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Understanding Public Knowledge and Attitudes towards Trafficking in Human Beings: A Cross-National Study

• Thank you
• Why
• What
• How
• So what
• Q&A (offers of unpaid help, donations in kind or cash, etc.)
Why?

Trafficking in Human Beings (THB): one of the gravest violations of human rights

HOWEVER

Writing and researching: problematic

Why?

- Conflicting theoretical perspectives & policy-making approaches
- Absence of reliable data
- Absence of shared understanding how to tackle the complexity of issues involved
- Accusations of bias and taking sides: ivory towers and political platforms (Kempadoo 2005)
Why?

Overall consensus that something needs to be done: legal, political and economic responses

**However:**
THB as a matter of concern for various stakeholders for very different reasons

+ specific national socio-economic, cultural, political contexts

= different and conflicting policy responses within and between countries, regions, movements, governments
Why?

- Trafficking: ‘new slave trade’, transnational organised crime, illegal migration, threat to national security, human rights violation, violence against women, prostitution, or the combination of the above

- Global Panics (Kapur 2005):
  - About the survival of the nation
  - Moral panic feeding anti-sex work agenda
  - Cultural panic treating the ‘Others’ as cultural contaminant
Some UK tabloids’ headlines (2006)

• HALT THE TIDE OF EU MIGRANTS ... HIV CHILDREN BRINGING TIMEBOMB TO BRITAIN - Sunday Express, 20/8
• EAST EUROPE MIGRANTS HELP TAKE JOBLESS TO SIX-YEAR HIGH - Daily Mail, 17/8
• MIGRANTS GET BRITS' PAY SLASHED BY 50 PER CENT - The Sun, 18/8
• UNCHECKED IMMIGRATION IS PUTTING BRITONS OUT OF WORK - Daily Telegraph, 18/8
• CHEERS, WE'RE COMING TO RIP YOU OFF - People 20/8
• HOW THE NEW FAGINS ARE BRINGING CHILD SLAVERY TO BRITAIN - Sunday Telegraph 4/6
• NHS AND SCHOOLS 'AT RISK FROM SURGE IN EU IMMIGRANTS' - The Times 31/07
• IMMIGRANTS TO FLOOD IN - Daily Star 24/07
UK Government responses (the story of victims, crime and immigration)

• ‘We have...established mandatory training for all frontline UK Border Agency staff on human trafficking awareness’ (2011)
• 'We will pursue and disrupt trafficking networks overseas ...to stop them before they ply their trade in the UK and then bring them to justice’ (2011)
• ‘We are also seeing clear evidence of improvement in victim identification’ (2011)

Statements by Damian Green, UK Minister of State for Immigration
Why?

Such panics:
- inform legal and institutional responses to THB
- Shape public opinion and attitudes
- Shift the focus away from the reliance and growing demand for cheap labour and commodified bodies and neglect gendered and racialised vulnerability and exclusion within the context of neoliberal capitalism and consumerism
Why?

• Mary Buckley:
  ‘What is missing from this accumulating multivariate picture [of trafficking] is...the extent of people’s knowledge about its scale and of what the process entails, and views on what action, if any, should be taken’ (Buckley 2009)

• 2012-2016 EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings:
  the efforts needed to raise public awareness of trafficking targeting consumers and users of services, corporate social responsibility, business and human rights, and initiatives aimed at eliminating human trafficking from the supply chains of business
What?

The project will investigate:
- public knowledge and attitudes towards THB
- what factors influence such knowledge, and
- the extent to which public attitudes influence or are influenced by anti-trafficking policies in HU, UA, UK

The overall aim:
• Research, evaluate and disseminate how general public in the three countries along one of the many trafficking routes understand Human Trafficking: i.e. how much people know about Human Trafficking and what exactly they think it is
What?

The role and significance of the study

a) Contribution to scholarly debates on how citizens can influence public policies and how public knowledge is embedded in complex socio-political processes

b) Addressing the existing deficit of comparative empirical data in the field

c) Compare cross-national differences and/or similarities in public understanding and framing of THB in national policies and print media

d) Offer and promote a set of context-specific recommendations on how to develop targeted campaigns and policies to inform public awareness of trafficking

e) Set the agenda for further research into the links between public awareness, consumer behaviour and corporate social responsibility
How?

• Multi-method approach: QUAL + QUAN

Data collection:
• desk-based research
• semi-structured interviews
• focus groups, and
• cross-national opinion surveys.

Data analysis: quantitative regression analysis, qualitative policy and content analysis sensitive to the national contexts
How? Work Packages!

- WP1: Communication/Knowledge Transfer
- WP2: Identification and comparative analysis of relevant policies and legislation
- WP3: Cross-national survey of public knowledge and attitudes towards THB
- WP4: Printed media analysis
- WP5: Qualitative research: focus groups and interviews
- WP6: Understanding and analysing public knowledge and attitudes towards THB
- WP7: Developing policy recommendations
So what? or What next?

- Setting the basis for further research on:
  (a) the links between public awareness of human trafficking and labour exploitation and consumer behaviour
  (b) and exploring the new emerging discourse of trafficking and forced labour as a matter of CSR
Thank you