian invasion still taking over the country, it is practically impossible to export these items - leading to fears of a food crisis around the world as well as in Ukraine (Euronews 2022).⁶

Another crisis brought about by the Ukrainian war is migrant labour. As of May 2022, many Ukrainian women refugees who work in UK farms are said to be fleeing the farms, citing abuse by farm owners. However, most of these farm labourers seem to have arrived following the 2013–2015 Russo-Ukrainian war, long before the beginning of the 2022 war. This is because:

Two thirds of the UK's Seasonal Worker visa holders issued in 2021 went to Ukrainian workers. Almost 20,000 Seasonal Worker visas were granted to Ukrainian nationals; 67 percent of the total (The Guardian 2022).

One such a worker says that 'through threats and humiliation', seasonal farm labourers 'are forced to work tirelessly until their hands and feet bleed' (newfoodmagazine.com 2022). This is a crisis because they will probably be desperate very soon once more, being foreigners with limited visa freedom; they are likely to return to the same farms because of limited alternatives.

Discussion and findings

'There was a famine in the land' (1:1): Disruption and forced travel

In comparing the context of Ukrainian women and that of the *Book of Ruth*, this study discovered disruption, forced travel, creation of refugee status and other related consequences for

5.DW News (2022) reports how Nigerian farmers have been stopped in their tracks: 'plants need nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium in their fertilizer. Russia is a top supplier of all three. The conflict is creating scarcity for farmers and fueling rising food cost' (DW News (2022)).

6.In South Africa, for example, at a certain point in mid-2022, the price of cooking oil, an indispensable commodity to women, increased by around 30%.

Ukrainians and the characters of the *Book of Ruth*. Famine in the land is the disruption that set the family in flight from Bethlehem to Moab in the *Book of Ruth* (1:1), while the disruption that set Ukrainians on the road is political turmoil. More than 10 years later, there is a return migration from Moab back to Bethlehem in the *Book of Ruth*, but this time it is brought about by the lack of a breadwinner and a positive turn of events in Bethlehem (1:19). The crises of food shortage and arrested economic productivity or agricultural production are not the original cause of flight for the Ukrainians, but predictably feature later.

At the time of writing this article in December 2022, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been in full force for close to a year. A journalist reports that storehouses are full of grain that cannot be sold or consumed (NYTimes.com 2022). Russian soldiers have:

[B]locked access to the Black Sea, Ukraine's main export route, cargo trains face logistical hurdles, and trucking is stymied because most truck drivers are men aged 18 to 60 who are not allowed to leave the country and cannot drive agricultural exports across the border (NYTimes.com 2022).

Ukrainian farms are being bombed and invaded by Russian soldiers frequently. Ihor Pavliuk, a Ukrainian agriculture journalist, reports on farming during the ongoing war (AGCANADA Report 2021). He reports that hungry Russian soldiers frequently invade the farms to eat and take food supplies, but do not leave without setting fire to tractors, combine harvesters and store houses and finally plant landmines everywhere in the crop field (AGCANADA Report 2021). Such vandalism destroys the crop, renders the field unusable for fear of landmines, causes long lasting economic losses, but also defaces crop fields so that they will be nonarable for many years. In an interview on video, a bomb deactivator soldier could not promise the farmer that they will remove the landmines in any foreseeable future (DW News 2022). His explanation was that first they will have to deactivate schools, health facilities, shopping centres and all public spaces (DW News 2022). However, the war is raging, so there is no guarantee that even such public places will be deactivated in the foreseeable future.

The following is the story of how the Ukrainian crisis began and progressed. In November 2013, President Viktor Yanukovich, in disagreement with parliament and much of the Ukrainian population, and heeding Russia's demand, refused to sign an agreement to bring Ukraine to closer ties with the European Union. Instead, he opted for stronger bonds with Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union (Max Fisher 2014). That sparked widespread protests which he responded to with police violence.⁷ Police brutality escalated the protests, and the protests managed to force Viktor Yanukovich to flee the country, whereupon parliament immediately voted him out of power (Kiev Post 2014).⁸ Russia responded with heavy military presence, backed revolts in

7.The protests were called Euromaidan protests.

8.The parliament had a total of 450 parliamentarians.

eastern and southern Ukraine (regions which generally preferred Russian governmental influence), annexed Crimea and oversaw the breakaway of Donesk and Luhansk (BBC 2015). Russia rejected the interim government that had ousted Viktor Yanukovich. In the 2013–2015 conflict, more than 10000 people died while as of 27 November 2022, the 2022 conflict had claimed 6655 civilians (AAAS⁹ 2022; Statista 2022).

On 29 October 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that there were 7.89 million Ukrainian refugees across Europe (Data.UNHCR 2022). The UN webpage of UN Women started a gender sensitive assessment of the Russo-Ukrainian war during the 2014 version of the bloody conflict. The assessment is ongoing, and was updated to cover the much more devastating 2022 Russian invasion. The article notes that, unlike men and boys, women and girls are 'responsible for the care for children, disabled and elderly family members' (UN Women 2022). This kind of care is closely connected to social cohesion, social services like schools and health facilities, and other community resources (UN Women 2022). Invariably, relief organisations find that the majority of people in need of aid during different kinds of disasters are women and children. As already noted in the introduction, women refugees carry the extra burden that when they flee, they bring along children, the elderly, the sick and other dependents, whereas the men are more likely to flee solo or remain behind alone during war and economic disaster. Of course, this means that female headship of Ukrainian families has risen drastically and instantly.

The inconvenience upon women not only impacts on the present, but also has consequences for the future. As already noted, it will take years after the war for the women to settle back into farming in their country because of difficult rebuilding projects targeting public infrastructure, reservicing of farm fields, re-erecting farm houses, acquiring farm implements, and the re-establishment of the system of buying and selling and/or importing and exporting of seeds, fertilisers, livestock and public infrastructure. Even more serious is the possibility that the women might never return to their country to farm their old land. In that scenario, they will have to contend with being temporarily or permanently condemned to provide cheap labour for other farmers in a neighbouring country. The throngs of refugees who started to flee during the 2014 war still cannot return because the conflict has escalated again now in 2022. These women, along with the families that they head, will dramatically raise the statistics of poverty-stricken families. The following section relates this sudden leadership crisis to that of the context of the *Book of Ruth*.

'And Elimelech Naomi's husband died' (1:3): Female headship and crises

The next discovery of the comparison is the consequence of female headship during crises for both the Ukrainian and Ruth

9.The AAAS is the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

contexts. Within the first three verses of the *Book of Ruth*, the viewpoint of the narrator has shifted from the man who was, by reason of being male, the head of the family, to Naomi. In the patriarchal nature of the Old Testament world, even though Naomi is the only character in this group whom the narrator wants to follow up, the narrator will not say 'a certain woman of Bethlehem went to sojourn in the country of Moab, she, and her husband, and her two sons.' V. Mtshiselwa and N. Ndikhocele (2016) note the invisibility of women in Ruth 4, a text that promises land redistribution. In particular, the exercise was meant solely for the two women's survival (Naomi and Ruth). Similarly, here in Ruth 1:1, although Naomi is the actual focus of the story, the narrator still hides her behind her husband. Naomi apparently takes over Elimelech's place as the head as evidenced when the neighbours welcome her, when women celebrate the birth of Obed, and when Obed is ascribed to her in 1:19 and 4:16. In contrast to Elimelech her husband, Naomi has led her family for much longer.

In the case of the *Book of Ruth*, the story gives no clue as to why all the three husbands died, namely, Elimelech, Mahlon and Kilion. In Ukraine, women generally outlive the men by many years, and displacement tends to separate the men from their families while women tend to be the figure around which the family unites. In Ukraine, 'women live on average 10 years longer than men, and that gap is even more pronounced in rural communities' (FAO.org 2021a). The average lifespan of Ukrainian women was 76.2 years, while for men it was 65.6 years in 2019.¹⁰ In the case of the recent (2022) Russo-Ukrainian war, many more men are displaced internally without their families because they stayed behind to join the army, while the women left with the family to seek refuge in the neighbouring countries. Thus, the men are displaced internally while for women, the displacement is external (eca.unwomen.org 2021). The United Nations reports that:

As elsewhere in the world, women in Ukraine represent a large proportion of the agricultural labour force and thus play key roles in managing natural resources and promoting the well-being of their families. (eca.unwomen.org 2021)

'Naomi is selling a piece of land' (4:4): Land ownership and exploitative gendered traditions

Another common occurrence found in the study's comparison of the contexts of Ukrainian women and the *Book of Ruth* is limitations related to land ownership and resulting from exploitative gendered traditions. While women generally have access to land, it is land that they do not legally own, so they lack freedom and authority to make decisions. This greatly debilitates against women's economic independence productivity. From ancient times until contemporarily, men owned the land and women did not. Whereas the text of Ruth 4:4 clearly says that Naomi owned a piece of land in question, there are signs that her male relatives had greater power than her over its administration (Cf. Mtshiselwa & Ndikhocele 2016:2). The best possible explanation for this conundrum is that Elimelech owned the land under the umbrella ownership

10. This statistic applies to all former Soviet states, but 'In Western Europe [...] female life expectancy exceeds that of male[s] by just 5 years' (FAO.org 2021a).

of the family and, after his death, the land fell back under the jurisdiction of his paternal family whose male members had more authority over it than the remaining widow (Cf. Moore 2008:682). Mtshiselwa's and Ndikhocele (2016:2) interpretation of Ruth 4 leads them to observe that 'women's ownership and use of productive land [depends on] their relationship with a male figure.' Thus, by asking Boaz rather than 'So and so' who had greater priority to marry Ruth, Naomi and Ruth were essentially declaring that they preferred Boaz to redeem the land for Naomi (Snow 2017:6). Therefore, the expression that says Naomi is 'selling' the land only means she is advertising it to her male relatives to show interest in taking it, starting with the closest relative to the most distant, which is an order that entails levels of entitlement. In truth, Naomi neither has exclusive rights to the land nor authority over it, but men do.

Turning our attention to Boaz, we notice that as a land owner, he wields direct power over his field in a way that Naomi does not over her own. This ownership and authority over land has made him wealthy, a feature that immediately attracts Ruth the Moabite to his farm. Ruth being an economically disadvantaged female 'Other', the two characters relate on unequal terms, and Ruth is the vulnerable party who only has her body while Boaz has his riches. Linda Naicker, studying the character of Ruth and survival sex among South African women, notes that patriarchy preys on 'women with little or no access or opportunity' (2021:153). It is very likely that, had Boaz been a female farm owner, Ruth would have found survival in the farm through labour rather than through sex or marriage. Similarly, the context of Ukraine betrays a special strand of sexual exploitation with its laws that focus on sexually protecting internally displaced women and girls as well as ensuring 'that people fleeing the country have access to documents even if they would be able to exit without them' (Reliefweb.int 2022:8). The same document reports that as a consequence of the worsening of the war situation:

[W]omen and girls face higher risks of human rights violations and sexual exploitation and abuse, including transactional sex, survival sex and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) (Reliefweb.int 2022:12).

The condition whereby the farm owner is by default a man rather than a woman means there is a greater chance that Ruth, who has been working laboriously all along, will not experience an economic turn-around due to her hard labour, but due to a sexual favour that she is capable of doing. Both the land owner and the displaced woman are highly conscious of this sexual potential, and indeed, Ruth, who is the more desperate of the two, ends up taking the initiative of survival sex.

'She also brought out what she had left over' (2:18): Domestic burdens and gendered roles, biases and imbalances

The present finding under discussion is domestic burdens and gendered roles, biases and imbalances for both the

Ukrainian women during the current crisis and women characters in the *Book of Ruth*. According to Ruth 2:17–18, Ruth gleaned laboriously all day until evening with very little rest, threshed out the grain, and when she was given food, kept some of it for Naomi (2:18). Making extra efforts to present ready food to her mother in law represents a gendered role, which is, in turn, the cause of many women's slavish labour in contrast with men. Women are socialised, expected and sometimes forced to prepare and serve meals while men are not, despite the fact that they work in the farms just like the men. Oleksii Shestakovskiy (2013), in a study of the mentality that subjects Ukrainian women to slavish labour, calls this problem 'double burden.' He observed that women carry the 'double burden' both at work and at home (Shestakovskiy 2013:172). Alissa Tolstokorova's examination of multiple disadvantages of Ukrainian rural women led to the confirmation of a 'triple burden' (2009:10). This is the trend where the woman is formally employed, but is heavily involved in the family farm while she is solely responsible for domestic care (2009:10).

Patriarchal societies say that it is the man's job to bring food home, and the woman's to prepare it and turn it into a meal for the family. Nonetheless, women work many more hours on farms and expend more labour than men (Cf. CARE 2022). This means that, although it is theoretically the man's role to bring food home for the woman to cook, in practise, the woman works harder than the man to bring food home, and then more to make it ready to be eaten. This reality is applicable to Ukrainian women and women in virtually every country. This additional labour is much more psychologically and physically demanding, because it cannot be restricted by time and space. Hence, the woman is always attentive to the need for a meal or snack for children, the elderly, the sick, and the whole family (Tolstokorova 2009:10). Because she needs to produce a meal, she is often compelled to work harder than the man to ensure that everyone will be satisfied. Unfortunately, while her labour is mandatory, it has no salary or any form of economic reward – it is domestic and informal.

Women often fail to advance economically because they 'combine three or four social roles' (eca.unwomen.org 2021). 'They must be mothers, farmers and work in their main job, such as a school or shop' (eca.unwomen.org 2021). Women are too busy trying to survive and to provide for their families. They work informally in household-owned farms as wives, daughters, mothers, grandmothers, sisters, cousins and so forth. Men hold the more formal jobs while the majority of women do 'unpaid informal work on family farms' (FAO.org 2021a). This means that they are not documented or recognised as employees. Men, on the other hand, tend to work under formal employment when they do not own the farm or farm-related business.¹¹ Furthermore, the woman within the household automatically attracts other gender-biased fixed roles in such a way that she is recognised

11. Greater are the chances for the man than the woman that in a farming household, unless he is paid properly for his labour, he will leave and go to search for an income generating lifestyle away from home. The woman often stays to work for the family.

for them and not for the strenuous farm labour she provides. Concerning the rural women of Ukraine, eca.unwomen.org (2021) notes that they 'engage in both productive and reproductive labour, often with ancillary rural production.' She is expected to farm along with the husband or men, yet also be the family cook, do family laundry, raise the children, and sell the farm's produce. Sometimes she is employed in a school or shop.

Moreover, by the end of Ruth chapter 4, the hardworking girl with immense farming potential, Ruth, is no longer at the farm but is indoors raising Baby Obed. This child-raising role emanates from the biological make-up of women as opposed to that of men, and thereby cannot be shared. For example, women fall pregnant and breastfeed while men do not; nevertheless, it is the man-made and socialised elements of gendered oppression that feminist scholars and activists seek to deconstruct and reconstruct. Thus, the following section is ambivalent in its observation of Ruth's blessings, fame and achievements, but ends with caution; Ruth still lives under unacceptable inequality and oppression.

'Your daughter in law [...] loves you and is better than seven sons' (4:15). Virtuous to feed the world

The final finding under discussion is that, for the Ukrainian and Ruth contexts, women are more inclined towards care for humanity than men (Cf Jackson & Jones 1998:63–64). This virtue means that the woman is more prepared to sacrifice herself than the man, and to go to unimaginable lengths for the welfare of those that she is connected to. Although not to be understood literally, the expression 'better than seven sons' (Rt 4:15) holds some elements of truth for Ruth as well as for many women, at least as far as total commitment to food security for the family and additional gendered roles is concerned. The concepts of commitment and responsibility are closely attached to her quality of *hayil* [valour], which itself cannot be dissociated from her gender roles.¹² Tatiana Zhurzhenko (2001) identifies this quality in Ukrainian women when contrasted with the men in an earlier study as follows:

The leading role of Ukrainian women in the family, their readiness to take upon themselves the responsibility for its physical survival and their apparently greater ability than men to adapt to change has historical precedence. (p. 44)

As observed in the preceding section, Ruth goes to great lengths to ensure that there is a meal on the table for Naomi when the time to eat arrives (Cf. Rt 2:18). Zhurzhenko's (2001:45) discovery is in the same class as the qualities that motivated Ruth to seek food security by resiliently collecting unusual amounts of grain (Rt 2:17–18). She says of small-scale informal businesswomen:

[They] do not identify themselves as 'entrepreneurs' since their main motivation is to secure and organize their family's needs. They are usually 'ordinary women' forced into making extraordinary efforts for the economic survival of their families (Zhurzhenko's 2001:45).

12. Cf. Masenya 2010:4.

These women do not care how people categorised them for as long as their families could eat.

In Ruth 4:15, the women of the neighbourhood proclaim Ruth's worth. It is obvious that they are trying to summarise her traits when they mention her love for Naomi, being better than seven sons, and giving birth to the *go'el* (4:15). Ruth's embodiment of these virtues has demonstrated how gender skewed they are. For example, firstly, for as long as Ruth's hard work cannot advance to preparing meals for Naomi, her love would be inadequate. This is most likely because of Naomi's declining strength due to old age.¹³ Secondly, her work ethic has proven to be exceptional. Thirdly, Ruth has demonstrated a noble character since arrival, so her renown has spread throughout the city, for Boaz says, 'All the people of my gate know that you are a virtuous woman' (3:11); in 4:11–12, the elders at the court of the city, most probably because Ruth's fame is known among them, pronounce fertility and prosperity for her in the name of the Lord. They wish her to be fertile like Leah, Rachel and Tamar. Ruth acquired her fame by being virtuous, a description which, upon critical examination, proves to be exclusively feminine. This nature of her virtue is what got the elders to pronounce fertility on her. Before noting its injustice, this section observes that from the rhetoric of the narrative, it is what made her fertile, in the light of everybody's goodwill and benediction; overall, what makes her better than seven sons is her love and hard work and the resultant fame and fertility. Despite an uneven playing field tilted against the woman, it is still her who feeds the world, as far as productivity is concerned.

Notwithstanding, the narrative's valorisation of Ruth's character has received much criticism recently, being interpreted rather as victimisation of Ruth by patriarchal culture and her own self-victimisation. For example, Madipoane Masenya's article which questions the authenticity of Ruth's '*eshet hayil*' (Cf. Masenya 2010) exposes the desperate flaws of such a concept. From that perspective, the character of Ruth must not be uncritically emulated by the reader, but even before that, the cultural context that produces and legitimises such a character must be dismantled and reconstructed. However, all critical and activist scholars of gender issues admit that this societal change is slow to achieve and might be impossible without men's cooperation. For this reason, attempts have been and are being made by interventionist gender scholars to engage men in the war against patriarchal culture. The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (the Circle), for example, added to its methodologies a focus on masculinities with the aim to deconstruct and reconstruct hegemonic masculinities and reach out to men (Nadar & Phiri 2012:126).¹⁴ These attempts can help men save face whom, when paired against the

13. A man would at best sacrificially hire a female stranger or beg one of his female relatives, for example, to constantly prepare meals for his mother-in-law.

14. With the same goal in mind, Adriaan van Klinken's and Beverley Haddad's (2011) study also made a proposal to involve the men in the fight against Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in their article 'Transforming masculinities towards gender justice in an era of HIV and AIDS: Plotting the pathways'.

women, rank quite low in the categories of commitment and a sense of responsibility.

Yet, while the above arguments point to the woman as a more reliable candidate than the man for feeding the family, community, nation and the world, the cultural status quo would rather grant land, loans, information and other incentives for improved livelihood to the man than to the woman. The relevance of this finding for Ruth and Ukrainian women is that, unless desperate interventions are made, they are condemned to slavish labour for the rest of their lives. Thus, female farmers 'substantially lag behind their male counterparts' when it comes to crop yields and earnings. However, the reasons for this 'crop gap,' according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), have nothing to do with an aptitude for farming but everything to do with the gender-specific obstacles (us14.campaign-archive 2021).

The FAO report also argues that, 'if women farmers gain access to the same resources as their male counterparts, the entire world will eat, too' (FAO.org 2021a). The same report (FAO.org 2021a) further proffers that 'abolishing gender-specific barriers in farming would not only empower women to achieve their highest economic potential,' but it will also 'help feed a hungry world'. Reflecting on the available statistics, the FAO report also explains that 'most of the approximately 820 million people worldwide who are currently undernourished live in developing countries – the same places where women are key to food production' (us14.campaign-archive 2021). It is against this background that one can safely conclude that:

[Giving women] access to the same resources and education as males could increase [women's] food production by up to 30 percent, potentially eliminating hunger for 150 million people. In addition, the FAO asserts, earning extra income would enable women to spend more money on health care, nutrition, and education for their children – investments that could produce long-term, positive results for farm families and their neighbors.

Similarly, the main goal of an organisation by the name, 'She Feeds the World,' is to improve the food security and nutrition of poor rural households, with a strong emphasis on women small-scale producers (care.org 2020). Females who work in the background 'account for nearly half of all agricultural labor in developing countries and work as much as 13 h more per week than men' (care.org 2020).

Conclusion

This article presented, in comparison with the problems faced by the female characters of Ruth, a study of the unique problems women contend with during displacement, food crisis and arrested economic and agricultural productivity, using Ukraine as the latest casualty. The article did this by interrogating the reciprocal concepts of displacement, famine and crop production from a gendered point of view. The findings of the study are compatible with gender Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and will alert stakeholders for intervention in

view of the uniqueness of the plight of women during displacement, famine and arrested economic and agricultural production. As regards earth preservation, the article critiqued the land-defacing effects of the Russo-Ukrainian war, as farm fields, roads and random fields are destroyed.

The article argued and demonstrated that gendered injustices against women match patterns as ancient as those in the narrative of Ruth. For example, a sense of commitment, attachment and responsibility to and for the family tends to grow in women during displacement, famine and arrested crop or food production, a trait that increases her burden at the worst time. In addition, the article showed that due to the paradoxical injustice of patriarchy, the woman tends to suddenly become both the sole breadwinner and head of the family during displacement and famine. She is burdened with resettling the family and carving out a living for their benefit. These discoveries mean that the woman takes on the roles of both female and male. Finally, a more sexualised conclusion was made by this study, namely that men own the land and subsequently, the means to help the female 'Other' economically; therefore, like Ruth, contemporary women who have been made helpless by crisis are at the mercy of men, and are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. In addition, the article embodied a call for a proactive recognition and reward of women's critical involvement in economic sustenance and crop production, removal of barriers and distractions, and greater initiatives to level the playing field between women and men, as far as resources and support are concerned.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The author has declared that no competing interest exists.

Author's contributions

S.K.B., is the sole author of this research article.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author, and the publisher.

References

- AGCANADA Report, 2021, 'Farming behind the lines in Ukraine: A Ukrainian agriculture journalist chronicles the challenges of sowing a crop during wartime', *Glacier Farm Media Limited Partnership*, 17 March 2022, viewed 16 May 2022, from <https://www.agcanada.com/daily/farming-behind-the-lines-in-ukraine>.
- BBC News, 2015, 'Putin reveals secrets of Russia's crimea takeover plot', *BBC News*, 09 March 2015, viewed 20 March 2022, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31796226>.
- Berman, S.K., 2014, *Analysing the frames of a Bible: The case of the Setswana translations of the book of Ruth*, vol. 16, University of Bamberg Press, Bamberg.
- Bowman, R.G., 1995, 'Narrative criticism: Human purpose in conflict with divine presence. 10–33', in G.A. Yee (ed), *Judges and method: New approaches in Biblical Studies*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN.
- Care.org, 2020, 'She feeds the world', viewed 10 May 2022 from <https://www.care.org/our-work/food-and-nutrition/nutrition/she-feeds-the-world/>.
- Data.UNHCR, 2022, 'Ukraine refugee situation', *Operational Data Portal*, UNHCR, 29 November, viewed 07 December 2022, from <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>.
- Dube, M.W., 2005, 'Circle readings of the Bible/Scriptures', in *Study of religion in Southern Africa*, pp. 77–96, Brill, viewed 27 February 2023, from https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047407492_007
- Dube, M.W., Kgalemang, M., Setume, S., Motswapong, E.P., Kebaneilwe, M., Madigele, T.J. et al., 2021, 'Botho/Ubuntu and "Unsettling Patriarchy": Go Laya in Gaborone bridal Showers', *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Centre: Botho/Ubuntu and Community Building in the Urban Space* 50(Spring/Fall), 1–45.
- DW News, 2022, 'War in Ukraine has a devastating effect on farmers: Ukrainian agriculture expert Roman Slaston describes what impact Russia's war in Ukraine is having on farming activities in the country', *DW Akademie*, 23 March 2022, viewed 30 April 2022, from <https://www.dw.com/en/war-in-ukraine-has-a-devastating-effect-on-farmers/av-61233035>.
- Eca.unwomen.org, 2021, 'Improving livelihoods of rural women across Ukraine', *UN Women*, 08 November, viewed 05 May 2022, from <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2022/01/improving-livelihoods-of-rural-women-across-ukraine>.
- Elson, D., 2000, *Progress of the World's women 2000*, UNIFEM Biennial Report, United Nations Development Fund for Women, New York, NY.
- FAO.org, 2021a, 'Helping women fulfil potential in rural Ukraine can make agriculture sector more efficient', *Food Agriculture Organisation*, 13 July, viewed 05 May 2022, from <https://www.fao.org/gender/news/detail/es/c/1444831/>.
- FAO.org, 2021b, 'National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods – Ukraine, Revised', *Food Agriculture Organisation*, Budapest, viewed 16 May 2022, from <https://www.fao.org/publications/card/fr/c/CB4501EN/>.
- Ferrant, G., Pesando, L.M. & Nowacka, K., 2014, *Unpaid care work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes*, OECD Development Center, Boulogne Billancourt.
- Fisher, M., 2014, 'Everything you need to know about the 2014 Ukraine crisis', *Voxmedia*, 03 September, viewed 30 April 2022, from <http://www.vox.com/2014/9/3/18088560/ukraine-everything-you-need-to-know>.
- Frost, R., 2022, "'We must feed our soldiers and our Ukrainian nation", say farmers who are working despite war', *Euronews Green*, 23 March, viewed 16 May 2022 from <https://www.euronews.com/green/2022/03/23/we-must-feed-our-soldiers-and-our-ukrainian-nation-say-farmers-who-are-working-despite-war>.
- Jackson, S. & Jones, J. (Eds.), 1998, *Contemporary feminist theories*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, p. 280.
- Kiev Post, 2014, 'Parliament votes 328-0 to impeach Yanukovich on Feb. 22; sets May 25 for new election', *Biznesgrupp Tov*, 23 February, viewed 30 April 2022, from <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/euromaidan-rallies-in-ukraine-feb-21-live-updates-337287.html>.
- Masenya, M., 2010, 'Is Ruth the 'ēšet hayil for real? An exploration of womanhood from African proverbs to the threshing floor (Ruth 3: 1–13)', *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 36(suppl 1), 1–21.
- Moore, E., 2008, 'Ruth 2: Ancient near Eastern Background', in T. Longman & P. Enns (eds.), *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, poetry and writings*, pp. 687–693, Intervarsity Press, Nottingham.
- Mouton, J., 2001, *How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral Studies*, Van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria.
- Mtshiselwa, V. & Ndikhokele N., 2016, 'Reading Ruth 4 and Leviticus 25:8–55 in the light of the landless and poor women in South Africa: A conversation with Fernando F. Segovia and Ernesto "Che" Guevara', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 72(1), a3140. <http://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i1.3140>
- Nadar, S. & Phiri, I., 2012, 'Charting the paradigm shifts in HIV research: The contribution of gender and religion studies', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 28(2), 121–129. <https://doi.org/10.2979/jfemistudrel.28.2.121>
- Nadar, S., 2009, 'Beyond the "ordinary reader" and the "invisible intellectual": Shifting contextual Bible study from liberation discourse to liberation pedagogy', *Old Testament Essays* 22(2), 384–403.
- Naicker, L., 2021, 'Food, sex and text: Exploring survival sex in the context of food insecurity through communal readings of the book of Ruth', A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Religion and Theology, University of the Western Cape.

- Newfoodmagazine.com, 2022, 'Ukrainian workers flee UK farms: Ukrainian workers flee UK farms due to poor treatment, with one woman describing it as "akin to modern-day slavery"', *New Food*, 21 April, viewed 31 April 2023, from <https://www.newfoodmagazine.com/news/164083/ukrainian-workers-flee-uk-farms/>
- Nytimes.com, 2022, 'Everything was destroyed': War hits Ukraine's farms, *New York Times*, 10 April, viewed 16 May 2022, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/10/world/europe/ukraine-farmers-food.html>.
- O'Connor, K.M., 1998, 'Crossing borders: Biblical studies in a trans-cultural world', in F.F. Segovia & M.A. Tolbert (eds.), *Teaching the Bible: The discourses and politics of Biblical pedagogy*, pp. 322–337, Orbis Books, Maryknoll.
- Reliefweb.int, 2022, 'Rapid gender analysis of Ukraine: Secondary data review', viewed 27 February 2023, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/rapid-gender-analysis-ukraine-secondary-data-review-29-march-2022>.
- Schüssler-Fiorenza, E., 1999, *Rhetoric and ethic: The politics of biblical studies*, Fortress Press.
- Shestakovskiy, O., 2013, 'Gender inequality in Ukrainian labor market: Structural prerequisites and lasting stereotypes', *Visnyk Kharkivskogo Natsionalnogo Universytetu Imeni V.N. Karazina*, 1045, 169–174, viewed 27 February 2023, from http://www.sociology.kharkov.ua/socio/docs/magazin/vesnik_soc/1045.pdf.
- Snow, T., 2017, 'Agricultural dimensions of the Book of Ruth', A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the School of Theology and Religious Studies of the Catholic University of America, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.
- Statista, 2022, 'Number of civilian casualties during the war in Ukraine 2022', *Statista Research Department*, viewed 07 December 2022, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1293492/ukraine-war-casualties/>.
- Stone, R., 2022, 'Ukraine's mounting death toll includes a growing number of researchers: Physicists, chemists, and mathematicians are among the thousands killed in Russian invasion', *American Association for the Advancement of Science – AAAS*, 22 April 2022, viewed 28 April 2022, from <https://www.science.org/content/article/ukraine-s-mounting-death-toll-includes-growing-number-researchers>.
- The Guardian, 2022, 'Ukrainian workers flee "modern slavery" conditions on UK farms: Charity calls for people who arrived on seasonal work visas and are now undocumented to be offered protection', *Guardian News & Media*, 19 April 2022, viewed 30 April 2022, from https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/apr/19/ukrainian-workers-flee-modern-slavery-conditions-on-uk-farms?CMP=share_btn_tw.
- Tolstokorova, A., 2009, 'Multiple marginalities: Gender dimension of rural poverty, unemployment and labour migration in Ukraine', in *FAOIFAD-ILO experts workshop 'Gaps, trends and current research in gender dimensions of agricultural and rural employment: differentiated pathways out of poverty'*, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania, pp. 1–24.
- Tsoffar, R., 2007, 'The trauma of otherness and hunger: Ruth and Lot's daughters', *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 5(1), 1–13.
- Ukpong, J.S., 2004, 'Contextual hermeneutics: Challenges and possibilities', in J.N.K. Mugambi & J.A. Smit (eds.), *Text and context in New Testament hermeneutics*, pp. 20–55, Acton, Nairobi.
- UN Women, 2022, 'In focus: War in Ukraine is a crisis for women and girls', *UN Women*, 29 March, viewed 02 May 2022 from, https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/in-focus/2022/03/in-focus-war-in-ukraine-is-a-crisis-for-women-and-girls?gclid=Cj0KCQjwvLOTBhCJARIsACVldV1s60-fV8ePgE8OiiimvR_w78zI44JnDzS8hZnxheBniOfly1hcrNYaArVIEALw_wcB.
- us14.campaign-archive, 2021, *AWARE*, 03 September, viewed 31 January 2023, from <https://us14.campaign-archive.com/?id=9249ff135c&u=9bb459588c30d6df82f45eb9b>.
- Van Klinken, A.S. & Haddad, B., 2011, 'Transforming masculinities towards gender justice in an era of HIV and AIDS: Plotting the pathways', in B. Haddad (ed.), *Religion and HIV and AIDS: Charting the Terrain*, pp. 275–296 University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg.
- Zhurzhenko, T., 2001, 'Free market ideology and new women's identities in post-socialist Ukraine', *The European Journal of Women's Studies* 8(1), 29–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135050680100800103>