

# From Bleeding Hearts to Critical Thinking: Exploring the Issue of Human Trafficking

*Edited by Kamala Kempadoo and Darja Davydova*



Centre for Feminist Research

FROM BLEEDING HEARTS TO CRITICAL THINKING:  
EXPLORING THE ISSUE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Conference presentations  
York University, Toronto  
March 19-20, 2012

Editors: Kamala Kempadoo, Darja Davydova  
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Cover Art: Jimmy Limit (photographer), Allison Magpayo (art direction), button and stickers produced by Readers & Writers

Texts on cover:

Kempadoo, K., J. Sanghera and B. Pattanaik, eds. (2005) *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights* (1<sup>st</sup> ed). Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Goldman, E. (1998). *Red Emma speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader* (2nd ed.). Amherst: Humanity Books.

Published by: Centre for Feminist Research (CFR), York University, Toronto, Canada  
November 2012



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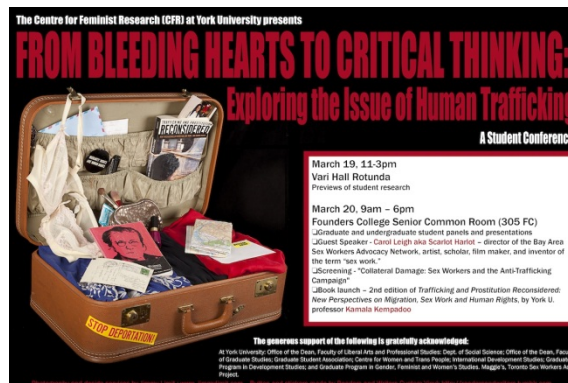
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## Introduction

On March 19-20, 2012, we held an event at York University, entitled “From Bleeding Hearts to Critical Thinking: Exploring the Issue of Human Trafficking.” We wanted to create a public forum at which student analyses of representations of human trafficking could be presented to stimulate broader discussion about the topic and advance critical thinking on campus about issues such as “sex trafficking” and undocumented migration. The event comprised displays about representations of human trafficking on the first day, and an academic conference on the second. A compilation of some of the excellent student research showcased during the two days is presented here.



The conference drew its inspiration from the international symposium “Migration, Sex Work, Trafficking: Master Narratives and Critical Perspectives,” which I organized with the Centre for Feminist Research (CFR) in January 2011. That symposium highlighted new research from Europe, Africa and North America, exploring alternatives to the notion of “sex trafficking” and foregrounding the work of doctoral students and activists (see Appendix I). The symposium attracted considerable attention and discussion, and underscored to the organizers the need for broader education and critical thinking about the topic of human trafficking at York University.

The impetus from the symposium was carried forward in two courses I taught at York University during the academic year 2011-12: “Global Human Trafficking” and “The Global Sex Trade.” The former, offered through the undergraduate International Development Studies program, was designed to problematize approaches to human trafficking and to identify key concepts and theories that play a role in the framing of the problem. It placed the concept of human trafficking in historical, global, and gender perspectives, paying particular attention to the ways in which the trafficking of persons is defined and conceptualized, how prostitution is taken up in the discourse, and how “the victim” is constituted and treated. National and international anti-trafficking narratives, policies and interventions, as well as underlying causes and links to systems of slavery, bonded labour and undocumented migration were all important topics in the course. The latter course, on the global sex trade, was cross-listed by the graduate programs in Gender, Feminist and Women’s Studies and Development Studies. It was designed as an introduction to the main theories and perspectives on prostitution and other forms of sexual labour, and involved the study of specific configurations in, and discourses on, sex work in different parts of the world. It also examined the issue of cross-border movements that underpin a global sex trade, and gave students an opportunity to learn about the main debates on the subject of “the traffic in women”, aka “sex trafficking”, and to study contemporary critiques of, and alternative perspectives on, anti-trafficking discourses.

Both courses were aimed at strengthening analytical and critical thinking skills and at enhancing research and study, policy development and community activism on important contemporary social issues.

The undergraduate course on human trafficking attracted considerable attention from students from a variety of programs, including Psychology, Education, Sociology, Law and Society, Social Work, Geography, Environmental Studies, and International Development Studies. As the course progressed, the idea of organizing a public event took shape. Aiming to reach as many students outside of the course as possible, a public space in the main university building was chosen to mount displays and engage passers-by in discussion about the topic. A one-day academic conference would follow at which the student research would be more formally presented. Students from the graduate course on the sex trade who had written their final term paper on the subject of “sex trafficking” were also invited to present their work at the conference (see Appendix II). For the keynote to the event we invited sex worker rights activist and filmmaker Carol Leigh to present her documentary film about human trafficking. The talk she gave at the conference is also featured here.

The graduate papers that were presented have all been revised and edited for this publication and are published in Part I. The undergraduate course work resulted in written papers, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, poster board displays, videos, dance, and information presented on Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr. The creativity and thought that went into the undergraduate presentations was remarkable, producing provocative and interactive displays on the first day, and a series of thoughtful presentations and lively discussions on the second. Some of that work and a summary of the various team projects can be found in Part II. Apart from the novelty of the event as a class project, it gave both graduate and undergraduate students a first-hand experience with presenting in an academic forum, which for the majority was a first.

All in all, the collaboration, cooperation and enthusiasm that went into producing this event were tremendous. The undergraduate students worked together successfully as teams and, as exemplified in the dance performance and this publication, graduate students stepped in and offered their time, energy and skills to assist the undergraduates with developing their projects. I hope that this collection, although not representing all of the research and analysis, can continue the important work that was done by the students, and serve as both a documentation of the event and a resource for teaching and learning about an issue that continues to haunt the globe.

### **Acknowledgements**

The event was co-organized and hosted by the Centre for Feminist Research (CFR). Allison Magpayo took great initiative with designing the conference poster and together with Toby Wiggins gave organizational assistance for the event. At the CFR, Jessica Balmer worked effortlessly on the event details, while director Ena Dua gave significant guidance and support for the overall planning. On the day of the conference, York University professors Sonia Lawrence (Osgoode Hall Law School), Amanda Glasbeek

(Law and Society) and Sharada Srinivasan (Development Studies), and PhD candidate Nadia Hasan (Political Science) expertly moderated the sessions and contributed to the discussion with their wisdom. Professor Deborah Brock (Sociology) very kindly launched the second edition of my edited book on trafficking at the end of the conference. Our guest speaker Carol Leigh proved to be much more than a guest, attending both days of the event, documenting the whole on camera, holding interviews and lending her voice to the discussions. Darja Davydova enthusiastically took the lead in conceptualizing, coordinating and editing the publication, while Tracy Locke and Jessica Balmer provided important copy-editing, layout, and proofreading skills.

The conference was generously supported at York University by the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, the Department of Social Science, the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Student Association, the Centre for Women and Trans People, International Development Studies, and the graduate programs in Development Studies and Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies. Maggie's, Toronto's Sex Workers Action Project, was also a key supporter of the conference.

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October 2012

## **Collateral Damage: Sex Workers and the Anti-Trafficking Campaigns<sup>1</sup>**

*Carol Leigh*

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I formally met Professor Kempadoo when I attended a conference at The University of Colorado in Boulder in 2002, “The Business of Bodies: Women and The Global Sex Market.” At that time, I had started collecting materials for a long range film project, tracking the development of the anti-trafficking discourse and policies, specifically from a sex workers rights perspective. I was already quite familiar with her work, which offered a map of discovery and clearly articulated links between discrimination against sex workers and broader political forces, and I filmed her presentation, which spoke to the complex intersections of discussions of globalization, imperialism and the changing view of sex work in the context of the trafficking discourses.

In 2012 Dr. Kempadoo said to me, “When we met 10 years ago, not too many people were talking about trafficking and since then everybody has an opinion on it and everybody can say something about it...but nobody really knows what it is. It’s just this scary thing that’s out there... living a life of its own. It’s a panic. It’s a discourse. It’s laws. It’s a whole machinery that is in operation...”

As a long-time sex worker rights activist, I have closely followed and influenced prostitution discourses. I recall when Kathleen Barry’s *Female Sexual Slavery* introduced an updated version of “white slavery” to feminist discourse in 1979. Although the “sexual slavery” framework was apparently not suited to mainstream concerns, a new stigmatizing language, referring to prostitutes as “prostituted women,” attempted to communicate the abolitionist premise of prostitution per se as a crime against women.

It is clear that the abolitionist analysis is and was a substantial element in any discourse about prostitution around the world. And so, I was glad to join Professor Kempadoo and York University students in this conference that “unpacked” discourses within overlapping, anti-trafficking frameworks, including prostitution abolitionist, modern-day slavery and the UN Protocol frameworks.

My own focus is sex work policy and history and I was eager to explore what was responsible for a return to this view of women as “waifs at the mercy of strangers, foreigners and organized crime.” Following the late 20th century evolution of the prostitute, from Xaviera Hollander’s “Happy Hooker” to Margo St. James’ role as prostitute activist and organizer, the sex workers rights movement was informed by the LGBT, labor and civil rights movements of the 60s and 70s.

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<sup>1</sup> This talk accompanied the documentary film-in-progress of the same title.



The AIDS crisis introduced a contemporary view of prostitutes as sex educators as a new generation of young people learned new ethics on the sexual frontiers. The sex worker rights movement was equipped to introduce empowerment and harm reduction strategies that countered the pathologized sex worker with survivors, teachers and leaders in the AIDS crisis.

Then, in the mid-90s, my fellow activists observed, first, a sudden attention to trafficking, then a steady shift to the trafficking framework in discussions of prostitution. Somewhat familiar with the history of prostitution abolitionism through Barry's work as well as *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* by Judith R. Walkowitz and *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* by Ruth Rosen, it was clear that we were embarked on a resurgence.

In Boulder in 2002, Kempadoo articulated this understanding:

It would appear that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the appearance of women from the former USSR countries in Western European sex industries was a main reason for European governments to pay attention to the problem of trafficking. In many ways, this focus echoes the late nineteenth to early twentieth century crusade to end "white slavery," led by Britain and the US, that centered upon the involvement of European women in the global sex trade... It would seem yet again that attention to the lives of white women—or women of European descent—has propelled international action.<sup>2</sup>

The resurgence and anti-trafficking frameworks resulted in a torrent of local and international laws and policies, with scant resistance. Only a handful (but growing list) of academics published critical work and deconstructions of trafficking frameworks. Although I had followed Professor Kempadoo's work closely, when I attended the "Bleeding Hearts/Critical Thinking" conference, I was struck that even ten years later, my work-in-progress film *Collateral Damage: Sex Workers and The Anti-Trafficking Campaigns* paralleled the content of work by students ranging from a discussion of the conflation of prostitution with trafficking, the conflation of migration with trafficking, uncorroborated and manipulative statistics and colonialist influences in the portrayal of women from developing nations.

As I compile a range of resources on trafficking discourses for my project, I develop an analysis that reaches beyond issues of sexual politics and sex worker rights. Based on Professor Kempadoo's work as well as that of others, including Laura Agustín, Grace Chang and Nandita Sharma, this analysis focuses on the effect of economic and migration policies on women, people in the third-world, and working class people in general. But as a sex worker activist and early feminist, I am personally inspired by an investigation of

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<sup>2</sup> Kempadoo, Kamala. "Trafficking for the Global Market: State and Corporate Terror." Paper presented at the meeting "The Business of Bodies: Women and the Global Sex Market," University of Colorado-Boulder, March 6-8th, 2002: 16.

intersections of feminist discourses and anti-trafficking movements and policies.

As I observe the trafficking panic recycle, it occurs to me that there is something society craves in the image of the sexually abused woman. The sexually tortured and abused “whore” is central in our culture, as a warning to those who leave home or who stray from conventional sexual paths, and as an archetype, communicating sexual danger.

I recall when I first started working as a prostitute I was disturbed that Linda Lovelace had become a feminist icon, and that she was inspiring a prurient, voyeuristic following based on her role as a victim of the sex industry. I had been a feminist since the early seventies, long before my involvement with prostitution. I grew up witnessing my father verbally abuse my mother. When I came to my feminist consciousness, I suddenly understood that the abused woman was all of us, the dynamics of the oppression of women, our second class status, and society's tacit acceptance of our abuse in the fifties and sixties.

One reason I was interested in prostitution prior to my own experience was my identification with the victimization of the prostitute. “She” is a target of the misogyny and discrimination that I resisted as a feminist. My own experience as a sex worker placed me on the battlefield of the sex wars, men and women alike against women.

What concerns many of us critiquing anti-trafficking frameworks is the *essentialization* of sex workers and immigrant women as victims and the way our societies, in shaping contemporary policies of repression, are repurposing the “fallen woman.” Rather than rejecting the perennial symbol of the abused woman, many sex worker groups re-contextualize her, insisting that she is a symbol of the discrimination and violence sex workers face.

So, *Collateral Damage* also focuses attention on victimization of sex workers as a result of anti-trafficking policies. One of the primary critiques of anti-trafficking policies is the obsession with prostitution and its conflation with trafficking. The suffering of the prostitute, as a victim of violence and violations of human rights, is not an object lesson about the dangers of female independence. The violations are the battle scars in the struggle against state violence, and for rights and recognition. And so, *Collateral Damage* opens with a video from Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW) in which a sex worker explains that she was raped by the police. The state and the trafficking policies are the perpetrators.

It is clear the image of the individual in the sex market as a victim-warrior is eclipsed in mainstream society by the competing image of the victim-waif. Sex workers are imaged as predatory, invoking the Whore of Babylon, an allegorical figure of evil mentioned in the Book of Revelation. With this predatory identity, a sex worker couldn't possibly care about trafficking. When a sex worker tries to deconstruct or disrupt an anti-trafficking framework, they are accused of being a pimp, perpetrator and apologist for the abuse of women. How does one enter the conversation with such a profound reputation?

The abuses of sex workers are considered inconsequential. Sex workers can't be raped; sex

work is a dangerous life and sex workers should expect violence and abuse. As Catherine Mackinnon recently claimed, “All you can do to help a prostitute is help her to get out.” The same perception separates guilty and innocent victims, insisting that prostitutes have to be considered victims or they must be considered perpetrators.

There is no way to challenge the state’s structure for implementing or overseeing or discussing the effects of its policies. The way that debates are framed makes it difficult to enter the conversation: if you are not against trafficking, are you for it?

The women who enter the discourse as saviors forget about the ways in which they themselves need to be saved, obscuring that the state may be impacting their lives and those of their friends and associates. A complex set of gender relations and perspectives on victimization start to emerge at this point.

We have a complicated message to deliver, one that also pivots on an explanation of the intersection of economic forces and choice in the realm of sex and work. Although that discourse may be entertained within academia, it has not entered the public sphere. I was struck by these challenges at a demonstration in San Francisco with our local Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP). Activists distributed a flyer that explained that they were consensual sex workers and not trafficked people. Forced prostitution exists and it is terrible, but we are not all forced. As activists in *Collateral Damage* insist, “Sex work is not trafficking,” and people should understand that there is a difference between forced and voluntary involvement in sex work. The white slavery/sexual slavery/trafficking victim framework is clearly a contemporary obsession. Apparently we will feel the repercussions of policies resulting in more widespread criminalization and marginalization of sex workers for quite some time.

As we move forward in advocating for our communities, under the weight of this new stigma of “predatory trafficking denier” and excluded from participation in policy making by decree (i.e., the anti-Prostitution Loyalty Oath), sex workers face questions about developing effective strategies and priorities. From the suggestion by long time sex worker rights advocate, Cheryl Overs, that “Perhaps the highest priority for the sex workers rights movement should be to unite to reject the entire paradigm of trafficking and sexual exploitation” to the principles of “nothing about us without us,” our right is to inclusion and leadership in policies that affect us, which is a fundamental challenge to mainstream approaches to abuse and exploitation. As Overs explains, sex workers are charged with reminding the public that solutions include justice for all of us... “[for] the duped innocent, for the incorrigible slut, for the happy hooker; for the screaming queen and for the ‘sex slave’ – and for the other 99% of adult sex workers who don’t fit these stereotypes – all need the same thing and our slogan says it perfectly – **‘only rights can stop the wrongs.’**”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cheryl Overs, “Willing Brides and Consenting Homosexuals?: Why we must unite against the trafficking paradigm”, <http://plri.wordpress.com/2010/09/28/willing-brides-and-consenting-homosexuals-why-we-must-unite-against-the-trafficking-paradigm/>

Clearly, given the complexities and history of the constructs of trafficking we need education for our own communities and for the general public. Having attended many conferences and panels, the collection of papers and presentations at this forum at York University are the most well-constructed and researched, and fundamentally challenging, that I have seen at an academic conference specifically addressing issues of trafficking. I have learned much from this event, was privileged to be part of it, and look forward to incorporating the work of the York students in my representation of *Collateral Damage* to sex workers and our communities.



## CAROL LEIGH

Carol Leigh has been working as a prostitute, activist and an artist in the Bay Area for more than thirty years. Since the late seventies, she has written and performed political satire as "Scarlot Harlot," and produced work in a variety of genres on women's issues including work based on her experience in San Francisco massage parlors. Leigh is one of the "mothers" of the sex workers' rights movement in the US and internationally - in fact, she coined the term "sex work" in the late seventies.

Leigh is a long time spokesperson for COYOTE, the sex worker rights organization, founded by Margo St. James. For several years she coordinated a street outreach project through the Coalition on Prostitution, providing condoms, and health and safety information to street workers in San Francisco. She co-founded BAY SWAN, Bay Area Sex Workers Advocacy Network; is webmistress at BAYSWAN'S Prostitutes' Education Network Website; founded both Trafficking Policy Research Project and San Francisco Sex Worker Film Festival; volunteered at the HIV Prevention Project; is a founding member of ACT UP (in San Francisco); and was seated on the San Francisco Board of Supervisor's Task Force on Prostitution representing San Francisco's Commission on the Status of Women. She has worked with community groups as a consultant regarding sex workers' rights in Hungary, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Africa.

Leigh attended Boston University's Master's program in Creative Writing and is trained in a variety of media. She has been producing videos since 1985, including promotional pieces for Bay Area community service organizations such as the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, the Needle Exchange and Women's Positive Legal Action Network. Leigh has won numerous awards for her work, which features a range of genres including guerrilla documentary, narratives, comedy, industrials and music videos. Her current short film explores sex worker and anti-trafficking campaigns. Behind humanitarian concern is a century-old movement that historically reflects xenophobia and prostitution abolitionism. The resurgence of the white slavery/trafficking framework is tied to moral panic that has historically resulted in discriminatory immigration policies, increased criminalization of sex work and few solutions for individuals who are victims of forced labor.

## **PART I**

### **Graduate Research**

## **Sex Work and Media Discourses of “Slavery”: Unpacking Al Jazeera’s *Slavery: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evil***

*Savitri Persaud<sup>4</sup>*

### **Introduction**

In October of 2011, Al Jazeera ran a series entitled *Slavery: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evil*, which was produced by Tim Tate and hosted by Rageh Omaar. This series captures “different dimensions” of what Al Jazeera calls “modern-day slavery.” Some of the “dimensions” explored included “bonded slavery,” “prison slavery,” “charcoal slavery,” and, not surprisingly, “sex slavery.” Sex work practices fell strictly under the umbrella of Al Jazeera’s use of this monolithic term “slavery.” Moreover, these other “dimensions” of “slavery” seemed to collapse into one another under this category of oppression. Al Jazeera’s melting pot of “slavery,” as much as it attempted to make distinctions between “dimensions” of “slavery,” convoluted differences in a framework that rendered these phenomena within a context of “victimhood” alone, choosing to only present narratives grounded in violence and coercion.

Using Al Jazeera’s *Slavery: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evil*, specifically the episode on “sex slavery” (“Sex Slaves,” 2011) and the roundtable discussion that culminated the series (“The Al-Jazeera Slavery Debate,” 2011) as my points of departure, this essay will critically take up the way in which anti-trafficking discourse often finds itself entangled and interwoven with debates that make for, in the words of Elizabeth Bernstein (2010), a “coalition of strange bedfellows” (p. 47). The misconceptions and generalizations that often accompany associations with sex work come to bear immense implications on the lives of women, men, and children as they begin to spell out the extent of our social anxieties as related to sexuality and the selling of sex. Most striking in this series is the way in which women’s bodies are stereotyped and othered by groups of “strange bedfellows” that purportedly champion human rights, specifically representatives from the US State Department, Free the Slaves, the United Nations, and Not for Sale. This essay examines these dominant tropes associated with sex work and the power relations and pretenses that underpin conceptions of this labour practice as presented by Al Jazeera. What will be emphasized here is that even though these constructed narratives of oppression alone come to represent a symbol that we give further meaning to, it must be acknowledged that these narratives of “slavery” are only one small, distorted, and misrecognized part of a much larger story that is often left untold.

### **Description of Al Jazeera’s “Sex Slavery” and “Trafficking” Roundtable**

<sup>4</sup> Savitri Persaud is a PhD student in the department of Social and Political Thought at York University. Her research analyzes the intersections between gender, violence, disability, and folklore in the Caribbean. She can be contacted at [savitripersaud@gmail.com](mailto:savitripersaud@gmail.com).

Al Jazeera's episode on "sex slavery" ("Sex Slaves," 2011) uses Moldova as its case study. Throughout the program, Moldova's socio-economic status as "the poorest country in Europe" is repeatedly mentioned. The camera then cuts to an interview with Kevin Bales, President of Free the Slaves. Bales tells the viewers that of the estimated 27 million "slaves" in the world, approximately six to eight percent are "sex slaves" that have been "trafficked." The program details the ways in which women are "duped" into "sex slavery" when they are offered opportunities to become performers (as dancers or singers). The audience is shown a snippet of a young woman posing as a decoy who answers an ad to become a dancer. She meets with the recruiter, Olga, who tells her that all she must do is "dance, dance, and then sit at the table with the clients." The viewers are told that these "tactics" to lure women into "sex slavery" are common and manipulative. The camera then cuts to an image of Alexandr "Salun" Kovali. The audience is informed that he is a notorious "sex trafficker" that has been arrested for trafficking Moldovan women across Europe. Kovali's crimes are described as heinous, particularly the way that he repeatedly "threatened, blackmailed, beat, raped" and kept his "sex slaves" in cellars. Kovali claims his innocence saying, "The girls were paid as hostesses. What they did after 5am after the club closed is none of my business. It's their private life." Host Omaar insists that Kovali's actions must have been more insidious and tells the viewers that he was sentenced to prison on "trafficking" charges for 19 years. A lawyer representing the victims in the Kovali case tells the audience:

The problem is not Moldova. The problem is about the countries where girls are exploited. Those countries' societies have a problem. Men exploit helpless girls and women, who are forced to accept prostitution in order to just support their families in Moldova, a very poor country

The camera then pans to Amsterdam and begins with Omaar interviewing Harold van Gelder, head of Amsterdam's Trafficking Squad. Omaar asks if it is possible to assess what percentage of women working in the red light districts have been "trafficked," to which van Gelder responds:

No, not possible. I can't give you that. We don't even know how many prostitutes are working in Amsterdam because we are not registering prostitutes. Why should we register them? We don't register all the butchers and the bakers in Amsterdam

But Jerrol Martens at Comensha, described as Holland's national trafficking reporting organization, says he has a clear idea. Martens tells the audience that in 2011, there were over 1000 registered victims of human "trafficking" and that 80 percent were in the sex industry. Omaar then claims that of the four million tourists that visit Holland, the majority flock to the red light districts. Omaar then interviews Toos Heemskerk, an outreach worker in the red light districts of Amsterdam. She tells the viewer:

You want to believe that they like the things that they are doing, but the story behind them is so different than what you see... How can a girl from Albania out of a village – I don't know where from – know her way to Amsterdam,



know where to live, know how to rent a window. There must be an organized crime around it.

Additionally, the viewer is constantly bombarded with images of naked women – bodies that appear against the backdrop of darkness, accompanied by sullen and somber music.

“The Al Jazeera Slavery Debates” (2011), a roundtable discussion, culminated the series, also hosted by Omaar. The panelists were Luis CdeBaca, Ambassador at Large at the US State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons; Kevin Bales, President of Free the Slaves; Joy Ezeilo, UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons; and David Batstone, President of Not for Sale. When asked by Omaar to define “trafficking” and “slavery,” the panelists had a difficult time formulating concise definitions. Bales tells the audience, “Face it. Trafficking is simply a process by which a person is placed into slavery. If they don’t end up in slavery in the end, it’s not called trafficking, it’s called smuggling.” CdeBaca says that “slavery” today is based on individual relationships of inequality, not systemic causes like that of racial slavery. In defining “trafficking,” Ezeilo tells the viewer, “It is slavery and we need to begin to call it that! That is why increasingly you’re seeing modern day slavery... If you look at the definition of trafficking in persons as contained in the Palermo protocol, it also used slave, slave-like practices, practices similar to servitude – it is in that same notion that we’re talking about.” Batstone says that society has made slavery into a murky topic when claims of migration are brought into the discussion. He tells the audience, “The moral clarity we need to end this issue is to call it slavery.” The different dimensions of “slavery” highlighted in the series are each visited briefly in the discussion. When Omaar asks CdeBaca if pressures are being put on China to end “slavery” within its prison factories, CdeBaca responds by saying, “I’m not willing to discuss or prepared to talk about it... We don’t arrest other countries. We arrest traffickers. What we do is name and shame and this notion of putting pressure to effectuate change doesn’t seem as robust as raiding a ship but it is diplomacy.” Omaar returns to the question of “sex slavery” and claims that it is “a trade in human flesh that ruins the lives of millions of young women every day.” When asked how we can begin to address the problem of “slavery,” Ezeilo says, “If countries have the right laws, the legal framework – you have to criminalize trafficking. That is important. Those who run brothels, those who keep prostitutes, those who exploit prostitutes of others... we have to deal with that.” The viewer is left with this message: “The modern form of slavery lives with us and manifests and is everywhere and is in every country.”

### **The Problem of Defining**

Al Jazeera’s *Slavery: A 21st Century Evil* (Tate & Omaar, 2011) is fraught with the problem of defining what is meant by “slavery,” “trafficking” and “smuggling.” Omaar, CdeBaca, Bales, Ezeilo, and Batstone each offer the viewer a different rendering of these phenomena. They equate these terms and have difficulty separating what each means individually. Bales’ definition is particularly telling because he tends to obscure “trafficking” and “slavery” without indicating any markers that distinguish the terms, except of course when “smuggling” is brought into the equation. The commentators then

command the viewers to appeal to “common sense” and empathy by calling “slavery” what it is - “slavery.” There is no room for nuance in this discussion primarily because each panelist represents a different organization with a diverse set of mandates and objectives – a set of strange bedfellows indeed. Furthermore, when definitions are skewed, so are the numbers that come to represent the “problem.” In the series on “sex slavery,” the viewer is given different sets of “approximate” data to account for the practice of “trafficking.” The data cited by van Gelder and Comensha tell different stories of Amsterdam, especially since van Gelder explicitly states that he cannot account for the number of “trafficked in sex slaves” since people in this line of work – and any other kind of work for that matter – are not registered. This makes it impossible to fathom any precise or approximate number. Comensha disagrees and cites a number of around 1000 (“Sex Slaves,” 2011). The viewer is left with no definite answer, which is directly related to the fact that “trafficking” and “slavery” are incomprehensibly defined. Who exactly are these mysterious bodies that are the “slaves” and “victims” of “trafficking”?

Jo Doezema (2010) argues that the “white slave” or “victim” of “trafficking” is also subject to a similar narrative that often creates an elusive subject that is not easily defined or quantified due in no small part to the way she has been context-stripped and turned into a research subject (p. 5). In the case of Al Jazeera, she has been turned into a sensationalized subject. In attempting to unpack the myths and ideologies associated with trafficking, Doezema (2005) employs a “genealogical” lens to historicize the “white slave” and her contemporary counterpart, the “victim of trafficking” (p. 9). *Sex Slaves and Discourse Masters* is concerned with the power relations that buttress constructions and formations of “white slavery” and the “trafficked body,” analyzing which discourses become dominant and which are rendered tangential. Doezema analyzes the way that myth and ideology operate as a function of society and power. While Doezema makes a compelling argument accounting for the power relations that affect the lives of sex workers, the panelists in Al Jazeera’s discussion do not. CdeBaca refers to the “problem of slavery” as a case-by-case and individual crisis, not a structural issue wrought with complex power dynamics (“The Al Jazeera Slavery Debate,” 2011).

Doezema’s work on myths and trafficking can be read in conversation with the work of Jan Boontinand (2005), who also calls on her readers to attend to the complexities that are often skewed, given our understanding and conceptual framework of “trafficking.” Boontinand (2005), like Doezema (2010), and O’Connell Davidson (2005), all point out that there is no internationally recognized definition of “trafficking.” How, then, do we make distinctions between phenomena such as voluntary migration and “trafficking,” and, further, what separates the two and how do we take methodological stances that unpack these distinctions and complex realities? What kinds of ideological assumptions lie at the base of these obscure definitions? According to Boontinand (2005), the researchers she studied were asked to treat migration and prostitution as two separate phenomena while also bearing in mind six factors: deception, force or coercion during transportation; force or coercion once arrived at the given destination; restricted freedom of mobility or choice; abuse of authority; and debt bondage (p. 177). In “The Al Jazeera Slavery Debate,” Batstone calls on viewers to stop using migration as a “euphemism” and to exercise judgment and “moral clarity” which will enable us to “call it slavery.” Batstone asks his

audience to do the exact opposite, despite the fact that he is participating in a discussion that attempts to make distinctions between “dimensions” of “slavery” and “trafficking.” Putting the work of Boontin and Doezenia in conversation, it seems as though the muddled terrain of an incomprehensive definition of “trafficking” continues to perpetuate myths and ascribe meanings, however illusory, to the bodies of women, which then become enumerated in national and international laws.

When thinking about the myths that Doezenia outlines and about Boontin’s analysis of participatory methodologies and conceptual frameworks that have been applied to discourses surrounding “trafficking”, one must carefully untangle *which* bodies can be trafficked given spatial and temporal differences, and nuances associated with the ways in which different NGOs and governments approach the “problem of trafficking.” As stated by Boontin (2005), the complex realities of these subjects is often not told and not contextualized in a way to account for the intricate processes that gave rise to these population movements, which can be readily apprehended under the broad umbrella of human “trafficking.” What of broader processes of capitalism, colonialism, and liberalism that infuse meanings into the term “trafficking,” but also how these processes dictate *who* can be trafficked and *which* bodies cannot. There is no discussion of this in Al Jazeera’s series. Similar to the way Doezenia talks about the power of myth and ideology in constructing “white slaves” and the “victim of trafficking,” Al Jazeera’s series on “slavery” imparts discursive meanings onto the bodies of “trafficked persons” in order to achieve particular ends; much like the ways in which abolitionist feminists, fundamentalist religious groups, and organizations like Free the Slaves and Not for Sale engage in practices that inscribe meanings onto the body of the elusive “victim of trafficking.” In reference to Susan Dewey’s (2008) work in her chapter “Feminist Ethnographic Research in Times of Crisis,” when examining sex work, sometimes what we are left with are “hollow bodies” that are nameless and faceless under the distinct tropes of hegemonic categories, such as “trafficked body” or “migrant.” These categories invariably signal to us *which* bodies can and must be saved and which bodies do not occupy that realm of “victimhood” because of the meanings that come to constitute these “hollow” spaces.

### **A Discourse of Oppression Forged by “Strange Bedfellows”**

Bernstein (2010) tackles the ways that anti-trafficking discourse has been taken up by evangelical and religious groups and branches of feminism particularly concerned with the anti-trafficking and abolitionist movement in a political push for what she calls “carceral paradigms” and “militarized humanitarianism” (p. 47). Josephine Ho (2011) also discusses the way in which disparate social issues begin to merge under a discourse of “anti-trafficking” leading to the construction of a slew of disciplinary mechanisms in Taiwan, embodying tenets of global governance. Through the utilization of a human rights discourse, this paradigm makes central the criminal justice system in a move that justifies state interventionist policy. Given the ways that “trafficked persons” are situated as “victims” and the “traffickers” as the “perpetrators,” the discourse around “trafficking” has become a moral crusade that is encompassed by processes of criminalization and incarceration (Bernstein, 2010; Goldman, 1998). Panelist Ezeilo’s comments from “The Al

Jazeera Slavery Debate” (2011) are a prime example of carceral paradigms, as she believes that the “traffickers” should also be arrested and imprisoned for their “crimes.” Nothing is said at this roundtable that might begin to undo these essentialized categories of “victim” and “perpetrator”; instead, the viewer is left to accept these reductive terms.

Rutvica Andrijasevic’s (2007) article also unpacks how anti-trafficking images produced by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) constructs symbolic and essentialized renderings of women and men, “victims” and “perpetrators” respectively – prompting us to examine how violence operates at the discursive level. Both Bernstein and Andrijasevic ask us to interrogate how these anti-trafficking campaigns – forged by feminist abolitionists, evangelicals, and the IOM – produce stereotyped frames of analysis that reproduce social inequalities. The authors examine the constitutive nature of the universalizing and essentialist category of “woman,” urging the reader to undo this monolith. Al Jazeera’s series portrays these women as only “victims.” Moreover, the images shown by Al Jazeera and the campaigns forged by the IOM are eerily similar in the ways that they reproduce hypersexualized images of battered women, “victims” of “trafficking.” The Al Jazeera interview (“Sex Slaves,” 2011) with the outreach worker Heemskerk speaks to this association with “trafficking” and a “cult of victimhood.” Heemskerk cannot fathom how a young woman growing up in rural Albania ends up in Amsterdam. For Heemskerk, something insidious must have brought her to the Red Light District. Moreover, there is a common grammar of complete and utter despair and poverty at play when discussing nations in Eastern Europe, such as Albania and Moldova (“Sex Slaves,” 2011). Andrijasevic (2007) also takes note of this when assessing the IOM campaigns launched in the Baltic states. There is an implied hierarchy that is at work here between the wealth narratives of western Europe and the discourse of impoverishment of Eastern Europe; these myths are further played out on the bodies of women, men, and children in sex work within these contexts.

### **What About Agency?**

In the final section of this essay, I want to specifically highlight the agentive practices of sex workers as detailed in Amalia Cabezas’ *Economies of Desire* (2009). I want to move away from Al Jazeera’s reductive and monolithic understanding of sex work in order to show how women have utilized their sexuality in ways that rupture these common misunderstandings. Cabezas (2009) unpacks the “erotic underpinnings of transnational tourism” and the diverse strategies employed by Cuban and Dominican people involved in “sexual-affective relationships” with travelers, who are predominantly from the west (pp. 10-12). Cabezas contextualizes and examines the nuances that are often silenced in sex tourism discourse as she provokes and seeks to complicate the dichotomous stories that are told about the lives of these workers in southern spaces, with a focus on Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

In chapter four, “Daughters of Yemaya and Other Luchadoras,” Cabezas shows how sex work practices can be apprehended, transformed, and aligned with agentive methods of survival by women in Cuba through the utilization of the myth of Yemaya, the goddess of the ocean and a symbol of motherhood. Yemaya – a figure in the religious and cultural

system of Santeria (practices based on a fusion of West African Orishas and Catholic saints) – is considered the deity of “universal motherhood,” hence her title as the “great mother” (Cabezas, 2009, p. 116). Yemaya is considered a figure that protects mothers and children. Some of the women Cabezas interviewed believed that they were protected by Yemaya when their pleas for help to ameliorate their living conditions were answered through the coming of tourists through the benefits – social, economic, and emotional – that were rendered to them by foreigners in these sexual-affective relationships. Of the way her prayers to Yemaya were answered, Naomi, a single mother of two, recounts:

‘I would cry and pray that Yemaya would find me something so that I could take care of my children, to help me find something to eat, money, a good job, anything. I had been there, crying, with my pain, for about an hour, when an Italian man approached me. He asked me what was wrong, but I could not answer because I was crying so hard. I was finally able to tell him about my situation. I took him to my house, which is not really a house, but a modest room... Just like that he gave me money...and bought us food and many other necessities.’ (Cabezas, 2009, p. 113)

According to Cabezas, these stories that sing the praises of Yemaya – like the one that Naomi offers – represent what she calls a *tactical sex* strategy or a means of conceptualizing sex work that is not dependent on essentialist ideas of identity and work. In this particular instance, myth serves as a survival mechanism used to carve out paths that allow women the space to break binary conceptions of sex work that are traditionally rendered as entirely “good” or wholly “bad” in order to be participants in and mutual beneficiaries of sexual-affective relations. These women of Cuba and the Dominican Republic do not retell their stories under the purview of “slavery.” A narrative of this kind is entirely missing from Al Jazeera’s series.

The first subtitle of chapter four, “Never Whores or *Putas*” (Cabezas, 2009) points out the recuperative characteristic of the myth of Yemaya. On the one hand, Yemaya reaffirms ideas of “woman as mother and caregiver” through the disavowal of “sex workers as whores.” On the other hand, Yemaya rejects the derogatory terms affiliated with sex work, while reaffirming the potentiality of “woman as provider for her kin.” Moreover, there is an element of respectability attached to the ways that Yemaya is apprehended as a deity that, if worshipped, will allow women to fulfill kinship responsibilities as mothers, wives, sisters and daughters through sexual-affective encounters as a way of silencing the stigma of the “whore.” Cabezas’ ideas of tactical sex are salient in the ways that they describe the highly intricate and distinct survival strategies employed by women in these sexual-affective relations, which are a far cry from the situations that we are presented with in the Al Jazeera series on “slavery.”

### **Reconceptualizing Work**

In her conclusion of the collection *Sex Work Matters: Exploring Money, Power and Intimacy in the Sex Industry*, Melissa Ditmore (2010) tells us that we need to engage in a reconceptualization of sex work in order to garner a thorough understanding of the realities

faced by the people involved in this labour practice. She writes:

It is common for people to grow up to work in the same economic sector as their parents, and sex work is no exception. This is particularly true in places where there are established communities of sex workers, with sex workers living and working in the same neighborhoods for generations. Whether you accept or deplore this state of affairs, it must be acknowledged, and the children of sex workers recognize that rights that are won or lost for their parents today will affect their own lives tomorrow. (pp. 241-242)

Understanding the material realities of the people in sex work is crucial in a world of campaigns that tout human rights. Al Jazeera's *Slavery: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evil* does little to give voice to these realities. Moreover, when we discuss sex work, our discussions often tend to pivot around a rights-based discourse. Ditmore issues a plea for us to "push boundaries in sex work activism and research" (2010, p. 242). What might this look like? What might it mean to not only be inclusive of but also to transcend a rights-based discourse – especially since "rights" are more or less tied to laws, which may be pieces of legislation that are not intended to achieve substantive change in the regulation of sex work? How do we go about pushing these boundaries? This kind of work begins by holding narratives of "trafficking" and "slavery" to account, like the ones presented by Al Jazeera. In rupturing this discourse of "trafficking," real stories emerge; stories like the ones presented by Cabezas – stories that tell us about the ways in which women, children, and men negotiate their everyday experiences and engagement with sex work.

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## **My Father, the Hero: Paternal Masculinities in Contemporary Sex Trafficking Films**

*Jennifer Jozwiak<sup>1</sup>*

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In *Sex Slaves and Discourse Masters*, Jo Doezema (2010) suggests that contemporary sex trafficking narratives operate as modern-day versions of the sensationalized stories of white slavery that proliferated in Britain and the United States around the turn of the century. In these stories, traffickers are consistently coded as foreigners who permeate western nations with the express purpose of abducting young women and girls. These women and girls have often made the dangerous move of stepping outside domestic perimeters – leaving their home, or their home communities – and subsequently become unwitting but lucrative capital investments in the international sex industry. Sex trafficking narratives, like their antecedent stories of white slavery, act as warnings that highlight the perils associated with transgressing boundaries of both gender and nation.

This presentation emerges partly in response to Doezema's book, which is concerned with the ideological functions stories of sex trafficking perform. Here, I want to suggest that we look to the ways that men and masculinities figure in sex trafficking narratives, and to urge that close critical attention to the specific roles men play might uncover additional social and political meanings of these popularly disseminated stories. Recent filmic renditions of the contemporary sex trafficking narrative appear to take up a concern with how American men in particular are positioned within the global sex trade. This turn to men is demonstrated first through a difference in the gendered viewpoint of the narratives: while the stories Doezema draws on are largely told from the point of view of trafficked women and typically reveal what are fundamentally tales of tragedy, films such as *Taken* (2008, dir. Pierre Morel) and *Holly* (2006, dir. Guy Moshe), released within the last decade, articulate a narrative of sex trafficking through the perspective of the male characters that focuses on the rescue of women and girls. In *Taken*, for example, it is protagonist Bryan Mills' (Liam Neeson) frantic search for his abducted daughter that introduces the complex international problem of sex trafficking to spectators. In these films, then, it is men, not women, who serve as our entry-point into sex trafficking narratives, and it is through their particular gendered experiences that we glean information about the clandestine operations of this international business of sex. As I argue here, these films construct American men as international protectors of women and children, and complex and sometimes contradictory forms of male masculinity thus emerge tied to family and nation. By turning

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our focus to the representations of men and masculinities in film versions of sex trafficking narratives, the story seems to shift from one of tragedy and horror to one of rescue and salvation.

First, a brief word on definitions: by male masculinity, I intend here an unfixed and heterogeneous category that is bound by social relations, and which manifests through attributes that change according to time and place. R.W. Connell (1995) suggests that there is a hierarchy of masculinities, rooted in men's domination of women. Hegemonic masculinity is a powerful and axiomatic masculinity that normalizes patriarchal relations and is mobile, its contents shifting in accordance with cultural values. When the conditions for patriarchy change, hegemonic masculinity transforms to guarantee men's dominance. In this way, the face of hegemonic masculinity evolves, taking up different forms in different contexts. While masculinity that is hegemonic is regulated by the overarching structure of society, subordinate masculinity is constructed through relations between groups of men. Masculinities that have less access to power than hegemonic masculinity – howsoever power is constituted in a given time and place – are rendered subordinate. Subordinate masculinity is thus constituted through an inability to meet the standards of hegemonic masculinity, and men and boys who fail to meet this criterion produce a subordinate version of maleness (Connell, 1995, p.77).

Masculinity is thus a slippery entity, configured through a fixed structure of relations with inconsistent content. When I talk about masculinities, then, I am not referring to a stable set of attributes, such as stoicism or strength, though these are attributes typically associated with masculinity. Rather, I am talking about a set of social relations that categorize individuals based on their access to power. Moreover, because of the way that hegemonic masculinity is necessarily historically and culturally bound, dominant value systems emerge tied to these particular configurations of men's masculinity. That is, by looking at how a culture idealizes certain versions of masculinity, we can begin to decode the values that underpin that culture.

In the logic of *Taken*, hegemonic masculinity is constructed through the ability to successfully penetrate, navigate and control familial arenas in service of the nation. This film largely marks fatherhood as a masculine dividend by conceptualizing the narrative progress of the main character from outside to inside this prescribed gender role as a shift from subordinate to hegemonic masculinity. It is thus the failure of this film's protagonist to act as a proper father that challenges his masculinity at the beginning of the story, and it is his ability to adequately accede to this role at the end of the narrative that recuperates him.

Bryan Mill's masculinity is initially found wanting because he is unable to establish a meaningful relationship with his daughter. The film introduces Bryan by way of his estranged daughter's seventeenth birthday party. In this sequence, Bryan arrives at the opulent home of his former wife and her new husband with a gift for Kim (Maggie Grace), his daughter, in tow. Bryan, formerly a government agent (and here, we can begin to link Bryan's masculinity with wider ideas of national security), has recently retired and relocated to California in an attempt to reconnect with Kim. His gift – a karaoke machine,

recalling Kim's childhood fantasies of becoming a singer – is swiftly overshadowed by the pony Kim's new and affluent father has given her. In the scene following the party, we see Bryan at home, carefully pasting a new photograph of Kim into what appears to be an album comprised solely of images of his daughter's past birthdays. The images in this album point to a limited relationship between Bryan and Kim: the collection documents the passage of time, but because the photographs seem to have been taken out of a sense of duty, they do not seem to reflect the sort of shared memories that are built through years invested in a meaningful relationship – that is, the sort of relationship that Bryan appears to desire. Bryan's photograph album thus appears to mark a lack: it is the absence of his fatherhood that is preserved in its pages.

It is when he rescues Kim, abducted by sex traffickers while she is on vacation in Paris, that Bryan's masculinity progresses from subordinate to hegemonic. In the process of locating and saving his daughter, Bryan infiltrates an organized crime ring, violently murders seven men in a confrontation at a Parisian brothel, tortures a man through electrocution for information and evades and overrides the Parisian government. Fatherly love indeed. But this is exactly the point: while this shopping list of violence and political power seemingly gestures toward conventional conceptions of hegemonic masculinity, what I want to suggest here is that it is not the actions themselves but the fact that these actions are animated by Bryan's paternal search-and-rescue mission that renders them manly. Bloodshed and political insurgency in *Taken* are conceptualized as masculine precisely because these actions help Bryan rescue his daughter. While these actions may not look paternal on the surface, they are in fact ways that Bryan takes up a paternal role.

And, by the end of the film, he is successful: following two altercations, Bryan and his daughter are reunited. By the end of the narrative, there is a sense that their relationship has changed, and for the better: the film concludes with Bryan and Kim safely back home in the United States, Bryan introducing his daughter to a popular songstress. By helping her to realize her childhood fantasies of becoming a singer, Bryan is taking part in Kim's transition to adulthood, and thus stepping comfortably into a more traditional fatherhood role.

The wider point I want to begin to bring forward here is the way that fatherhood figures in the national register. I suggest that in sex trafficking films, men are constructed as fatherly heroes and national representatives in order to reinforce notions of the United States as a dominant and paternal global power. In *Taken*, paternal masculinity is linked to nationalism through state agencies. Bryan is a former state security agent and is thus constructed as a protector of the nation. This is mobilized through the rescue narrative the film takes up. In the process of saving his daughter from sex traffickers, for example, Bryan travels from the United States to Paris, where he uncovers a covert partnership between French state officials and an Albanian organized crime ring, gesturing toward the internationality of sexual commerce. Here, then, the long arm of the American law extends into the global register: in rescuing Kim from the international sex trade, Bryan displays a paternal masculinity that ultimately works to prop up the fatherly status of the United States.

Moreover, following Sherene Razack (1995), I want to suggest that American men in modern sex trafficking films are also coded masculine precisely because they penetrate spaces marked by sexual corruption and emerge unscathed, and that it is through this impenetrability of paternal masculinity that the United States is narratively constructed as a privileged and powerful nation. In her discussion of masculinity, sex work and spatiality, Razack highlights the way that hegemonic masculinity is constituted through temporary penetration into spaces marked degenerate: for those men who enter deviant zones and return unmarred, masculinity – and masculine privilege – is affirmed and secured. We can take up this framework to make sense of the boundary transgressions that take place in *Taken*. In this narrative, the entry of the protagonist into the corrupt sphere of the international sex trade to rescue a child does not contaminate him. Indeed, it is through his journey into deviant spaces that an idealized masculinity is confirmed in the first place. Further, because paternal masculinity is wed to American nationalism, the United States emerges as a bold and impenetrable entity.

Finally, I want to briefly discuss the way that non-American men in *Taken* and *Holly* are consistently coded as sexually egregious and how Patrick (Ron Livingston), the American protagonist in *Holly*, thus comes to be defined through sexual restraint. In these films, the men who purchase sex from young women and girls – men who, in the economy of the sex trafficking narrative, are thus sexually deviant and morally corrupt – are also frequently marked as non-American. In *Taken*, for example, the most visible procurer is the man who buys Kim: this is Sheik Raman (Nabil Massad), who appears toward the end of the narrative. Sheik Raman's time onscreen is short, and we only see him in a brief altercation with Bryan. But in his limited screen time, Sheik Raman takes up a lot of ideological screen space: because he is the most visible procurer we see, he thus comes to stand in for the sort of man who would buy another man's daughter. When we see Sheik Raman, then, standing behind Kim with a knife held to her throat, and he appears violent, menacing and visibly Middle Eastern, we see a man who has been coded monstrous by the logic of the film. And, because Sheik Raman carries the representative weight of sexual procurers in *Taken*, there is a risk of ideological slippage that might mark all Middle Eastern men sexually monstrous.

In *Holly*, sexual proclivity for young women and girls is represented primarily through the character of Klaus (Udo Kier). *Holly* follows the relationship that develops between an American man, Patrick, and Holly (Thuy Nguyen), a young Vietnamese girl who works in a Cambodian brothel. Angered when he sees the way that Holly is exploited, Patrick takes up the responsibility of rescuing her from her circumstances. After Holly is sold from a local brothel in Cambodia, Patrick traces her movements to Vietnam in an effort to save her from a life of sex work.<sup>2</sup> It is at the brothel in Cambodia that we first encounter Klaus, who is marked Eastern European by his name and his accent. The film presents Klaus as sexually egregious – he engages in sexual activities with adolescent girls – and maps this nefarious sexuality onto the body of an Eastern European man. In the same way as the

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<sup>2</sup> This story is thus also embedded in the wider notion of America as hero: we here have an American man trying to save another nation's daughter.

representation of Sheik Raman in *Taken* risks marking all Middle Eastern men sexually monstrous, the corrupt sexuality of Klaus in *Holly* may shift uncomfortably to the bodies of Eastern European men in general.

This depiction of non-American men as sexually deviant ultimately works to highlight the restrained sexuality of *Holly*'s American protagonist. When Patrick finally locates Holly at a brothel in Cambodia, it appears that her experiences in sexual commerce have changed her, and she no longer desires the sort of escape Patrick offers. Rather, Holly seems to covet the economic power he might provide: further in the narrative, Holly informs Patrick that she wants to go to America with him and get married. Here, the film points to the particular gendered power dynamic that structures Patrick's relationship with Holly. For Holly, rescue looks like marriage and a life in America, while for Patrick, this version of salvation constitutes another form of oppression. However, Patrick discovers that Holly's sexual propositions are not altogether unwelcome: in a sequence during the night, we see Patrick arrive back at the hotel where they are staying and lay in bed next to Holly. She turns to face him, and the camera holds them both in a medium shot, light flickering in from the window rhythmically illuminating their faces. The image lingers a bit too long, and begins to take on a sexual connotation. Then, Patrick stands abruptly, and the next scene finds him in the proverbial cold shower, the film here pointing towards Patrick's desperate attempt to quell his desire for Holly. Throughout the rest of the narrative, Patrick maintains a platonic relationship with Holly. What I want to suggest, then, is that it is this ability to control inappropriate sexual desire that marks Patrick's masculinity in this film.

My argument here has been three-fold: first, that in *Taken*, hegemonic masculinity emerges through fatherhood, and as this film's protagonist moves through the narrative, he learns how to take up a paternal role and thus recuperates his previously troubled masculinity. Second, that this paternal masculinity is linked to wider notions of nationalism, and it is in this way that sex trafficking films seem to work to establish the United States as a symbolic fatherly nation. Finally, I argued that men outside the boundary of the United States are regularly marked with a nefarious sexuality in contemporary sex trafficking films, and that this deviant sexuality is pushed up against the chaste sexuality of Patrick in *Holly* in order to highlight the way that Patrick's masculinity is constructed through the ability to control sexual desire.

Although young women and girls seem to form the narrative centre of contemporary sex trafficking films – it is, after all, their rescue that propels the plot – these are primarily stories about masculinity constructed through fatherhood and national heroism. We thus need to continue to think critically about the social and political values embedded in films like *Taken* and *Holly*, and to consider the wider implications of these stories.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Special thanks to Shaunna Bruton, Darja Davydova and Kimberly Veller for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

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## **Anti-Sex-Trade/Trafficking Campaigns in American Cultural Media: The Problematic Support for Abolitionism**

*Amy de Blois<sup>1</sup>*

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It seems as though everyone has an opinion on and feels as though they have legitimate knowledge about the global sex trade. It is a topic that we are enthralled by and want to learn more about. Recognizing this urge, the media distributes information through a variety of avenues, presenting news and stories connected to the global sex trade on a regular basis, making us feel as though we are “in the know.”

I argue here that by being presented with these often-sensationalized stories, we develop the false idea that we are well versed and knowledgeable about this controversial topic. In reality, however, the majority of us tend to voice our ideas and opinions without having a legitimate education on the global sex trade, which can be harmful for those actually involved in it, overshadowing the voices of those who might be able to help us develop a fair and open-minded position. The information that is presented to us through forms of media, such as mainstream films, are often one sided, with anti-sex trade campaigns raging at the forefront. Sensationalism and the depiction of the terrors of this industry have produced a moral panic and push for abolitionism, causing many members of the general public to be unaware of the multiple frameworks surrounding the global sex trade. The abolitionist framework seems to dominate the American mainstream, arguing that all aspects of the sex industry be removed, made illegal, and abolished.

As Alison Jobe (2008) argues in her article “Sexual Trafficking: A New Sexual Story,” “sexual trafficking stories [are] frequently recounted in the news media, TV and film,” ( p. 66) but only those stories that show the negative sides to this trade are presented, with the media frequently ignoring stories that support, accept, or at least attempt to understand the sex trade. The idea that we are all potential victims of this heinous crime is constantly reiterated, inducing a fear in audience members and therefore an even greater desire for abolitionism and condemnation of those involved in this business. With the media’s problematic portrayal of the global sex trade, abolitionism becomes viewed as the only way that we can remain safe, while ensuring that we keep our children protected.

To understand the problems that arise from the media’s sensationalism of the global sex trade, I examine two fictional films, Pierre Morel’s *Taken* (2008) and Guy Moshe’s *Holly* (2006), paying particular attention to the portrayal of children in the sex trade. I argue that the prevailing abolitionist perspective within these films does not reflect all aspects of this

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controversial industry, and therefore needs to be challenged and reviewed with a critical eye.

It is first important to form a clear understanding of the abolitionist framework in relation to the global sex trade, which supports the fight against all aspects of the sex industry. In her chapter “Prostitution and Sex Work Studies,” Kamala Kempadoo (2004) argues that the “abolitionist framework first gained prominence during the latter part of the nineteenth century, and drew from Christianity and its vision of a moral society” ( p. 257). Since then, this framework has continued to develop, arguing that the global sex trade is a social problem that needs to be destroyed. Advocates of the abolitionist framework believe that all areas relating to the global sex trade are problematic and threatening, and that those involved in this business are in dire need of saving and protection. The abolitionist framework typically characterizes women as innocent, young, and naïve victims, coerced by criminal and immoral men to enter the dangerous realm of the sex industry. Though abolitionists claim to come to the aid of “desperate victims,” they usually end up creating harm, erasing the agency of those involved in this business.

Sensationalism in the media is another term that needs to be discussed before proceeding with this paper’s arguments. The media aims to shock and entertain, with the primary goal of maintaining the interest of their audiences in their brand of stories, news, and other media products. As argued by Hardy, De Swert, and Sadicarus (2010), “in defining sensationalism, scholars and media critics assume that it provokes the senses and emotions of audience members, thus attracting the attention of a larger audience” (p.1). Sensationalism is not only defined by what the news or story is about, but also how it is presented. In order for a story to make headlines, it must focus on the demands of the audience, while keeping viewers entertained. While sensationalism has caused the public to be aware of many issues within their community, this often exaggerated and scandalous form of media has been argued to be immoral and harmful, “violating social boundaries of decency and respect and edging out more important public affairs reporting” (Slattery, 1994, p. 6). Among a variety of topics, those stories relating to the global sex trade and sex trafficking tend to be hugely sensationalized and given a negative approach, invoking a panic within viewers.

With abolitionism and sensationalism defined, it is now time to introduce the films *Taken* and *Holly* in order to analyze how their sensational content has contributed to the abolitionist framework, and the problems that ensue. *Taken* was a huge Hollywood success with its messages therefore reiterated to a large audience. This fictional film follows the character of Bryan Mills (Liam Neeson) in his search for his seventeen-year-old daughter Kim (Maggie Grace), who was “taken” by foreigners and forcibly sold into the sex trade, while on a vacation to Paris with a friend. Mills, then, must race against time to both save his daughter and demand justice.

The film *Holly* is quite similar to *Taken*, as it also follows an American man in his search to save a young girl from a life of forced sexual slavery. In this film, Patrick (Ron Livingston), an American who has been living in Cambodia for several years, encounters twelve-year-old Holly (Thuy Nguyen), who was smuggled across the Vietnamese border in

order to become employed as a sex worker in a Cambodian red light district. Patrick forms a friendship with Holly, and when she is sold to another child trafficker, he embarks on a frantic journey in hopes of freeing her from what he believes to be a horrific situation.

The first theme that I would like to discuss in relation to these films is that of children's involvement in the sex industry. I argue that due to the way that children have been portrayed in these films and other forms of media, it has become difficult for members of our society to not immediately form negative opinions regarding the sex industry, and concerning those who enable it. Preconceived notions surrounding this topic therefore seem inevitable, and outrage is often formed when thinking about the countless children who take part in this business all around the world. As Julia O'Connell Davidson (2005) argues in her book *Children in the Global Sex Trade*, many people feel "physically sickened by media coverage of cases of child sexual abuse," and in addition view the paedophile as "one of the most loathed and feared figures in the contemporary Western world" (p. 5). These perspectives are presented throughout *Taken* and *Holly* and reflect the popular belief that the sex trade should be abolished.

The introduction of *Taken* frames the victim of the film as an innocent, happy and youthful child, making her eventual deceptive capture into the sex trade seem even more shocking and frightening. Dreaming about his daughter's fifth birthday on the date of her seventeenth birthday, the male hero of this story still views his teenage daughter as his little girl who he will always have the duty of protecting. Throughout the film, the young Kim often refers to her father as "Daddy," while Bryan refers to his daughter as "Kimmy," referring to Kim's youth, despite the fact that she is only a year away from becoming a legal adult. Her youth and naivety is continuously emphasized throughout the film, presenting to the audience a likeable "all-American girl next door." Kim is represented as a child who is rendered a helpless victim upon being sold into the sex industry. With the presentation of an innocent child instead of a rebellious teenager, I argue that the film attempted to appeal to the morality of the audience, hoping to traumatize them upon viewing her entrapment. The coding of Kim as a child causes her forced sexual slavery to become even more disturbing for viewers.

As in *Taken*, youth and innocence also play an important role in the film *Holly*. The madam of the brothel in which Holly lives constantly attempts to entice potential customers to buy the inexperienced and virginal twelve year old girl, who is the main character of this story. "You like?" she asks Patrick with a smirk on her face, "She's still a virgin. Not yet open. I give you good price." Being a virgin, the young girl is marketed as a prized and highly coveted item. As Margaret Allum (2000) states, "the appeal of 'deflowering' another is psychological, a triumph of power over innocence. The man who buys sex with a virgin is purchasing merely the knowledge that he and he alone has been her first" (p.1). Another author, Aaron Sachs (1994), also discusses the perceived prize of virginity, stating that "customers at brothels have been asking for younger and younger girls, believing that they are more likely to be free of disease" (p. 24). Holly's virginity underscores her youth and innocence, portraying her as young, inexperienced, and inappropriately placed in the sex trade.



Further examples of youth continue to present themselves throughout *Holly*, such as in the scene where several five-year-old children ask Patrick if he wants them to perform oral sex on him. One of the children frantically tells Patrick that if she does not make money, her mother will beat her, presenting the potential horrors of the sex trade in a hugely sensational and upsetting way. Patrick later makes it clear to Klaus, a man who has been engaging in sexual activity with underage youth at the brothel, that he views men who buy sex from underage girls as criminals who ought to be condemned and punished, again presenting abolitionist sentiments.

Through sensationalized media such as this, we have been socialized to view paedophiles as disgusting monsters, such as how Patrick views Klaus, obsessed with oppressive and harmful sex with children. O'Connell Davidson's arguments that for the most part, paedophiles do not actually wish to harm children and it is not, in fact, they who purchase sex from children the most often, is never put forth in this film, nor are any other arguments that might provide support to the sex trade. *Holly* only explores the negative aspects of this business, keeping with the common sentiment that paedophiles are not to be trusted and should instead be condemned and considered dangerous. That said, the potential for danger and violence present itself constantly in these films. These themes are over-sensationalized and depicted as inevitable, therefore advancing the idea that it is impossible to safely engage in sex work. In her chapter, "Throwaway Women," Kathleen Barry (1984) argues that female sexual slavery is a social condition that affects all women who do not have control over their everyday circumstances (p.121). With female sexual slavery, she argues, women become subject to sexual violence and exploitation. While the women involved suffer, the perpetrators profit. Similarly, another abolitionist feminist, Catharine MacKinnon, also conflates the sex trade with violence and exploitation. Quoting fellow abolitionist Kathleen Barry, MacKinnon compares prostitution to rape, claiming, "The only difference in rape and prostitution is time. One ends, the other doesn't" (2009). From this statement, it is clear that MacKinnon believes that violence and force can never be removed from the sex trade, which presents itself time and time again in *Taken* and *Holly*, creating an image of the sex industry that is damaging, hazardous, and morally wrong. In his journey to save his daughter, Bryan Mills ends up killing thirty-five men, which indicates the potential for a high level of danger and violence within the sex trade industry. Sensing danger, Mills at first forbids his daughter to go on vacation to Europe, claiming that "you have no idea what the world is like," refusing to sign her underage permission form. As Jenny Kitzinger (2008) argues, "the most common form of abuse usually comes from those that we know, who we believe to be trusted and 'well-adjusted' adults" (p. 139). Despite this fact, journalists perpetuate unhelpful stereotypes which highlight the threat from "psychotic" strangers, creating a fear in our minds about the "other" and the "unknown." "Stranger-danger" is reiterated in countless media stories and intertwined throughout everyday public and social conversation (Kitzinger, 2008, p. 139, p.152), making us feel as though in order to remain protected, it is necessary that we create rigid boundaries. The possibility of danger instills fear for our own lives, for the lives of our loved ones, and a wish to remove any potential threat.

One of the most disturbing scenes of violence taking place in this film occurs when Bryan searches through a house that he was told he might find Kim. In each of the five rooms that

he checks, girls are lying on beds, either passed out or dead. All of the girls in this scene wear very little clothing, and the bed sheets only cover half of their bodies, allowing for as much skin as possible to show, making their bodies visually available. As Rutvica Andrijasevic (2007) argues in her article “Beautiful Dead Bodies,” images found in anti-trafficking campaigns often view the “female body as a spectacle” (p. 39) and therefore on display with the purpose of being gazed at. The women found in the beds in *Taken* are displayed as passive objects, placed within the confines of “victim” status. Despite the fact that they are immobile, captive and dead, the female bodies in this scene are disturbingly eroticized, becoming an object of the male gaze (Andrijasevic, 2007, p. 42). The instances of violence and danger found throughout *Taken* are meant to shock audiences, exaggerating the hazards that can be, but are not always, present in the sex trade. Nevertheless, in this film, danger is depicted as a logical repercussion of sex work, ever-present in this industry.

The sensationalized theme of danger also presents itself throughout *Holly*. Instead of discussing those scenes, however, I would like to instead focus on how trafficking is discussed in the introduction of this film, given by Andy Prozes, CEO of the LexusNexus Group, a legal corporation that helped sponsor the making of this film. Prozes’ introduction is meant to incite just as much fear about sex trafficking as the content of the film does, which can be deduced from his grave and warning tone. As stated by Prozes:

The film you are about to watch is, I think, going to keep you awake at night. This movie happens to take place in Cambodia, but quite frankly, it could happen in almost any city around the world – perhaps in your own town.

Through this introduction alone, the audience is expected to become fearful of the fact that, no matter where we live, we are all potential victims of trafficking, and therefore, it is necessary that we work together, not only to save those who are already suffering in this trade, but also to save ourselves from forced sexual slavery. Prozes clearly supports the abolitionist framework, asking viewers to “get involved” and “help fight situations like *Holly* from occurring.”

As can be seen when analyzing *Taken* and *Holly*, various forms of American cultural media have created sensationalized stories of the global sex trade, in hopes that by inducing fear and panic among viewers, the abolitionist framework will continue to expand. This sensationalizing of narratives is problematic, as it does not show all sides of the debates that surround the controversial issues at hand. Stories offering a different perspective need to be given the opportunity to be presented in mainstream media, such as those in support of the global sex trade and by actual workers themselves, in order for members of our society to form knowledgeable and fair opinions. While it cannot be denied that children are involved in the global sex trade, and that there is a great amount of violence and danger in some aspects of this industry, we must also keep in mind that these are not the only factors that make up this business. We must therefore look towards other sources in order to receive more information about this controversial business.

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# Research on Sex Trafficking From Central and Eastern Europe and Politics of Belonging in the European Union

*Darja Davydova<sup>1</sup>*

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## Introduction

In the European Union (EU), Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) occupies a peripheral place in political, media and academic discourses on “sex trafficking.”<sup>2</sup> These discourses usually describe CEE as a point of departure and transit, as a place from where migrants flee difficult economic and political situations, a source of cheap sexual labour and a place of organized crime and corruption. They also usually perceive CEE citizens as culturally different and recovering from “transitional problems.” Thus, even though CEE nations joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 and by doing so, committed to democracy and human rights protection, their cultural belonging continues to be questioned in discourses on migration.

In this paper I demonstrate that the academic discourse on sex trafficking – in parallel with political discourse – is politicized and related to the ideology of nationalism, surveillance of borders and exclusionary politics of migration control. I argue that the underlying assumptions about the CEE region affect how researchers focus their projects on migration over the Eastern border and how sex workers’ migration is constructed as a problem requiring tighter border control and awareness raising among those who are perceived to be high-risk populations.

## Research on Sex Trafficking From Central and Eastern Europe

We often think of academic research as objective, value-free and presenting us with results that describe reality. The research on sex trafficking, however, is a perfect example of how underlying beliefs can bring us to completely different conclusions. Within anthropological and sociological research I identify three main research frameworks to examine and explain sex trafficking from CEE countries: the criminological framework, the framework of economic and political development, and the migration studies framework. These three types of research have different starting points in planning fieldwork, choosing a sample of participants and drawing conclusions. The conclusions

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<sup>2</sup> Here and further I refer to “sex trafficking” as a discursive construction within political, media and academic discourse and, as Jo Doezema proposes (2010), as a myth. To simplify I further omit inverted commas, however, I continue to refer to sex trafficking as a discursive construction within dominant discourse.

that this research brings us to can be seen in relation to more specific political frameworks of dealing with sex trafficking, such as abolitionism, the criminal justice approach and the sex worker rights framework. This demonstrates that the research inevitably has political implications.

### *Criminological framework*

The research on sex trafficking published in journals of criminal studies as well as research conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) often notes that the number of persons trafficked from CEE countries is steadily increasing (e.g. Laczko et al, 2002; Lazaridis, 2001; IOM, 1995). This increasing number is explained to be the result of the fall of the Soviet Union, transitional changes and poverty in Eastern Europe, loosening of the borders and the existence of organized networks of traffickers and criminals who bring women from poorer countries to the west in order to exploit them. The research conducted under the criminological framework focuses on illegal activities, such as illegal border crossing, violence against women, corruption and criminal networks. As a result of this approach, women's movement across the border and participation in the sex industry is perceived not as individual activity or choice but as an activity initiated and organized by criminal networks. By focusing on illegal border crossing, this approach overlooks the situations in which women cross borders legally without any assistance, but become undocumented migrants and/or find themselves in exploitative situations later as they overstay the length of their visa.

The research focusing on the criminality of sex workers' migration and violence against women usually collects data based on information provided by law enforcement agencies, police forces, border police, representatives of ministries of justice, agencies assisting victims of trafficking, or in some cases, members of organized crime groups (e.g. IOM, 2004; Hughes & Denisova, 2001; Lazaridis, 2001). This data collection supports the expectations that researchers have about possible findings of their projects. It influences how researchers draw conclusions about migration for sex work from cases of violence against women, involving smuggling, physical isolation and emotional control of women by third parties. Needless to say, this planning of research overlooks the systematic differences between those sex workers who are assisted by police or social services and those who decline or have no access to assistance (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2010, p. 7).

This type of research has significant political implications. Because the research emphasizes covert and exploitative criminal practices and the "transnational political criminal nexus originating in CEE countries" (Hughes & Denisova, 2011, p. 43), it runs the risk of reiterating the perception of the inherent criminality of Central and Eastern European men and the victimization of migrant women. The outcome of this research is usually a proposition to increase migration controls that would make it less profitable to run trafficking businesses (Surtees, 2008, p. 39; Lazaridis, 2001, p. 94). As scholar and activist of sex workers' rights, Jo Doezenia (2010) argues in her analysis of international politics in sex trafficking, the fear of organized crime on the part of the international community forms the ground for development of such documents as "The Protocol to Suppress, Prevent and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children" to

the “UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime.”

### *Developmental framework*

There are a number of studies which attribute the increase in trafficking from and through post-Soviet countries to the overall downward development of the region, economic deprivation, social expectations and patriarchal control over women. The conceptualization of migration for sex work as a problem is usually inherent in this research and the research begins with explanations of the sources of this problem.

A notable example of this type of analysis of female sex trafficking is the study on the rising global sex trade by Kathleen Barry (1995). Barry links the proliferation of sex industries to industrialization and explains that the aggravating impoverishment of CEE women and girls together with the end of communism opened the way for pornography, prostitution and sexual exploitation. Barry portrays the CEE region as corrupted by the western market economy and low morality and presents the west as the origin of the demand for female sexual services by western men. In this research the struggle against sex trafficking from CEE becomes a part of the feminist agenda of combating the patriarchy in the west as well as in the east.

More recent research proposes that the weakness of democracy in CEE, instability of economy, changes in familial structures, and the inability of civil society to protect victims of trafficking are the explanatory factors of female migration for sex work (Vocks & Nijboer, 2000; Hughes & Denisova, 2001, Kligman & Limoncelli, 2005). These analyses draw on sociodemographic data, such as the rate of unemployment, political and economic stability of the country, and gender equity. These types of analyses perceive sex trafficking as a process shaped by macroeconomic changes and political transitions and list contextual socioeconomic and cultural factors that make women vulnerable to trafficking. For example, Dutch researchers Judith Vocks and Jan Nijboer (2000) propose a typology of victims of sex trafficking that includes such types of victims as kidnapped, deceived and exploited. Their explanation positions non-western women as naive, unable to analyze their own situations or rationally make long-term plans due to lack of adequate information on the risks of migration. At the same time, CEE countries are perceived as not only culturally different from old Europe, but also unable to control the problem of trafficking or to assist those who experience violence and exploitation.

In their conclusions, researchers approaching sex trafficking from a developmental position propose to identify vulnerable groups of women, i.e. create a “typology of victims,” in order to raise awareness about sex trafficking among risk-groups. Some of the researchers also advocate tighter border controls (Kligman & Limoncelli, 2005, p. 130) and in some cases the legalization of prostitution because it would allow for easier “supervision” of prostitutes (Vocks & Nijboer, 2000, p. 386). In other words, the prevention of migration and the supervision of sex workers is understood as a solution to the problem. The outcome of this academic framework can be observed in the allocation of funding for awareness raising campaigns in CEE and “rescue” type of projects.

### ***Framework of migration studies***

The migration studies' take on sex trafficking emerges from the critique of sex trafficking discourse altogether. It proposes to focus on individual migration projects and the lives of migrant sex workers rather than conceptualizing migration for sex work as sex trafficking (Agustín, 2010, p. 27). There are few in-depth studies adopting this perspective; the most notable examples include the work of anthropologist Laura Agustín on "rescuing" agencies, an ethnographic study by Nicola Mai (2009) on Albanian and Romanian male sex workers in the EU, Rutvica Andrijasevic's (2004) research on CEE female sex workers in Italy, and Leyla Gülçür and Pinar İlkaracan's (2002) study on CEE sex workers in Turkey.

The framework of migration studies permits an understanding of migration for sex work as individual migratory projects and acknowledges the variety of reasons that play a role in migrants' choices to leave their home countries and engage in sex work abroad. For instance, Andrijasevic (2004) begins her research from the vantage point of women's lives and investigates the ways in which such macroeconomic factors as poverty play a role in migrant women's formation as subjects and realization of their life strategies. Similarly, Mai (2009) considers migration as a "symbolic and liminal act through which young [gay] men negotiate their psychological and economic autonomy away from 'home,' which promotes a family-based model of manhood" (p. 349). Therefore, migration for sex work is conceptualized as a personal project of identity-making. From this perspective it becomes possible to recognize that sex work and migration are neither imposed on Central and Eastern Europeans, nor fully voluntary, but rather strategic.

Furthermore, migratory research centers the occupational choices, behaviours, and needs of migrants and in doing so allows for an examination of the ways in which migrant sex workers are limited within particular social-economic situations and how they use these situations to their advantage. The migration perspective also suggests that policies should not focus on the issue of "choice," but instead, on the need to ameliorate migrant women's living and working conditions by addressing restrictive and abusive immigration policies and by decriminalizing undocumented sex work (Gülçür & İlkaracan, 2002, p. 419).

### **How Research Matters**

Critics of sex trafficking discourses have repeatedly noted that research on migrant sex workers is largely performed, commissioned, and inspired by states, which leaves little space for critical perspectives and encourages research only meant to justify pre-established policies (Nieuwenhuys & Pecaud, 2007). Some scholars also have demonstrated that legal and policy responses that are set out to identify and counter trafficking create an anti-organized-crime "industry" and a "rescuing industry," which work similarly to for-profit organizations when they attract investment to serve their goals (Goodey, 2008; Agustín, 2007; Weitzer, 2007). This, in turn, prioritizes criminological and developmental approaches in research and encourages the adoption of moralizing positions while planning and conducting research projects. This is especially evident in the ways in which aid money is allocated to researchers and service providers by major international funding agents. For instance, the conflation of prostitution with trafficking following the



UN protocol debates in 2000 played an important role in withdrawing USAID funding for those local organizations that do not advocate the abolition of sex work worldwide (Weitzer, 2007).

The research on sex trafficking highlighting the issue of criminal networks and economic development in the CEE forms a part of a strategy to secure the borders of the EU and keep unwanted people outside. The information campaigns in the CEE region demonstrate that the way in which sex work and migration are conceptualized as problems influences what types of “rescuing” strategies are undertaken. For example, in 2002 the IOM anti-trafficking campaign in Lithuania portrayed on its posters a lifeless body of a young woman manipulated by an invisible hand through the strings and attached with metal hooks. The caption of the image stated: “They will sell you like a doll!” Since the beginning of the campaign, this caption became a recognizable slogan that symbolized not only sex trafficking, but also the broader issue of violence against women. Today, information campaigns in Lithuania have changed their main message. Currently, campaign posters portray a vulgar image of a man in a business suit with his zipper open and the caption “Buying a woman is shameful!” This change in the way selling sex is interpreted and fought against went hand in hand with the expansion of the EU border in 2004. Today, the main attempt to regulate sex work in the Baltics does not target the organized crime networks but instead attempts to diminish the demand for the sex industry.

As the EU border moved further to the East, organized crime became less of a characteristic of the Baltics and the issue of demand for sex services in these countries became the key issue on the anti-trafficking agenda. The research and awareness raising campaigns that approach the issue from a criminological or developmental perspective describe Eastern European women as poor, passive and un-emancipated. They also reinforce the boundary between those who are recognized as truly European and those who are not. As a result, the issue of sex trafficking is used in Europe to support and secure national belonging within the EU by negatively portraying migration and discouraging migration from non-member countries.

### **Conclusion: CEE and the Politics of Belonging**

According to Jacqueline Berman (2003), in the west, globalization and the challenging of modern nation-states has caused a feeling of anxiety, which she calls “a crisis over boundaries” (p. 39). This crisis results in increasing attempts to control immigration into the EU by presenting immigrants as intolerant, incapable or unwilling to assimilate. The issues of sexuality are often used in old Europe to portray non-Europeans as unable to keep up with the ideals and principles of the European Union and thus to deny them access to EU citizenship. In a similar fashion, the issue of sex trafficking can be explained as constructed and exaggerated for the purpose of maintaining control over the borders and decision-making about who is and who is not granted the right to move, work or live within the EU. Discursive construction across the EU border allows governments to reinvent and strengthen this border both by physical control and by creating symbolic meanings of difference. This meaning is also maintained by the myth of trafficking and by constructing the image of the injured non-western feminine body (Doezema, 2010). The

exclusion produced by the migration regime is thus normalized as the protection of vulnerable Eastern European women and the stability of the EU.

Some scholars also note that the attention given to the Eastern European region through anti-trafficking campaigns initiated by the United States and the European Union stems from sharing the borders with the EU and the history of complex relationships that characterized the Cold War. As Susan Dewey (2008) notes, “the topic [of sex trafficking] presents a unique opportunity for the United States and the European Union not only to engage directly with state policy formation in Eastern Europe but also to do so by prioritizing a topic that few people would publicly criticize as agenda-based” (p. 43). That said, it becomes clear why the criminological and developmental research projects, which justify prevention of migration from the CEE region, garner more attention and funding from governments and institutions concerned about globalization and multiculturalism. As the focus on crime and violated borders leads to the conclusion that the state has the primary obligation and necessary means to fight against international organized crime networks, criminalizing the issue serves as a “means through which practices of ‘statecraft’ work to reiterate the privileged place of the state in international relations” (Berman, 2003, p. 37).

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## Nation-States' Vested Interest in "Sex Trafficking" Discourse

Shaunna Bruton<sup>1</sup>

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My presentation questions the reasoning behind nation-states' vested interest in sex-trafficking discourse. First I briefly discuss Canada's actions concerning sex trafficking, then allude to the importance of such an investigation, and follow by presenting my main arguments.

In 2002, Canada ratified the United Nations *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*. To combat human trafficking, the Government of Canada utilizes the "4-P" approach of prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships, as "This approach is consistent with prevailing international standards as reflected in the United Nations' Protocol" (Department of Justice Canada). To implement this approach, Canada has ensured widespread training and awareness concerning "sex trafficking" among immigration and citizenship officials, law enforcement personnel and the public at large through numerous mediums. Interestingly, while the Department of Justice Canada acknowledges the fact that it is hard to actually determine the number of "trafficked victims" in Canada, amendments that serve to tighten and toughen Canada's immigration and citizenship controls have continually been proposed on the basis of "human trafficking." Such amendments include Bill C-4, *Preventing Human Smugglers from Abusing Canada's Immigration System Act*, Bill C-56, *Preventing the Trafficking, Abuse and Exploitation of Vulnerable Immigrants Act*, Bill C-310, *An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Trafficking in Persons)*, and Bill C-10, *Safe Streets and Community Act*, among others. While these bills are worded around human trafficking, some have suggested that nation-states' concerns with "trafficking in women" have stemmed from motivations and politics not particular to the "issue" per se.

To give a brief example, Bill C-56 claims its aim is to "protect foreign nationals who are at risk of being subjected to humiliating or degrading treatment, including sexual exploitation." It seeks to amend the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* to allow officers to refuse the authorization of foreign nationals to work in Canada. Yet Bill C-56 also states that the purpose of this is to "protect public health and safety and to maintain the security of Canadian Society." Therefore, implicitly stated within its own wording is the suggestion that by refusing work permits to the "other," the "white" Canadian nation is protected. This exemplifies that the potential concern behind Canada's proposed immigration laws is not necessarily for the "trafficked woman," but for the Canadian nation.

While researchers have linked sex trafficking discourse to nation-states' anxieties over social

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change, shifting political boundaries and migration, I engage here in a more thorough investigation of these suggested anxieties, especially with regard to Canada. Deborah Brock et al. indicate the importance of such research in the article *Migrant Sex Work: A Roundtable Analysis* (2000). They ask:

Why is it that women, particularly women originating from certain countries, have had such a hard time getting into Canada? It is a great concern that the proposed changes to immigration and refugee law make specific references to the trafficking in women and children for sexual purposes as part of the platform for why we need to tighten our borders. It seems to me a very deliberate ruse to garner support from otherwise liberal thinking people for an extremely radically biased and regressive immigration policy. (p. 90)

In the same vein, Jo Doezema's (2010) book *Sex Slaves and Discourse Masters* urges the need to investigate who shapes the meaning of both "trafficking" and "sex slaves." Doezema intricately argues that contrary to the dominant portrayals of the "unwilling victim" or the "consenting prostitute," women said to be "trafficked" are chiefly women seeking increased autonomy and economic independence, trying to survive the workings of a global capitalist system (p. 17). She therefore refers to "human trafficking" discourse as myth, to indicate its functional role in society rather than its description of fact. Consequently, Doezema asserts that we must explore "why and how certain groups in society, including feminists, are so interested in the myth" (p. 31).

This presentation therefore starts to explore why nation-states, specifically, may have a vested interest in propagating popular perceptions of sex trafficking. I argue that global migration is perceived as a potential threat to state sovereignty (or to state power) and is also perceived as threatening the station of those privileged by the state's national identity and established order. Thus, as migration grows with globalization, nation-states have increasingly favoured "tougher" immigration controls. To gain widespread support for such policies, they have sought to emphasize nationalism and national identity, applying notions of sexuality to their advantage. Somewhat ironically though, sexuality, like migration, has historically posed a threat to nation-states. In light of this it might become clearer why propagating the "trafficking in women" myth may be appealing. It not only offers a way to secure state sovereignty, by promoting nationalistic sentiments, but it also offers greater control of women's threatening sexual autonomy. It should be noted that the research underlying this presentation predominantly pertains to the anxieties of Canada and the United States, though it has the potential to be theoretically applied to other nation states from the global north.

It is first important to distinguish between nation, state, and nation-state, as the three are not synonymous constructs. Nations are not tangible, but in theory they represent a "glorified ethnic group," whose members believe that a common origin, history or narrative ties them together (Mayer, 2000, p. 2). The prevailing national narrative serves to privilege some by constructing nationalism around difference, whereby its internal hierarchies often occur along lines of gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality, despite the national discourse of internal unity (Mayer, 2000, p. 6).

In essence, a national narrative is about defining who is, and who is not, included. Importantly, because elites play a major role in constructing the nation and its narratives, the nation is generally represented so that it serves the aspirations of the elite (Mayer, 2000, p. 10). Therefore nations have even been deemed "... cultural tools in the hands of elites... who seek to mobilize the masses on the basis of an emotional appeal to a common but fictitious nationality" (Conversi, 2009, p. 348). Conversely, states are tangible. They are governed entities, tied to a specific territory with marked boundaries and that abide by law. As such, the construct of "nation-state" refers to a state that self-identifies as deriving its political legitimacy from serving as a sovereign entity for a specific nation. It is portrayed as representative of the people's power, and is seen as a "reflection" of the nation (Mayer, 2000, p. 2).

Globalization, or the increasing interconnectedness of goods and services, people, technology, cultures and ideas, globally, has often been cited as a cause for the decreasing relevance of nation-states (Croucher, 2004). For instance, newly formed regional and supra-national bodies such as NAFTA and the EU can be seen as challenging the role of the nation-state (Castles, 1998). The threat to state sovereignty, however, is not necessarily due to the globalization of capital, but to the globalization of people. This is because "...increased human mobility can affect sovereignty in terms of both voice (within states) and relations among states (internationally)" (Moses, 2005, p. 54). Migrants can force national subjects to question the naturalness of their privileged identity, which can bring to light the fact that national identities are actually "won by the elite at the expense of everybody else" (Sharma, 2006, 146). Similarly, while it is often suggested that people's concerns over increased migration are primarily about "cultural intrusion," others note that cultural issues are so fraught precisely because they are fundamentally tied to anxieties over a challenged national identity (Liebner and Weisberg, 2002). Consequently, globalization has led nation-states to reassert their national narrative.

Nation-states such as Canada and the United States have sought to decrease the threat of global migration through tighter border controls. However the increased movement of people across borders is an inevitable outcome of a world capitalist system, as people increasingly utilize migration as a way to survive the workings of such a system (Sharma, 2006). The attempt to open borders to capital, commodities and ideas, but simultaneously close borders to people is unrealistic in a globalizing era (Castles, 1998). Therefore, rather than seeking to keep "others" outside of their borders, nation-states seek to divide "others" within their borders. Nandita Sharma (2006) explains this organizing of what she calls the "global apartheid:"

... [it] is not based on keeping differentiated people *apart* but instead, on organizing two (or more) separate legal regimes and practices for differentiated collectives *within* the same nationalized space... This is accomplished by the placement of people who live and work within a given national state within various categories of foreign-ness, like 'temporary migrant worker' or 'illegal'. Citizenship and immigration controls, thus, are central to the realization of these nationalized forms of discrimination... the nation's Others are not actually excluded but are 'differentially included'. (p. 125)

Such discriminatory controls also allow the privileged to reap the benefits of globalization at the expense of the nation's "others." For example, Gassen Hage has argued that "...anti-immigration discourse, by continually constructing the immigrants as unwanted, works precisely at maintaining [their] economic viability to... employers. They are best wanted as 'unwanted'" (cited in Sharma, 2006, p. 134).

So how does this discussion of nation-states, nationalism, and global migration relate to "sex trafficking" discourse? I would like to suggest that this discourse provides a timely avenue for nation-states, such as Canada, to reassert their power and privileged identity, both within the nation itself and within the international "world order." Depictions of "third-world" women as sexually deviant and their "third-world" male abusers as morally corrupt further classify non-nationals as the "other." Members of the privileged "white" nation are called upon, in such discourse, to take the moral high ground and act as "saviours." Propagated "sex trafficking" discourse suggests that by supporting tougher immigration controls and increased law enforcement, national members are in fact able to do so. This subsequently helps to reaffirm the importance and power of the nation-state and maintain the status quo.

In considering the vested interests of Canada and the United States, specifically, it is important to consider the impact of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Times of "national" crisis provide distinct space for nationalist rhetoric by the state, and also for the nation-state's voice to become more "valid" (Liebner and Weisberg, 2002). Since 9/11, nationalist sentiments declaring the need to protect "national" values, identity, and "way of life" have been prevalent. Of important concern has become "[t]he need to 'root out' invisible enemies by identifying who does, and does not, belong to the [national] community..." (Rygiel, 2006, p. 145). This amplified nationalism has not only occurred in the United States post-9/11, but also in Canada. Canadians have come to see identity as a source of security (Rygiel, 2006), and thus have sought to defend it. Therefore in both the United States and Canada, the war on terror has been fought through gendered and racialized notions of citizenship (Rygiel, 200), and as such anti-trafficking sentiments have been complimentary to anti-terrorist sentiments. This has helped to garner support for both the tightening of borders and the differential inclusion of "others" within borders. Since 9/11 the United States has put additional pressure on Canada to tighten its borders through "trafficking in women" discourse. In 2005, in Bill C-49: An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (Trafficking in Persons), the Parliament of Canada noted that:

Canada is recognized as a relatively strong force in terms of the laws and resources in place to combat trafficking. However, a recent US report on trafficking criticized Canada's limited ability to catch perpetrators, emphasizing that the government must use its laws "vigorously to increase investigations, arrests, prosecutions, and convictions of traffickers, especially those who may be abusing visa waivers and entertainment visas".

This criticism is arguably rooted in the fact that Canada and the United States share a large frontier.



I would also like to make a brief mention of the important utilization of sexuality within “sex trafficking” discourse. Firstly, this discourse provides space for the state to reinforce notions of the “ideal” national subject through depictions of appropriate sexuality. For example Rutvica Andrijasevic (2007) discusses the implication of anti-trafficking campaigns’ suggestion that a woman’s safest place is the home.. In this way, they locate a woman’s appropriate place both nationally and internationally. Secondly, sex trafficking discourse also provides a way for the state to control women’s sexual autonomy, by “warning” women who may stray from the nation-states’ version of the “ideal” national subject. Just as Eliot Borenstein (2006) states that historically the Russian prostitute “... disseminate[d] ideology about the nation as a kind of ‘textually transmitted disease’,” (p. 190) I argue that the “trafficked woman” today transmits ideology in a similar fashion. Through anti-trafficking campaign ads, government awareness programs, and mainstream media, the image of the “trafficked woman” warns women of the state about the dangers of straying from the “appropriate for a female” national role. Further, the “trafficked woman” also warns of the *national* harm one can cause with any form of involvement with the sex trade.

Through this short analysis of nation-states, nationalism, and sexuality, the vested interests of nation-states in propagating anti-trafficking rhetoric may become somewhat clearer. “Trafficking in women” discourse can help serve as a way to secure state sovereignty, by mobilizing nationalistic sentiments and by defining females’ acceptable sexuality. While the “trafficked woman” herself may be perceived as a threatening, undocumented migrant, nation-states’ anxieties surrounding the “trafficking issue” may not necessarily be concerned with the proclaimed issue per se. Rather, it is possible that their anxieties lie with increased migration in general. Globalization renders migration inevitable, and this increased migration poses a potential threat to state power and the privileged national identity. Therefore, I contend that like a “textually transmitted disease,” the “trafficked woman” and her abusers promote nationalist sentiments by reinforcing notions of the “other” and simultaneously notions of the ideal national subject. Taken together, these aspects of “sex trafficking” discourse serve the nation-state in its effort to tighten border controls and to “differentially include” unwanted migrants.

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# Exploring and Comparing the South African and Canadian Legal Response to Human Trafficking

Toni Francis<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

The following is a brief summary of the research I did for my Masters Research Paper, entitled, “Exploring and Comparing the South African and Canadian Legal Response to Human Trafficking.” The intention of my research paper was to explore and contrast Canadian human trafficking legislation to the South African equivalent with the objective of understanding their national frameworks on this issue and the implications for exploited migrant people. Several questions the paper explored included: how is trafficking understood in the particular national contexts? Is the definition of “trafficking” in these national contexts inclusive of all forms of labour exploitation or only sexual exploitation? How is the UN Palermo Protocol implicated in solidifying the mainstream understanding of human trafficking and grounding States’ responsibility in a law and order, criminal justice framework?

A comparison of national human trafficking legislation is particularly important and timely as the first comprehensive human trafficking legislation, the *Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill*, 2010, has been introduced in the South African parliament and awaits ratification. In the context of Canada, Bill C-56, *Preventing Trafficking, Abuse and Exploitation of Vulnerable Immigrants Act*, 2011, which would amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), has been introduced and had its first reading in the House of Commons. Therefore an analysis and comparison of these bills to uncover the implications for empowering exploited migrant workers in accordance with international legal conventions, or their ability to further disempower marginalised groups such as irregular migrants and sex workers, is quite significant.

My research took an intersectional, transnational, feminist perspective informed by critical women’s studies, migration and transnationalism scholars, including Kamala Kempadoo, Jyoti Sanghera, Laura Agustín, Ratna Kapur and Rutvica Andrijasevic. An intersectional feminist framework then challenges the notion of a universal experience of “womanhood” under a hegemonic patriarchy, and as a transnational concept, considers how mutually constituted identities are oppressed or exploited on a global scale in the context of globalization and capitalism. In order to consider the way that human trafficking legislation frames the particular bodies at risk of exploitation, as well as consider the limitations of this same legislation, I have

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chosen to use this approach to inform my analysis and draw on a variety of texts, including government policy documents and academic and non-academic articles.

I argue that the much favoured global government approach or criminal justice approach that prioritizes prosecution, immigration and border control (Kempadoo, 2012), does so at the expense of migrant workers and ultimately will not curb the exploitation of vulnerable persons, including women and children, but conversely contributes quite significantly to their continued exploitation.

### **South Africa**

South Africa has been identified as a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking, and is obliged to address and prevent human trafficking as a signatory of several international agreements, particularly the 1951 Geneva Convention, the UN Palermo Protocol and the 1998 International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work which binds it as an ILO member. South Africa continues to be the biggest receiving country of migrants in Southern Africa and as a result of attempting to balance its national economic development goals post-apartheid in this context, the government has aggressively deported over a million undocumented migrants since 1994 (Crush, 2008). Pending the adoption of the *Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill*, various existing national laws are relevant for prosecuting labour exploitation or human trafficking, including the Bill of Rights, the *1998 Refugee Act*, the *2002 Immigration Act*, the *Criminal Law Amendment Act 32 of 2007*, several common law provisions, the Corporate Work Permit scheme, and the Sectoral Determination 13: Farm Workers Sector Act. Though these legislations can theoretically protect migrant workers, there remains extensive work to be done around the exploitation and deportation of undocumented migrants, monitoring these processes and addressing the systemic political and economic drivers of migration and asylum claims.

The South African *Prevention and Combating Of Trafficking In Persons Bill* was developed in response to the US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Tier 2 watch list ranking, in order to provide a comprehensive legal framework for addressing and prosecuting human trafficking. However since it was introduced into parliament in 2010, it remains to be passed.

### **Canada**

Accessing Canada through legal or illegal means became much harder after the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the US. Since then, Canada has scrambled to secure and protect its 9000-kilometre border from terrorist groups and has reacted to threats of terrorism by implementing legislation that would "clamp down" on those who attempt to cross the border illegally (Perrin, 2010). A concerted effort on the part of Canada to protect its borders was aggravated by the US government's heavy criticism of Canada's refugee and immigration laws, and the accusation that Canada was a "jumping-off point" for terrorists (Oxman-Martinez & Hanley, 2004) and a transit country for sex trafficked victims (Perrin, 2010). Canada's scramble to protect its borders and the heavy legislative emphasis on criminal justice was most likely a result of its Tier 2 ranking by

the US Department of State's TIP Report in 2003 (US Dept. of State, 2003, p. 21). The 2003 TIP Report suggests that Canada's newly implemented IRPA of 2002 should change its response to human trafficking; Canada has been ranked Tier 1 ever since.

Like South Africa, Canada is a signatory to the *Palermo Protocol* and as such is compelled to implement preventative human trafficking measures, adequate protection measures, and effective prosecution instruments. Current legislation on human trafficking is contained within the *Criminal Code R.S.C., 1985*, C. C-46, Sub-section 279.01-279.04, which came into force in 2005 with Bill C-49 and updated in 2010 with Bill C-268, both acts to amend the Criminal Code; and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) 2001, Chapter 27, Section 118.

The proposed legislation, *Bill C-56, Preventing Trafficking, Abuse and Exploitation of Vulnerable Immigrants Act*, was introduced into the House of Commons on November 2010 and would amend Section 3(1) of the act pertaining to the objectives and application of the Act with respect to immigration. This amendment would authorise immigration officers to refuse the authorisation of work visas for foreign nationals if they perceive them at risk of becoming a victim of exploitation or abuse, irrespective of whether they meet the visa requirements.

In doing a comparison of these proposed legislation I considered several questions, but one in particular I would like to foreground here.

***How are women of colour impacted by the proposed anti-human trafficking legislation in Canada and South Africa?***

In South Africa there continues to be accepted and widespread consumption of exploited migrant labour along with pervasive xenophobia towards migrants, a large percentage of whom are disproportionately poor, low-skilled, racialized women from neighbouring African countries or migrant women from the border towns of South Africa's northern rural areas. Poor, racialized women who work in low-skilled positions in hospitality, food services, customer service, farming, or in homes experience excessive abuse by employers. Racialized migrant women, many from East Asian countries, are targets of brothel raids in rich urban centres (HSRC, 2010). Work permits that tie migrant women to one employer, in cases of domestic work, further expose women to a risk for exploitation. Poor, racialized women are often the sole providers for two or three other family members, and this financial responsibility compels them to migrate in pursuit of employment, often using the services of smugglers to cross borders. South Africa's deportation of undocumented migrant workers for contravening their visas or for working without visas, irrespective of the exploitation they might have suffered, endangers women's lives and can lead to their re-trafficking if the need to make an income is great enough. The proposed South African Trafficking Bill does not effectively address systemic gender inequalities and women's vulnerable position in South Africa due to sexism, misogyny, racism and a socio-cultural perspective that encourages men's dominance over women. Racialized, poor women are particularly affected by indifferent labour treatment and represent the majority of unemployed people in South Africa. In order to address human trafficking or labour exploitation, the South African Government needs to address the particular way these women are marginalised and

exploited due to a history of Apartheid and centuries of state-sanctioned racism. Black women generally, but specifically Black women in rural areas of South Africa continue to suffer from this legacy of marginalisation and figure disproportionately in the number of people exploited in various sectors in South Africa.

When racialized women are entering Canada it is generally through family class visas, on student or visitor visas or through employment programs like the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program or Live-in Caregiver Program. Women from Eastern Europe were admitted into Canada under the Exotic Dancer Program, but these visas are no longer accessible. The Live-in Caregiver Program continues to offer a service in high demand and women from East Asia, including Indonesia, are encouraged by their governments to enrol in this and other care programs. However, as Anti-Slavery International(ASI) explains, the exploitation of these migrant women starts months before they arrive in destination countries (2003). ASI explains that Indonesian migrant women are officially required to go through over 400 government-sanctioned agencies, all of whom seek to profit from migrant work. Compulsory contracts, live-in training camps prior to leaving, exorbitant agency fees, and exploitative contracts without any significant legal labour protection (ASI, 2003) ensure that women who enter into these employment programs are exploited long before they enter destination countries and Canadian homes. Racialized women who enter Canada through these employment programs have strict contracts, have paid high recruitment fees to be accepted into the programs, are remitting their money to support whole families, and as a result are hesitant to report any abuse for fear of deportation. The Canadian government has repeatedly demonstrated its non-committal stance on migrant human rights protection by detaining migrants in detention centres across the country due to their illegal modes of entry into Canada or visa contraventions, as opposed to migrant labour exploitation itself.

Racialized migrant women who enter Canada through employment programs report enduring severe exploitation, and the infringement of their labour and human rights, either working extremely long hours, having their freedom of movement restrained or experiencing various types of abuse at the hands of their employers. Yet the Live-in Caregiver Program has admitted over five thousand women every year into Canada (Hodge, 2006). The proposed Bill C-56, which would amend the IRPA, would result in the denial of work visas to migrants deemed to be at risk of exploitation. As opposed to addressing exploitation at the sites in which they are found to occur, and targeting exploitative employers, these immigration and trafficking legislation are targeting innocent migrants. For those women migrants who are admitted into Canada, they are lumped into a class of disposable workers who have to accept working conditions that Canadians don't and are prohibited from changing employers without the first employer's consent (in the case of the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program) and government approval, fueling their labour and human rights exploitation.

## **Conclusion**

Human trafficking is ultimately the movement of people for the purposes of exploiting their labour or services. The majority of people who are trafficked are migrant workers. These migrant

workers are people seeking opportunities to escape poverty, civil unrest, gender inequality, and discrimination, who wish to improve their lives and remit money to support their families. Many of them are recruited to take particular jobs by family or friends or through recruitment agencies or other folks who offer to find them employment and make all of the arrangements. For most trafficked people it is only once they arrive in the country of destination that their exploitation is realised (ASI, 2003). Any anti-human trafficking legislation needs to be considered within a broader migration framework and any anti-human trafficking legislation needs to reduce trafficking and prevent the human and labour rights violations to which migrant workers are subjected (ASI, 2003, p. 3). My concern with both South Africa and Canada's trafficking measures is that they do not challenge systemic causes for the precarious migration of people across borders. The Canadian government facilitates the uninhibited flow of workers, including agricultural workers from South America, through its NATO partnership; it espouses a free trade, open-market economy which protects the international mining and agricultural projects of its transnational corporations in other countries; it exploits the vulnerability and underdevelopment of the Philippines and Caribbean islands, countries dependent on remittances. And on the other hand, it discriminates against a spectrum of differently skilled (im)migrants who pay for their entry into Canada and who need to have a substantial amount of money for start-up costs and qualify under a stringent point system (in the case of highly-skilled immigrants), only to have their foreign qualifications written-off or severely devalued. Canada's proposed legislation will severely decrease opportunities to secure a legal visa to enter and work in the country, increase the vulnerability of those admitted (im)migrants to exploitative working conditions with little recourse due to a fear or threats of deportation, and likely encourage more incidences of exploited migrant labour because the attraction of smuggling as an alternative is amplified.

South Africa's proposed Bill pays lip service to victim assistance measures and human rights, even though it does not have the capacity to fulfill these measures without sustained funding, and though it has not passed since it was introduced in the beginning of 2010. Though the definition of exploitation in the Trafficking Bill is broadened, a Trafficking Bill would be unnecessary because South Africa has comprehensive labour legislation that if effectively upheld and rigorously monitored for corruption, could address issues of labour exploitation.

In the context of Canada, Bill C-56 promises to further disadvantage (im)migrants and increase law enforcement efforts in the sex industry, due to a legislative emphasis on "sexual exploitation." The RCMP report on human trafficking that dangerously conflates trafficking with prostitution (2010), along with the current emphasis on protecting women and children from sexual exploitation (re: Rona Ambrose's introduction to the Bill), position the vulnerable trafficked victim as gendered and in need of rescuing, justifying impeding women's cross-border migration. Moreover, under current human trafficking legislation, any friend or family member assisting the irregular movement of a migrant across the border is considered a trafficker. In this way, migrant women are granted little agency and addressed primarily as victims to be rescued, rehabilitated, and repatriated.

In closing, there exist international conventions governing migrant rights, which have not been signed by either South Africa or Canada, for example the 1991 Migrant Convention, a convention that would protect the labour and human rights of migrants. However, both countries have chosen to propose legislation couched in the language of human trafficking that would further criminalize precarious migratory decisions, indicating instead their commitment to state security, sovereignty and border control.

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## **Trafficking in the International Context: Complicating the “Cause and Effect” Framework**

*Kyla McGowan<sup>1</sup>*

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As we are all no doubt aware, human trafficking has become a high-priority concern at both the national and international levels in recent years. Problematically though, trafficking has been taken up almost exclusively due to alarm about what is considered the most insidious and significant aspect of the trafficking “industry”—sex trafficking. Discussions in both the media and in various governing institutions about sex trafficking have come to be understood and addressed almost exclusively through a human rights framework. There appears to be consensus among governments, policy-makers, human rights watch groups, and the general public that through what is described as the “global scourge” of sex trafficking, the rights mainly of women and children are being violated in the most horrible way possible. Naturally then, in a capitalist and neoliberal global climate, the clearest and seemingly most effective way of addressing such violations is through legal interventions that aim to secure an agreed-upon set of human rights that should guarantee for all people adequate access to freedom and protection. Problematically, the “evil” of trafficking is generally ascribed to individual “bad men”; organized crime networks and “irresponsible” governments are identified and reduced to being the main sources of the problem. But it must be noted that such messages about global evils, violated women, and international criminals do not simply emerge fully formed within the popular discursive conscience. The process through which sex trafficking has come to be a phenomenon in need of direct legal response is complex and polyvalent and has emerged through the intersection of a variety of discourses about gender, race, class, capitalism, globalization, and neoliberal ideology. I consider human rights discourses, both official and popular, deployed in response to the perceived threat of sex trafficking to be a very interesting and fruitful entry point into a larger examination of the way complex cultural and legal frameworks come to interact and create particular understandings of sex trafficking as symptom of “the global condition.”

Recent analyses of human rights discourses have addressed many of the concerns foregrounded within conversations about sex trafficking and have attempted to reframe and redeploy universalist ideas about international law and humanitarian concerns. This has been accomplished in part by acknowledging a variety of important post-modern concerns that are often foreclosed by traditional narratives. Chief among these is the concept of positionality and scholars like Ratna Kapur (2005), Ilan Kapoor (2008), Antony Anghie (1996), and Sharron FitzGerald (2008) have attempted to address “rights talk” and international intervention through a postcolonial feminist framework that considers “who speaks for whom, how and where, as well as [...] who is listening, and to what end” (Kapur, 2005, p. 4) in order to evaluate how particular

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dominant discourses circulate and are reinforced.

Significant work is also being done to call attention to the fact that transnational elites, especially from western or west-allied countries, consistently frame human rights as transhistorical and natural, but continue to draw on a particular tradition and oppressive political history without acknowledging the fact that they are not promoting “universal” rights but rather a model firmly entrenched in a western, capitalist, and neoliberal legal tradition (Kapoor, 2008). There has also been a move to destabilize the idea that human rights are derivative of citizenship and state sovereignty through recognition of the fundamental devaluing of certain people that such a conceptualization of rights accomplishes (Kapoor, 2008).

Moreover, messages about the importance of supporting human rights on the global scale have been promoted by, in, and to the west with little attention paid to the historical and on-going history of abuses, oppression, and inequality present in the western context (Kapoor, 2008). I hope to consider how scholars, along with groups traditionally considered silent and “exploited,” have begun to call into question heretofore taken-for-granted international narratives about human rights and the “responsibilised” west.

Underpinning many of the attempts to address sex trafficking as an international concern is the normative concept of exploitation, a term that is invoked constantly in analyses ranging from traditionally moral, to labour-based, to feminist. Vanessa Munro (2008) explores exploitation as a “rhetorical placeholder for expressing disapproval” and points to the fact that the fluidity and flexibility of the meaning of the term, and the ease with which it is deployed in various seemingly incompatible ways, indicates that the taken-for-granted-ness of exploitation itself needs to be disrupted, and the broad understanding of “taking unfair advantage” needs to be further explored (p. 83). Munro (2008) importantly calls into question the measurability of harm, a model that has become the basis for much speculation over where the line can be drawn between “acceptable use” and exploitation (p. 85). Exploitation in the technical sense (that is, simply making use of something so that it is not wasted) occurs every day in the context of a capitalist society, but this relationship of use and production is rarely expressed or understood as exploitative. Inherent in the absence of discussions of exploitation in popular discourse about work and employment is a logic that implies and necessitates a hierarchy of use and therefore, a hierarchy of exploitation. Setting up such a hierarchy also means that a conceptual line must be drawn that identifies a threshold beyond which “acceptable use” becomes inhuman and degrading (Munro, 2008).

Exploitative use that is inhuman and degrading is a component of the process of human trafficking and relies upon identification of a hierarchy of exploitation through the concept of migration itself. For example, the awareness of the presence of exploitation in human trafficking tends to be conceptualized as wholly distinct from the process of smuggling; the division of these two forms of migration is founded upon a construction of consent that becomes foundational in determinations of degree of exploitation. Consent itself is a complicated and contested concept but in terms of determining whether conditions are exploitative or not, it functions rather plainly. Simply put, if a person who migrates illegally has consented or agreed at any stage of the process

of movement, their degree of exploitation is considered to be diminished. This fact creates a dangerous tendency to privilege those who can prove that they were coerced and discredits those who cannot, no matter how much violence they may have encountered (Munro, 2008). Defining exploitation and consent in such a limited way fails to consider the processes of globalization and socio-economic displacement which have led to widespread migration and invisibilize the various labour relations, or even western-based paradigms of self-definition, that might also easily be characterized as exploitative. Additionally, the focus on exploitation as inherent in sex work and sex trafficking, rather than in cases of trafficking for the purposes of forced labour, seems to represent a kind of “squeamishness” about commodification of sexuality or the blurring of distinctions between wage labour and servitude that may be occurring when hierarchies of exploitation are created and maintained (Munro, 2008, p. 95). It is important to note that identifying the exploitative nature of all capitalist labour relations is not meant to diminish the reality of the violence and marginalization endured specifically by sex workers; rather, it is important to offer new ways of understanding concepts which are too often left unquestioned, or are considered too deeply entrenched in legal frameworks to be critically examined.

The hierarchical ordering ensured through the exploitation model also has direct consequences for how particular hierarchies of peoples come to be cemented in discussions about sex trafficking. In her thorough and insightful examination of legality in the postcolonial context, Ratna Kapur (2005) advances a framework for understanding the intersections of inequality in trafficking narratives and posits three different ways the exclusion, and problematic inclusion, of the world’s “Others” tends to occur. She considers how legal discourses embody the binary of the “West” and the “Rest” by creating and emphasizing differences, by characterizing the “Other” as unable to choose or consent, by identifying the “Other” as backward, uncivilized and in need of assimilation, and finally by casting the “Other” as dangerous and fit only for annihilation or incarceration (Kapur, 2005, p. 2). The first of the three manifestations of the inclusion/exclusion binary through which legality and rights talk operates is that of the infantilized or victimized “Other,” unable to choose or consent. Kapur (2005) discusses how the third-world “victim subject” has become a transnational phenomenon, relied upon by feminists and policy-makers alike in the context of international human rights (p. 98). Here she specifically speaks to the creation of female victims as objects of western concern and saving impulses through discourses about sex trafficking, which tend to both narrow the focus of critiques of inequality either to the “simple” oppression of women by men, or to cultural practices which occupy the western imagination in totalizing, simplistic, and misrepresentative ways (Kapur, 2005).

Kapur also points to the large body of scholarship on trafficking which has reinforced the representation of the third-world woman as sexually constrained, limited to the home, poor, and illiterate and has then propped up this colonial construct of an “emaciated third-world victim” next to the equally constructed “emancipated western woman” (Kapur, 2005, pp. 115-116). She notes that the conflation of trafficking with sex and women has led to confused legal strategies which fail to realize *why* women move and instead can only make women’s migration understandable through narratives of forced or voluntary prostitution. In doing so, women who want to gain access to legal opportunities provided by human rights claims must take up and

fully inhabit the role of victim and may display no signs of agency or choice at any stage of the migration process lest they risk criminalization and deportation, an idea that confirms Vanessa Munro's theorization about consent in exploitation (Kapur, 2005). Furthermore, saving discourses that call for the "rescue" of third-world trafficked "victims" tend to ignore or refuse the rights of women whose participation in sex work has been deemed voluntary. Therefore, Kapur highlights the tendency in both state and feminist initiatives that favour attempts to "save" innocent women rather than grant rights to "guilty" women.

The second way inclusion/exclusion is manifested, according to Kapur, is through the image of the "backward" or "uncivilized" woman who must be assimilated. The colonial human rights models Kapur proposes can be separately identified. However, it is important to note that they do not operate independently of one another. The boundaries of the identities that rights discourses create are blurred and tend to overlap and bleed into one-another; we can see how the creation of the third-world victim can create the impetus for a call for assimilation in the "best interest" of such a victim. Within the context of both international and state policy, there has been an overwhelming tendency to promote the tightening of borders and the restriction of migration as the best way to combat the "social problem" of trafficking (Kapur, 2005, p. 145).

The effect of such messages serves to discourage women's mobility and stigmatizes their families; it also conveys the message that the "native" must be kept at home (Kapur, 2005, p. 142). Not only does the tightening of borders convey an anti-migrant sentiment, it does little to reduce the actual numbers of migrants who find their way into a country, sometimes by increasingly dangerous means; borders cannot be impermeable and harsh restrictions simply push abuse of vulnerable migrants further underground (Kapur, 2005). Additionally, the colonial thrust of many international legal initiatives serves to define migration as the counterpoint to trafficking, meaning that migration is framed as a dilemma, a law and order problem, or organized crime but not an issue of human rights because of the complicity of the migrant in the process, regardless of the hardships, violence, and abuse migrants might nonetheless face (Kapur, 2005).

Finally, the third manifestation of the exclusion/inclusion binary is evident in the criminalization and incarceration of third-world women and their families as a result of human rights policies and international law frameworks. Through the same processes that force women to take up the status of helpless victim in order to have their experiences legitimized in the western context, those women who are unable or unwilling to claim victim status are immediately understood as transgressive and criminal (Kapur, 2005). The anti-immigrant and anti-migrant sentiment that is powerfully expressed through specific immigration restrictions, for example, results in extremely negative views about people who move. Especially considering the conflation of migrant women with prostitution, women who move are almost always viewed through the lens of criminality and stigma when not considered helpless victims (Kapur, 2005).

Each of the three explanatory models I outlined gives some insight into the promotion and privileging of legal systems grounded in the conceptual sphere of "the international." It can be said that these processes are rooted to some extent in a desire to develop conditions of equality

and dignity on the global scale. Although this desire may be at least nominally altruistic, the human rights movement and the prevalence of “rights talk” cannot trace its benevolent roots without a critical consideration of the conditions through which they have emerged. Tracing the emergence of the liberal international law framework to the colonial encounter, further examining post- and neo-colonial perspectives along with unpacking marginalization and “Othering”, provides a more complicated, unstable, and fluid picture of the nature of much of the inequality we now see on the global scale. Especially through the lens of colonialism, which has shaped interactions between the west and the global south for hundreds of years, the assumption that the empire would assist in the development of civilization until it was capable of self-determination is reinforced time and again through western intervention (Kapur, 2005). This narrative, of leading the “Other” to civilization or enlightenment seems to me to be strongly echoed in narratives about sex trafficking worldwide. Much of the literature I have addressed takes up this idea in one form or another; trafficking discourses circulate on multiple different levels which constrain the subjectivity of women defined as “trafficked” to the point that they are only made intelligible as infantilized, helpless, victims, and culturally different “Others” who are unable to understand that they are being exploited without the aid of western policy makers and “saviors.” Additionally, the maintenance of a binary division of inclusion and exclusion to make human right projects meaningful prevents women from expressing their material experiences on their own terms; it also ensures that if they do, they are punished or denied. It is therefore important to try to find ways to understand contextuality and positionality that do not further marginalize those who are already designated as being outside of the western, rights-based paradigm. Part of this project can be accomplished by acknowledging the effects of colonial histories, and the effects of the ongoing focus on universalist or culturally specific remedies for conditions of inequality. Such conditions have been created and shaped by a myriad of relations both material and discursive relating to justice, inequality, and our socio-economic situations and require interventions that are equally complex. Spatiality and the material consequences of geographic systems of differentiation and inequality must also be interrogated. Understanding borders as discursive and sovereignty as a colonial construction can help to delegitimize denying the rights of migrant people and prevent the drawing of rigid lines between those considered deserving of help and those defined as undeserving.

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# The White Woman's Burden? The Rescue Industry and a New Imperialism

*Kimberly Veller<sup>1</sup>*

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## Introduction

The formulation of social problems, elevation of moral panic, and intervention fueled by a desire to “save” are exemplified by the symbiotic dynamic of the mainstream discourse on “sex trafficking” and the rescue industry. The concept of human trafficking has been conflated with sex work and sexual slavery, which has led to the relatively recent creation of the term “sex trafficking.” That the language has evolved to more finitely represent this conceptual relationship demonstrates the extent to which sex has eclipsed all other forms of labor associated with trafficking. The movement to “save the victims” of sex trafficking has developed into an industry premised on the necessity of rescue (Agustín 2007). The primary North American actors, particularly the US Department of State and the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), have been instrumental in shaping policy and denying agency to sex workers and migrant women around the world. The heteronormative values about sex and love and the moral reactions to sex work espoused by abolitionists are a driving force for the rescue industry, which is evidenced by the location of sex work within the broader “violence against women” paradigm. The idea of sex trafficking is touted as modern day slavery, illustrating a defining feature of moral panic – hyperbole. In this paper I address the moral panic around sex work and sex trafficking and identify some of theoretical and practical damage perpetuated by the rescue industry. As I will argue, the rescue industry is an entirely self-fulfilling hegemonic machine fuelled by moral panic and has proven much more damaging to women than any alleged harm of sexual labor.

## Sex Work, Social Problems, and Moral Panic

Abolitionist feminists and evangelical Christian factions have long associated sex work with victimization and male oppression, and the panic around sex trafficking is the most current incarnation of this (Bernstein 2010). The positioning of sex work as a social problem is intrinsically linked to colonialism, universalism, and western hegemony. This is echoed in similar panics toward pornography and abortion. Prostitution is often cited as “the world’s oldest profession”; indeed, different forms of sexual labor have played integral roles in many cultures, places and times. Laura Agustín (2007) suggests that the re-conceptualization of sex work

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occurred in nineteenth century London with what she terms the “Rise of the Social,” (p. 96) wherein bourgeoisie women sought to identify, locate and then solve social problems, so as to underscore their own superior position in society and provide themselves with a sense of purpose. This particular social outrage was built upon the view that sexual labor corrupts innocence (O’Connell Davidson, 2005). The ensuing moral panic was linked to bourgeoisie women’s ability to easily identify and understand themselves, which they did by separating themselves from women who engage in sexual labor outside the home. By casting these women as victims, they were able to draw on a self-righteous sense of morality which informed their legitimacy to intervene. We see this sense of self-importance today in the sex trafficking rescue industry. In both, the actions of abolitionists are deeply self-indulgent, non-reflexive, and devoid of any regard for individual lived experiences or agency apart from their own.

In defining sex workers as a threat, abolitionists secured (and continue to secure) their own position within an idealized femininity and morality. The moral crusade surrounding prostitution in nineteenth century London was damaging for several reasons, including its patronizing infantilization of women sex workers (Agustín, 2007). More recently, the recognition of sex work as legitimate labor has been met with great opposition by abolitionists, who have successfully mobilized outrage against migrant sex workers by essentializing them as incapable of having agency, positioning sex work as impossible to consent to, and casting other actors (usually men) as ultimately being in control (see Seshu and Bandhopadhyay, 2009; Agustín, 2007). Here, I argue that the conception of sex trafficking as a social problem is a modified revival of the moral panic toward prostitution and can be read as a ploy to not-so-covertly garner support for the crusade against sex work.

### **The West Knows Best**

Western abolitionists are keen to intervene in the lives of non-western women, particularly under the guise of women’s rights (Mohanty, 1988). There has been a gradual shift in the sex trafficking narrative to focus less on the white slave myth, and more on women of color from the developing world. The moral crusade against prostitution had a similarly racialized hierarchy. Agustín (2007) specifically refers to British women seeking to intervene in domestic sex work in colonial India. This framework is mimicked by contemporary intervention by western women in the lives of (primarily) non-western migrant and international sex workers. This neocolonialist tactic serves to dehumanize and essentialize third-world women as faceless victims, a dichotomous practice which is widespread in the rescue industry (Doezema, 2001). Abolitionist organizations like the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) and Shared Hope International support a conflation of migration, sex work, and trafficking, and deny the existence of agency in the choices of women navigating their own unique circumstances.

The desire to help non-western women is critical for abolitionists from the west, as the level of victimization and oppression of “trafficking victims” is intrinsically linked to the self-perceived level of empowerment of interventionists. To tease out this neocolonial dynamic, Jo Doezema (2001) takes up the work of Antoinette Burton to argue that:

the ways in which Victorian feminists portrayed Indian prostitutes [...] as “suffering bodies” [...] served to provide Victorian feminists with a way of arguing the necessity of their political participation in domestic government, so the “enslaved” Indian prostitute served to demonstrate the need for women’s involvement in the politics of the empire in order to purify it and stop the suffering caused by men. (p. 24)

Even here, it is men who control the sexual domain. And India in particular continues to be a site of sexual labor intervention, often with devastatingly misguided rescue missions, which I cannot address at length here (Seshu and Bandhopadhyay 2009; Shah 2004). Both Doezeema (2001) and Agustín (2010) periodize the origins of sexual intervention and highlight the division of “helped” and “helpers” along lines of class, race, and nationality.

The rescue movement is largely uninterested in domestic sex work unless undertaken by migrants. The dominant images in the mainstream media and NGO campaigns focus almost invariably on racialized women from developing countries (Doezeema, 2010). Perhaps for the abolitionist western woman, the third-world sex worker or trafficking victim is even less relatable than the domestic sex worker. Thus, the western abolitionist continues to understand herself through a binary construction of whom she is not and whom she should be helping.

### **The Rescue Movement and Fundamentalist Feminism**

The sex trafficking rescue movement demonstrates the unfortunate qualities of a moral panic, particularly a proclivity for alternatively victimizing and demonizing those involved. This move to categorize actors as evil or helpless is indispensable for justifying intervention (Weitzer, 2007). The sex trafficking rescue industry also perpetuates a static narrative of women’s experiences, wherein third-world women are too easily essentialized as a homogenous oppressed group, and western women are liberated and positioned to save their non-western sisters (Mohanty, 1988).

The western feminine ideals propagated by abolitionists are particularly troubling in rescue missions informed by rehabilitation and reintegration processes of those defined as “suffering bodies” (Doezeema, 2001). The rehabilitative aspect of the rescue movement can be especially harmful because it implies injury from sexual labor, a notion which limits the array of lived experiences of women migrants and global sex workers. Certainly, those who have become involved in the sex trade through involuntary labor may require services and support, but they should not be grouped with sex workers who have chosen their profession. The enforced identity of “suffering bodies” leaves little room for self-identification and assessment of one’s own reality and options (Doezeema, 2001).

The practice of victimization is unavoidable for rescuers who equate sexual labor as ultimately within the paradigm of violence against women. Abolitionist feminists like Kathleen Barry view heterosexual sex as the ultimate site of male power over women (Doezeema, 2001). Barry has also translated the hierarchical notion of economically developing nations to people, suggesting that third-world sex workers are somehow less developed than women in the western world (Kempadoo, 1998). Abolitionists evoke notions of a broken woman’s spirit that is believed to

need intervention, rehabilitation and protection (Agustín, 2007). This essentialized spirit is ideal for sex trafficking and prostitution crusades because it minimizes cultural difference and the possibility of different types of womanhood, sexuality, and identity. This narrow understanding of womanhood is, of course, unrealistic and in and of itself, deeply oppressive. At the same time, the notion of global womanhood functions to legitimize intervention by women for women.

NGOs within the rescue industry address issues of care, support and help to move forward for women whom they have “rescued,” but the ideology of these notions is highly problematic. The language used is often patronizing and dangerous. The term empowerment is often thrown around by rescue workers, but empowerment is by definition something that one does for herself (Agustín, 2007). When interventions take place as a result of a moral objection concerned more by societal norms and social organization than by the lived realities of individuals, the impacts can be decidedly disempowering.

The anti-trafficking discourse of the rescue industry positions gendered issues as appropriate sites of intervention without taking into account the possibility of different notions of womanhood. Indeed the onus of defining gender rights and an essential notion of womanhood is a task those in the rescue industry view as uniquely their own, as evidenced by their positioning of third-world women as victims of their own cultures (Doezema, 2001). The rescue industry exemplifies a commitment to heteronormative values, an idealized western femininity, and a hierarchy that ultimately views men as in control—whether as procurers of sex or as rescuers of slaves.

### **The Damage of Rescuing**

The rescue industry is incredibly damaging through its perpetuation of victimizing practices, western hegemony, neocolonialism, racial hierarchies as well as a feminine ideal, and it’s almost unflinching support of the notion that men are in control of women’s sexuality, labor, migration and salvation. By focusing on eradicating sex work and frequent calls to end the demand for sexual labor, men are put in control, and women’s economic livelihoods and right to choose are threatened. This suggests a dual victimhood wherein women are on the one hand powerless objects to be consumed through sexual encounters and on the other powerless captives unable to alter the industry.

The neocolonialist current in the sex trafficking discourse positions non-western sex workers as victims, but does little to provide them with support and rights, focusing instead on the act of saving. This echoes the abolitionist movement in nineteenth century London, which was described by Agustín (2007). In order to secure their interventionist labor, sex work abolitionists threatened and sometimes eliminated the livelihood of other women. This practice has been replicated by the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief of 2003, wherein the United States became the largest government donor to combat HIV/AIDS and attached conditions to funding, the most notable of which required organizations to sign an anti-prostitution pledge to qualify for funding—the epitome of a moral crusade (Weitzer, 2007). This move has not been overturned, but has garnered significant criticism, given that it is counterproductive. The

Brazilian government declined \$40 million in HIV/AIDS funding due to the pledge, highlighting its paradoxical existence; sex workers are essential to HIV/AIDS programming, and of course, cannot be asked to take a stance against themselves.

Equally paradoxical is the rescue industry's binary of men as monsters or heroes, which is deeply problematic. The stories of prostitute rescues portray Eastern and Southern men as evil traffickers or deviants (CATW, undated), whereas western men usually play the role of saviors. A book by *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof and his wife Sheryl WuDunn (2009) is based on the authors' own investigation of prostitution and trafficking in Africa and Asia and exemplifies the manner in which western men take up the role of savior. He is a self-ordained hero acting out of necessity, explaining that: "even though we are peripheral to the slavery, our action is needed to overcome a horrific evil" (p. 25). Consistently, Kristof is suffocatingly patronizing and sexist. Throughout the text, the term "girl" is used to describe women working in prostitution. Moreover, when describing the "victims" Kristof has "saved" by buying them out of the brothel, the authors are careful to evaluate women's physical attributes and level of beauty (see for instance the story of Momm, "a frail girl with oversized eyes," p. 37). Kristof is baffled when "girls" return to brothel work despite being "saved," but the authors insist that this is not representative of agency and write that "prostitutes are neither acting freely nor enslaved, but living in a world etched in ambiguities somewhere between those two extremes" (p. 39).

The glorification of men in the rescue industry is an alarming and growing trend. Organizations like CATW tend to include and highlight the participation of men, who are made to seem both responsible for ending the demand for sex work and for saving those who are oppressed by it in the meantime (Bernstein, 2010). At the CATW meeting attended by Bernstein, she notes that the men in attendance are singled out in the audience and applauded for their mere presence. Men are valorized or demonized by the rescue industry. They are seen as progressive and brave soldiers of righteousness or cast as evil traffickers and wanton sexual deviants.

While force and coercion exist in the sex trade, as in all industries, this is insufficient to argue for abolition of sex work. The annual reports on levels of government compliance to counteract trafficking issued by The US Department of State seem politically-fuelled and incapable of defining the elements of force and coercion in a manner unique to industries associated with trafficking. Fortunately, there are movements seeking to counter the western hegemony of the rescue industry. In April 2012, a Thai sex worker rights organization published a report based on the effects of anti-trafficking policies on sex worker rights in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (Empower Foundation, 2012). While problems with rescuing are nothing new, they continue to be significant. As Pim, a research partner and a sex worker from Burma recounts in the report: "I did so many jobs before sex work. I was exploited in every one of them. Sex work gives me the most independence, freedom and the best conditions. It's the same for all my friends. We are grateful and thank you for your concern, but please don't rescue me" (as cited in Empower Foundation, 2010, p. 58). The report also suggests that the criminal justice approach espoused by the rescue movement is the greatest obstacle to rights and freedom for sex workers in the region.

## Conclusion

In closing, I wish to emphasize that the rescue movement is dehumanizing, essentializing, victimizing, patronizing, anti-woman, and for the most part, is little more than a moral crusade constructed to help western bourgeois women feel useful and morally righteous. Given the staggering array of statistical variations documenting sex trafficking “victims” and growing backlash from “rescued” women and sex work organizations, the success of the rescue industry in advancing women’s rights is negligible at best. At worst, the movement reinforces damaging dichotomies between western and non-western women, sex workers and abolitionist feminists, migrant and domestic women, and men and women. While instances of forced sexual labor involving international migration do occur, sex work activists and scholars are rightly critical of the statistical inconsistencies, conflation of sex work with slavery, and the absolute lack of agency afforded to migrant women and sex workers within the dominantly abolitionist sex trafficking discourse (Agustín, 2007; Bernstein, 2007; Kempadoo, 1998). While some anti-trafficking organizations like the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) are making progress in broadening the discourse on sex work, migration and trafficking (Doezema, 2009), most organizations proliferate a mythology and narrative that is disempowering, damaging and decidedly anti-women.

While it is unlikely that this instance of moral panic will subside soon, it is imperative that activists, sex workers, and women who have indeed experienced trafficking be supported to come to the forefront of the discourse and help shape the presently distorted narrative. As Ronald Weitzer (2007) suggests, an alternative model for combating involuntary sexual labor migration would focus on socioeconomic conditions, address forced labor rather than sex work as a monolithic category, value women’s lived experiences and support better working conditions, health and safety for women in all industries. Doezema (2001) references Wendy Brown, who “argues that we need to develop new spaces in which to decide politically, collectively, what is good, just and right, derived not from identity-based notions of ‘who I am’ but from a new ethics of ‘what I want for us’” (p. 21). Much more so than the ideology of the rescue industry, this represents a truly feminist pro-woman movement—one that is inclusive, reflexive and open-minded; one that believes fiercely that sex workers are not in need of rescuing.

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## **PART II**

### **SOSC 3544: Undergraduate Student Research**

## Overview

### The Assignment

In the course “SOSC 3544: Global Human Trafficking” students were introduced to the idea of human trafficking as a discourse constituted by a set of approaches or “narratives.” Through study of a variety of academic journal articles and scholarly books they learned about feminist abolitionist and sexual slavery approaches and their historical links to the nineteenth century narrative on the “white slave trade” as well as their significance in disseminating a narrative about “sex trafficking.” They were taught about the criminal justice and modern-day slavery narratives that inform many contemporary national and international government policies, and the consequences such approaches have for law enforcement and humanitarian interventions. They read about migration studies and sex workers’ rights perspectives, and about how such narratives have also encouraged alternative framings of the problem.

The main objective of the research component of the course was to apply the theoretical knowledge gained in the course. The specific assignment was to research representations of human trafficking in the media and to identify and critically analyze the various narratives that underpin the representations. Students were given the options of either creating a team research project and writing a short individual activity report, or writing an individual research paper. In a class of 34 students, six elected to write individual research papers, while the rest formed themselves into eight teams of varying sizes. While I gave specific questions to guide the research, the format of the team presentations was to be decided by the teams themselves. Three teams chose to analyze films, news, and campaigns for the embedded trafficking narrative(s), two teams analyzed feature films for the ways in which gender, race/ethnicity and nationality were represented, and one team of two students opted to examine the statistics and their sources in various media reports and articles. Another two students choreographed, under the direction of graduate student Krista Antonio, a dance based on course materials—scholarly article and a documentary film—about representations of “mail-order brides.” The majority of the individual student papers analyzed feature films. In the following I summarize several of the team presentations drawing from PowerPoint presentations and some of the written reports. Three papers are published in their entirety in this collection and are not included in the summary below. These were selected for publication based on their completeness and quality of analysis.

### Representations in Films

The feature films *Taken* and *Holly*—two of the most explicit examples of Hollywood stories about human trafficking—proved to be the most popular amongst the students, and they formed the substance of analysis for various team projects and individual research papers.

The team comprising Diandrea D’arville, Kristina Matveev, Sivan Revivo, and Alexandra Salinas Contento (aka Team Edward) analysed the ways in which gender, race/ethnicity and nationality were reflected in *Taken*. In their PowerPoint presentation they showed how the film relied heavily upon the dominant racialized and gendered stereotypes of the trafficked “victim” as an innocent, naïve, young white woman, the traffickers as foreign male gangsters operating



transnational criminal activities involving drugs and sex, and the “rescuer” as a white American father and simultaneously a CIA agent. They argued that the film mirrored a criminal justice approach to the subject of human trafficking due to its heavy emphasis on law and order and transnational crime.

Harleen Channa, Simarroop Dhillon and Antonella Santi, in their presentation “Feature Films or Selected Representations? Rethinking Representations of Race, Ethnicity and Gender” further probed representations in film. Comparing *Taken* to *Holly* and four other films, they demonstrated that although the representations varied slightly, certain trends could be identified. Their analysis revealed that, while the category “trafficked victims” could be extended to include young women and an underage boy of different ethnicities and nationalities, the overwhelming image was of the victim as foreign yet white, poor and innocent, with traffickers invariably being portrayed as men from non-western countries, and the “rescuer” almost always as a white American, and most commonly a man.

	Victim	Trafficker	Rescuer
<b>Human Trafficking</b>	-1 American woman -3 Eastern European women	-Eastern European men	-White, American -Man and woman
<b>Taken</b>	-White, American, young woman	-Middle Eastern men	-White, American man
<b>Holly</b>	-Vietnamese young woman	-Vietnamese woman -Vietnamese parents	-White, American man
<b>Trade</b>	-Mexican young woman (Adriana) -Polish woman -Thai boy	-Russian men -Mexican/ American trade organization	-White, American man -Mexican young man (Adriana's brother)
<b>The Journey</b>	-White, Moldovan woman	-White, Eastern European men	-White, American woman
<b>Svetlana's Journey</b>	-White, Bulgarian woman	-White, Eastern European man	-Unknown

The team argued that there was an “oversimplification of trafficking” in the films, that the issue was sensationalized and associated only with sex, and that the gendered division of roles in the films “reinforced patriarchal society.” They found that the films highlighted mainly violence, force and kidnapping, depicted a “hegemonic relationship between white and racialized groups (Eastern European, Asian)” and reinforced a narrative about sexual slavery. They concluded that there is “a need to be critical of why ethnically-othered women are chosen more as the victims in American feature films and why white males are depicted as the “heroes” and rescuers” (PowerPoint presentation March 19-20, 2012).

In order to initiate a discussion about mainstream media stereotypes of human trafficking, Nicole Daiter, Jennifer Thierren and Aileen Heatherington made a banner, showed selected film clips, handed out mini-placards/protest signs, and created a Tumblr website about the film series *Human Trafficking*. Jennifer explains in her final paper for the course:

We made these mini protest signs in order for other students and faculty to be able to take one and “spread the word” about our conference and the issues surrounding the

stereotypes portrayed in mainstream media to their friends and colleagues. ... The front of the mini protest signs included images of the different characters in *Human Trafficking* and the question “trafficker, victim or rescuer?” at the bottom of these photos. We asked this question in order to get people passing by thinking of how they make these distinctions, more specifically how they associate the gender and race of these individuals with the role they play in the human trafficking framework... On the back of the posters we had the phrase “challenge your stereotypes” and provided the links to our Tumblr and the twitter that was created by another group in the class. (Jennifer Thierren, “Human Trafficking Conference Follow Up,” March 27, 2012:1)



The team identified the film as primarily reflecting a criminal justice approach.

### Analysis of the News

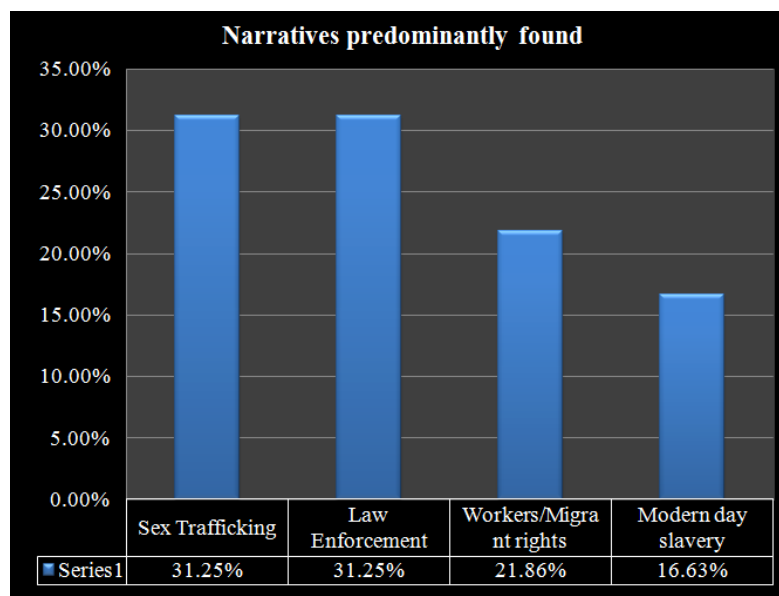
Kazim Hayat, Lily Ivkovic, Sabera Merali, Danielle Thomas, and Victoria Xayaboun together analysed six news sources—*The Guardian* (UK), *The Toronto Star* (Canada), *The Toronto Sun* (Canada), *The New York Times* (USA), *BBC World News* and *The Sun* (UK)—for coverage of news related to human trafficking during a one-month period ending on March 11, 2012. Of the 37 articles they found, around one-half came from *The Guardian* and just under a quarter from the *BBC World News*. *The New York Times* and the UK *Sun* each contributed a small number of the articles, and a handful came from the Canadian newspapers *The Sun* and *The Toronto Star*.

Of the approaches taken, the team found that ten articles—just under a third—related the issue to sex trafficking, with an equal proportion reporting it from a concern about law enforcement, while seven articles focused on workers and/or migrants rights, and five on modern-day human slavery. The team found that trafficked persons were portrayed as victims or slaves in 59% of the articles, and that economic consequences were taken up in 59%. There was a focus on children in 43% of the articles, and in 22% border control was a main issue (PowerPoint presentation, March 19-20, 2012).

Examination of the individual news sources led the team to conclude that *The Guardian* portrayed the issue “stereotypically through images of the ‘victims,’ such as child sex slaves in China, or the perpetrators as South Asian males” and carried “lots of critique regarding the Governments where migrants were employed.” It was found that *The Toronto Sun* in Canada tended to cover the issue as either sex trafficking or modern-day slavery, with little to no attention to the voices of the main actors involved. *The Toronto Star* portrayed women mainly as victims, taken and forced to work as sex slaves, but with no mention of worker’s rights. *The Sun* (UK) “did not take a stand against any side,” often reporting cases going through the courts. The team pointed out, however, that all articles in this paper lacked information on the background of

the trafficked persons and “provided an unclear perspective about the circumstances that led them to servitude.” *The New York Times* articles “were mostly related to sex trafficking and the need for stricter law enforcement to combat the issue,” with emphasis on the offender, and on women as victims. The sixth source, *The BBC World News*, “used a sensationalist approach that highlighted cases related to modern-day slavery and the need for the global North to rescue the victims in the global South through the criminal justice system.”

The students concluded that overall, the news on the subject was “incoherent” and that published articles were limited in their perspective and lacked in-depth information on the alleged victims and perpetrators. The voice of “victims,” and the conditions and consequences that led them into such a situation were not addressed, resulting in a “very partial picture” (Quoted from the PowerPoint presentation March 19-20, 2011 and final paper by Sabera Merali).



## Campaigns

In the presentation “Who’s Buying,” Karla Cronoro, Cheryl Wong, Elizabeth Goodfellow, and Winifred Tai-Ohenhen examined the anti-trafficking messages of three different campaigns: “MTV Exit,” “U.N Gift” (the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking), and “Not for Sale.” They found that statistics were used heavily in the three campaigns but that their use varied greatly and appeared to be employed mainly to whip up fear or to raise funds. They also found that the images were mostly of young women being trafficked, with the trafficker depicted as a foreign “Other” with power over the young girls. The campaigns were read by the team as disempowering to women, through representing the young foreign woman as a victim, as incapable of migrating on her own or of making sound economic decisions, and of being in need of rescue. The team concluded that the language deployed and the stories told in the campaigns had a “shock and awe” effect, that definitions of trafficking were very broad and thus “lacked realistic logic and scope,” and that the campaigns did not address the structural inequalities that cause the problems (PowerPoint presentation March 20, 2012).

## Developing a Critical Stance

One of the more difficult aspects of the assignment was to find a way to critically engage with media representations of human trafficking without simply reproducing the dominant tropes or narratives. The team made up by Aaron Huggins, Rumaila Soin, and Jennifer Welyhorski found

this aspect particularly challenging. They decided to create a poster board display of images representing three different narratives in order to raise questions about the ways in which such narratives dealt with the issues, and collected images depicting sexual slavery, modern-day slavery, and migrant's and sex worker's rights. They aimed to show the images and engage passers-by with questions about the verity of such images, hoping to disrupt common ideas about trafficking and to pose alternative ways of viewing the problem. Nevertheless, they found it hard to escape reproducing the very ideas they aimed to dispel. The team recognised and extensively discussed this problem, which was also raised by several other students during the panel discussions at the conference and in final reports and papers. As Jennifer Thierren notes,

While working on this assignment I discovered how challenging it was to think of creative ways to present human trafficking narratives such as the criminal justice approach... without perpetuating the same stereotypes and ideas that are put forward by these paradigms. I found it particularly difficult to find appropriate images from the film [*Human Trafficking*] to put on to the mini posters that did not reinforce the stereotypical images of the trafficker, victim and rescuer... I also learned that we must be extremely aware of the language we use whether it is on posters, websites or even when writing academic papers on the topic of human trafficking and ensure that this language fits the appropriate narrative we are trying to critique or represent. My group found this particularly difficult while adding information on our Tumblr website, more specifically in terms of the criminal justice narrative and our critiques on this approach... [It] took a great deal of time in order to ensure that our language was appropriate and that we were adequately conveying our message. (Jennifer Thierren, "Human Trafficking Conference Follow Up," March 27, 2012: 2)

While all the students in the course may not have been completely successful in finding the language, images, or analysis to convey a critical approach to the issue of human trafficking, the fundamental idea that human trafficking could be studied as a subject that, as with most other facts, is open to interpretation and a variety of perspectives, was conveyed throughout their research and presentations. We hope it is an idea that this publication carries forward.

Kamala Kempadoo

October, 2012

## Source the Stats: What Do We Know About Statistics on Human Trafficking?

*Maytal Michaelov and Stephanie D'Souza<sup>1</sup>*

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The project, which we designed and presented for the conference, explored the topic of statistics on human trafficking. This idea was largely inspired by the material covered in the eight-month-long undergraduate course entitled “Global Sex Trafficking” taught by Professor Kamala Kempadoo. Throughout our work in this course, we learned what underlies the ambiguities in statistics on human trafficking. We also knew that the general public probably is *not* aware of this vast range in statistics, or the reasons for these discrepancies. This project was an attempt to change that—at least in terms of York University’s campus population.

The first component of the project was a compilation of video clips presenting different statistical claims about human trafficking. This video was intended to be provocative and puzzling. The video began with the question, which seems to be central to many public discussions on trafficking: “What is the number of trafficking victims?” However, instead of providing a definite answer, we extracted information from a variety of academic texts, public media and social campaigns and presented a wide variety of numbers. As a result, clips from dozens of different videos, voices calling different numbers and visual snapshots of scholarly texts overwhelmed the viewer. The incongruence of statistics presented in different sources demonstrated that there is no definite answer and revealed the unreliability of statistical information on human trafficking. Ultimately, the goal of the video project was to encourage critical thinking about human trafficking and, especially, statistics used in public campaigns.

In order to generate further discussion, we also introduced what we called The Penny Campaign. The Campaign invited York students to share their estimates of figures related to trafficking. We then used this opportunity to talk about the sources of these numbers. In Vari Hall at York University we distributed the cards, which asked students to answer three questions related to human trafficking statistics. In an effort to attract more students, we attached a penny to these cards. The penny also symbolized the stereotypical trafficking transaction (as most trafficking situations are believed to involve a direct exchange of money for a person). The back of the card informed the students that they have just been trafficked by accepting the penny, which we believed demonstrated how easily statistics can be altered. In this case, based on our definition,

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Stephanie D'Souza is a graduate of the International Development Studies program at York University. Her work in the non-profit sector is fueled by a strong passion for social change, travel and volunteerism. She can be contacted at stephanie.dsouza@gmail.com

each participant contributed to a new statistic on human trafficking. The cards made a bold statement, which encouraged students to discuss the issue with us. One of the major points of the campaign was that statistics surrounding human trafficking vary greatly depending on the definition of “trafficking” and other terms that are used in that particular source. When asked, students themselves had a very difficult time defining “trafficking,” and this helped them understand the inconsistencies. The Penny Campaign exposed the shocking unreliability of human trafficking statistics and made a satirical comment that essentially *anyone*—even a York student in Vari Hall—can contribute to the database of statistical information on human trafficking.



The video and the Penny Campaign emphasized the need for critical thinking, even in terms of seemingly objective sources of information, such as expert knowledge, and political and social campaigns. The reactions from attendees of our presentation also showed that these sources of information are usually not questioned. We hope that our project demonstrated that even the most convincing of claims should not be taken for granted, and every source needs to be approached critically.

This project helped underscore the shortcomings of human trafficking narratives, such as the use of unreliable statistics for evoking an emotional response in the audience. It also helped foster discussion about the definitions of terms “trafficking” and “victim.” Furthermore, it introduced the students to a more critical standpoint, which hopefully will help them to distinguish unreliable or false claims, as well as strategic uses of statistics within discourse on human trafficking.

### **Project results on-line**

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/333455856702275/>

YouTube video: <http://youtu.be/SDqcvakk2KA>

Twitter page: <http://twitter.com/#!/sourcethstats>

## Mail-Order Brides: The Interpretative Dance

*Dance by Roli Arueyingho and Sharlene Gaithuma with choreography assistance  
by Krista Antonio*

*Text by Sharlene Gaithuma<sup>1</sup>*

*Photograph reproduced with permission from Sharlene Gaithuma and Roli Arueyingho*

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The dance routine was inspired by Sine Plambeck's chapter "From Thailand with Love: Transnational Marriage Migration in the Global Care Economy." In particular, we were fascinated by migrant women's autonomy and their aspirations for a better life. At the same time, it was disappointing to see that in society women's courage is often presented as merely a cry for help without recognition of their independence and agency.



The choreography of this project was inspired by the documentary film *Love on Delivery*, which deconstructed stereotypes about pimping. Instead of the stereotypical representation of the pimp as a male who has no interest in the well-being of a mail-order bride, the film depicted an alternative image of a woman trying to help her niece to attain a better life. Caring for her niece's well-being, the main character sought to ensure that the man who would marry her niece met her standards. Contrary to the popular image of the powerless young women, the film portrayed a bride-to-be who was well-informed about the conditions of the marriage and her new life abroad.

There are two dancers in this piece. One represents a popular stereotype of a trafficked victim, associated with the terms "violence," "force" and "pimping." The other was associated with the words "dreams," "maternity," "education," and "love," and represented the reality as portrayed through Plambeck's research and in the film.

The dance was performed to the popular song "Set Fire to the Rain" by Adele. We felt that the fire in the song represents power and awareness. One of the main messages embodied in the

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<sup>1</sup> Sharlene Gaithuma, graduated in summer 2012 with a Specialized Honours BA in International Development Studies at York University. Her passions lie in international affairs and doing freelance art in her spare time. She plans on furthering her academic career in natural resource management with a particular focus on Eastern Africa. She can be reached at [sgaithuma@yahoo.com](mailto:sgaithuma@yahoo.com).



dance called for the eradication of stereotypes pertaining to “mail-order brides.” The performance attempted to show that instead of being the victims of trafficking in need of rescuing, “mail-order brides,” or migrant sex workers, are actually striving to better their socio-economic conditions in ways they see fit. Overall, the dance seeks to portray empowerment and autonomy.

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*Love on Delivery* (2008), directed by Janus Metz. Cosmo Film Doc ApS.  
<http://www.dfi.dk/faktaomfilm/danishfilms/dfilm.aspx?id=21446>



## Note on Conference Poster


Allison Magpayo<sup>1</sup>

The Centre for Feminist Research (CFR) at York University presents

# FROM BLEEDING HEARTS TO CRITICAL THINKING:

## Exploring the Issue of Human Trafficking

A Student Conference



March 19, 11-3pm  
Vari Hall Rotunda  
Previews of student research

March 20, 9am – 6pm  
Founders College Senior Common Room (305 FC)

- Graduate and undergraduate student panels and presentations
- Guest Speaker - Carol Leigh aka Scarlot Harlot – director of the Bay Area Sex Workers Advocacy Network, artist, scholar, film maker, and inventor of the term “sex work.”
- Screening - “Collateral Damage: Sex Workers and the Anti-Trafficking Campaign”
- Book launch – 2nd edition of *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work and Human Rights*, by York U. professor Kamala Kempadoo

The generous support of the following is gratefully acknowledged:

At York University: Office of the Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies; Dept. of Social Science; Office of the Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies; Graduate Student Association; Centre for Women and Trans People; International Development Studies; Graduate Program in Development Studies; and Graduate Program in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies. Maggie's, Toronto Sex Workers Action Project.

Photography and design services by Jimmy Limit : [www.jimmylimit.com](http://www.jimmylimit.com) . Button and stickers made by Readers and Writers Custom Vinyl: <http://readersandwriters.tumblr.com>

While brainstorming the idea for the conference poster, I turned to *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered* by Dr. Kamala Kempadoo, a pivotal text on the subject of migration, sex work and human rights. Borrowing inspiration from the title of Jyoti Sanghera's chapter, “Unpacking the Trafficking Discourse,” I curated a suitcase of objects designed to both represent and reconfigure the viewer's assumptions on trafficking and “the trafficked victim.” By using familiar, meaning-laden objects, I encourage free association as a means of raising questions. For instance, while the notion of trafficking often brings to mind images of young, innocent and unwilling sex-slaves

<sup>1</sup> Allison Magpayo is an undergraduate student at York University, completing a self-directed program in Middle Eastern Studies and a certificate in Refugee and Migration Studies. Her undergraduate thesis will be written on Filipino migrant workers in Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories and the impacts of ethnically segmented labour markets on the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process. She can be contacted at [allisonmagpayo@gmail.com](mailto:allisonmagpayo@gmail.com).

Allison Magpayo also expresses a special thank you to photographer Jimmy Limit whose patience and editing skills made this project possible.

(foreign or otherwise), the suitcase and its contents bear witness to a different reality. By using visual markers of an informed and willing traveller (maps, letters, and even more fundamentally, a packed suitcase), I hoped to represent the agency and choice of migrant labourers, whether in sex work, agriculture, construction or otherwise. Showcasing agency forces the viewer to fundamentally reassess the meaning of trafficking promoted through government policy and popular media. The inclusion of family photos, letters and the “Western Union” envelope, also emphasizes the crucial role of labour migration to many transnational families and remittance economies across the globe.

While the stereotypically feminine items (lacy bra, nail polish) superficially enforce the discursive conflation of human trafficking and sex work, I mitigate this reading in several ways. Firstly, by adding text (button, sticker) that reads “Migrants Rights are Human Rights” and “Stop Deportation!” I hope to situate sex work as just another type of work within the larger struggle for migrant workers’ rights. Generously made and donated by Readers and Writers, a local custom vinyl lettering company, these items also encourage the viewer to consider the human rights aspect of anti-trafficking laws and their impact on actual lives of migrants and sex workers. Secondly, by including Emma Goldman’s classic work “The Traffic in Women,” a groundbreaking text on the rights of sex workers, I convey support for the struggle toward acceptance of sex work as legitimate work.

Finally, as the conference also marked the release of the second edition of Dr. Kamala Kempadoo’s *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered*, the book seemed a timely and appropriate addition to the conference poster. Simply put, the book’s title encapsulates the ultimate purpose of our conference—to encourage those around us to “reconsider” what they think they know about prostitution and human trafficking.

### **References**

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- Goldman, E. (1998). The traffic in women. In *Red Emma speaks: An Emma Goldman reader*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Amherst: Humanity Books. Pp. 175-189.

## Recommended Resources for Critical Thinking about Human Trafficking

The Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)

<http://www.gaatw.org/>

*The Anti-Trafficking Review*, peer-reviewed journal devoted exclusively to anti-trafficking issues and debates

<http://www.antitraffickingreview.org/>

*Research for Sex Work*, publication of the Global Network of Sex Work Projects

<http://www.nswp.org/research-sex-work>

The Prostitution Education Network, with important resources and links on sex worker's rights and organizations

<http://www.bayswan.org/>

Zines by Emi Koyama, on trafficking and sex work

<http://eminism.org/store/zine-emi.html>

*The Naked Anthropologist*, blog by Laura Agustín on migration, trafficking and sex

<http://www.lauraAgustín.com/>

*The Old Anti-trafficking Propaganda* by Nandita Sharma

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/09/05/the-old-anti-trafficking-propaganda/>

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## Appendix I: 2011 Symposium Poster

The Centre for Feminist Research (CFR) and The Department of Social Science present:



### **International Symposium** **"Migration, Sex Work, Trafficking: Master Narratives and Critical Perspectives"**

From new research in Europe, North America and Africa, this symposium critically examines key narratives about the cross-border movement of persons for work in sex industries, and explores alternative ways of thinking about "sex trafficking." The panels showcase graduate student research in the field and highlight new directions in the debate.

**Thursday, March 24th 2011**  
**10:00am - 3:30pm**  
**Harry Crowe Room (109 Atkinson)**  
**York University**



#### **Keynote speaker:**

*Dr. Rutvica Andrijasevic* (Open University, UK)  
"Sex, Slaves and Citizens: the Politics of  
Mobility in Europe"

#### **Panelists:**

*Elya M. Durisin* (PhD candidate Political Science, York University)

*Amanda Glasbeek* (Assistant professor, Criminology, Department of Social Science, York University)

*Synnøve Økland Jahnsen* (PhD candidate Sociology, University of Bergen, Norway)

*Sine Plambech* (PhD candidate Social Anthropology, Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)/Columbia University, New York)

*Karlee Sapoznik* (PhD candidate History, Harriet Tubman Institute, York University)

*Jessica Yee* (Native Youth Sexual Health Network)

To register for lunch and/or to receive copies of symposium materials, please e-mail [tlo\\_919@yahoo.ca](mailto:tlo_919@yahoo.ca) by March 22<sup>nd</sup>

The generous support of the following is gratefully acknowledged: Dean of Research; Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies; Department of Social Science; Law and Society Program and the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

## **Appendix II: 2012 Conference Program**

# **From Bleeding Hearts to Critical Thinking: Exploring the Issue of Human Trafficking**

## **A Student Conference**

**March 20, 2012**

### **9am: Opening and welcome**

Ena Dua – director, Centre for Feminist Research

Barbara Crow – Associate Dean, FLA&PS

Kamala Kempadoo – conference organizer, Dept. of Social Science

### **9:15 – 10:45: Graduate student panel I**

Moderator: Sonia Lawrence

Savitri Persaud (SPTH) “Sex Work and Media Discourses of ‘Slavery’: Unpacking Al Jazeera’s “Slavery – A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Evil”

Kimberly Veller (DVST) “The White Woman's Burden? The Rescue Industry and a New Imperialism”

Jenn Jozwiak (GFWS) “My Father, the Hero: Paternal Masculinities in Contemporary Sex Trafficking Films”

Amy de Blois (GFWS) “Anti-Sex-Trade/Trafficking Campaigns in American Cultural Media: The Problematic Support for Abolitionism.”

### **11 – 12:30: Graduate student panel II**

Moderator: Amanda Glasbeek

Darja Davydova (GFWS) “Academic Discourses on Sex Trafficking and Politics of Belonging In The European Union”

Shaunna Bruton (GFWS) “Nation-States’ Vested Interest in “Sex Trafficking” Discourse”

Toni Francis (GFWS) “Exploring and Comparing the South African and Canadian Legal Response to Human Trafficking”

Kyla McGowan (SLST) “Trafficking in the International Context; Complicating the 'Cause and Effect' Framework”

Lunch

**1:30 – 3pm: Guest speaker: Carol Leigh**

Screening of excerpts of “Collateral Damage: Sex Workers and the Anti-Trafficking Campaign”

**3:15 – 5:15: Presentations by students in SOSC 3544**

Moderators: Nadia Hasan and Sharada Srinivasan,

“Mail Order Brides” performed by Roli Arueyingho and Sharlene Gaithuma

“Rethinking Representations” by Harleen Channa, Simarroop Dhillon and Antonella Santi

“Who’s Buying ”by Karla Cronoro, Elizabeth Goodfellow, Winifred Tai-Ohenhen, and Cheryl Wong

“Source the Stats” by Maytal Michaelov and Stephanie D'Souza

Team “Edward”: Diandrea D'arville, Kristina Matveev, Sivan Revivo, and Alexandra Salinas Contento

“Human Rights Advocacy” by Kazim Hayat, Lily Ivkovic, Sabera Merali, Danielle Thomas, and Victoria Xayaboun

**5:30 – 6pm: Reception and book launch of the second edition of *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered* edited by Kamala Kempadoo**

Presentation by Deborah Brock, Dept. of Sociology