'Traffickers and *Their* Victims': Anti-Trafficking Policy in the United Kingdom

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Abstract

This paper relies upon the 'What's the problem represented to be' approach to policy analysis to interrogate key representations of human trafficking implicit in the UK Government's anti-trafficking policy. It identifies six policy vectors, or representations, of human trafficking embedded within the policy, including organised crime, 'illegal' immigration, and victim assistance as three primary vectors; sexual exploitation/prostitution, poverty in countries of victims' origin, and isolated instances of labour law infringements as three secondary vectors. In addition, a series of assumptions, which underlie the current interpretation of trafficking, are also identified. By exploring what the problem of human trafficking is represented to be, the paper also provides an insight into what remains obscured within the context of the dominant policy frameworks. In doing so, it highlights the role of state-capital entanglements in normalising exploitation of trafficked, smuggled and 'offshored' labour, and critiques the UK's anti-trafficking policy for manufacturing doubt as to the structural causes of human trafficking within the context of neoliberalism.

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Introduction

Writing about human trafficking is problematic because of conflicting theoretical perspectives and policy approaches to prevention, protection, and prosecution. It is fraught with accusations of bias and taking sides directed at scholars and 'stakeholders'[1] joining the anti-trafficking 'industry' and attempting to influence debates from 'ivory towers' and political platforms. Yet, there is an overall consensus that trafficking is a *problem* and, as a *problem*, it requires legal, political and economic responses. Similarly to other social phenomena identified as 'problems', the way in which human trafficking is problematised creates a form of social knowledge – a discourse. How such knowledge is acted upon results in real-life consequences for those whose voices may not have been fully recognised, or have been silenced by discourse-makers. Over the last 15 years, a specific interpretation of trafficking, as defined by the Palermo Protocol (UN, 2000), became embedded and further 'operationalised' in national legislation, policies and media representations making it difficult to think, write and talk about this 'problem' outside of the established terms of reference.

This paper draws upon social constructionist and post-structuralist approaches, and relies on critical discourse analysis to highlight processes in which subjects are constituted within policies and are governed through specific problematisations. The 'What's the problem represented to be' approach to policy analysis (WPR) developed by Bacchi (2009) provides an interpretive framework to interrogate representations of 'problems' implicit in dominant anti-trafficking discourses, and to highlight what they include and what they leave out. It provides both conceptual and methodological tools to explore how what may seem to be a universally accepted 'problem' – 'the scandal

of human trafficking' (Ki-moon, 2013) - may not exist as an objective phenomenon that can be fully understood and eradicated, but is, in fact, constructed by national governments within specific socio-economic, political and cultural contexts. In this way, it becomes possible to uncover ontological and epistemological assumptions that underlie current anti-trafficking policies, and identify and confront power involved in producing and sustaining dominant discourses.

This paper focuses on problem representations embedded within the anti-trafficking policy in the United Kingdom (UKATP) with the critical intent to demonstrate how governing through specific problematisations has detrimental effects that can be uncovered and challenged; by doing so it raises the possibility that we may be governed differently. By identifying key policy vectors, or representations, of human trafficking embedded within the UKATP and its underlying assumptions, the paper highlights the location of trafficking represented as a crime of illegal border-crossing, and of selective victims' rescue and assistance vis-à-vis broader structures of neoliberal governmentality and neoliberal economic governance. It suggests that although the latter implicates the state, capital and consumer-citizens in a broader system of exploitation of labour of gendered and racialised trafficked and/or smuggled 'Others', reductive policy representations retain their currency within the context of increasing securitisation of public and private life. A specific anti-trafficking policy narrative described in this paper de-links trafficking from the operation of neoliberal market governance and effaces the role of governments, business and consumers in invisibilising and benefitting from exploitation, coercion and dependency of the non-citizen 'Others'.

Methodology: What Is the Problem Represented to Be

The WPR approach to policy analysis (Bacchi, 2009) is based on a premise that every policy is discursively constructed and, as such, contains an explicit or implicit interpretation and diagnosis of what it describes to be a problem. Inseparable from specific historical, political and socio-economic contexts in which they develop, polices, as cultural products, do not merely offer solutions, they also 'by their very nature…imply what is held to be problematic' (Bacchi, 2009: 263). In the process, specific policies emerge as necessary responses and limit our ways of thinking about the 'problem' and options available to 'fix things up'. Bacchi (2009) suggests that the process of working backwards from concrete policies to the identification of issues that were not problematised and policy solutions that were not considered has a transformative potential since it may reveal how particular problematisations emerge and how they play a role in the way that we are governed and live our lives. In order to explore such problematisations, Bacchi (2009) identifies six questions to be applied to a selection of policy texts. These questions interrogate: representations of the 'problem' in a specific policy; assumptions underlying such representations; their origins and history; what fails to be problematized; effects produced by dominant representations; how such representations are disseminated; and how they can be questioned, disrupted and displaced. Policy texts represent 'entry points' for analysis as they tell us what to think and what to do about a problem.

For the analysis in this paper, such entry points included the UK's anti-trafficking legislation drawn from relevant legal acts on immigration, asylum and sexual offences; the UK Government Human Trafficking Strategy (UK Government, 2011); 2012 and 2013 Reports by the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group (UK Government, 2012a, 2013a); and responses to Freedom of Information requests submitted to thirty largest (by population) local authorities, forty-five police forces,

and UK Government's ministerial departments in 2013 to assess the availability of anti-trafficking policies, activities and funding allocations. These documents were coded using NVivo. The assembled corpus of qualitative data was analysed using the WPR guiding questions. The origins and history of the UK government anti-trafficking discourse, as well as the issues related to the trafficking of children, are not discussed here given their complexity and restrictions on the article volume.[2] The 'endpoint' for the policy analysis in this paper is May 2014; it does not cover the Modern Slavery Strategy published by the UK Government in November 2014 (UK Government, 2014), or the Modern Slavery Act (2015).

UK Anti-Trafficking Policy: What *IS* the Problem?

The UK Human Trafficking Strategy (UK Government, 2011), a key element of the UKATP, outlines the Government's interpretation of what human trafficking is and how, as a 'problem', it should be addressed. The Strategy serves as a departure point in this analysis, which included identifying relevant policy documents, developing a coding scheme, and iterative NVIVO-assisted coding. The concept of 'vectoring', applied by Aradau (2008) in discussing the politicisation of trafficking as a socially constructed category, was relied upon to make sense of the assembled corpus of texts. Drawing upon this approach, three primary and three secondary vectors were identified as embedded within the UKATP.

The primary vectors include organised crime, 'illegal' immigration, and victim assistance, which construct trafficking as a crime of 'illegal' border crossing involving two main constituents – 'traffickers and their victims' (UK Government, 2011: 17). Depending on whether victims meet the benchmark of 'genuine' victimhood and suffering set by the Government (see ECPAT, 2014), they can be

temporarily 'regularised' and assisted. As a crime, the policy suggests, trafficking threatens the UK, its borders and people. These three vectors form the 'core' of the UKATP and identify areas for dedicated anti-trafficking government interventions.

Three secondary vectors - sexual exploitation/prostitution, poverty 'out there', and isolated instances of labour law infringements - although embedded in the government documents, are not immediately apparent as key policy directions and are constituted as not demanding any direct or immediate anti-trafficking response. Their role, however, is significant in delegating and dispersing the UK Government's responsibility to address what came to be known as 'pull factors' of human trafficking, including the increasing demand for low-paid and low-skilled labour in the UK and along the offshored and subcontracted supply chains, including emotional, physical or sexual labour provided by trafficked, smuggled, subcontracted, offshored (Urry, 2014) or 'voluntary exploited' (Wilkinson, 2012) workers.

In addition to the six vectors, this paper also identifies six themes, or assumptions, which underlie the UK Government's policy interpretation of trafficking (identified in italics in the discussion that follows). These assumptions enable the dominant problematisation of human trafficking by the Government appear as 'natural' and government responses to its own specific interpretation of the 'problem' as logical, proportionate, compassionate and, therefore, acceptable to the general public. The detailed exploration of rhetorical devices used by the UK Government and its senior politicians in describing trafficking and government's anti-trafficking responses falls outside the scope of this paper. What should be noted, however, is a concerted effort by senior politicians to promote UK as a 'world leader' in the fight against 'modern day slavery' by drawing on the historical legacy of abolitionism and appealing to the general public's sense of moral compassion with dehumanised victims. Fundamental

questions about the role of the government policies on immigration, international development, environmental change, counter-terrorism, labour market de-regulation and economic restructuring in making groups of people vulnerable to human rights abuses, including labour and sexual exploitation, along the lines of 'race', gender, ethnicity, age and nationality are effaced behind the façade of leading 'the global fight against this evil' (UK Government, 2014c).

Human trafficking, the Government suggests, is *ethereal and difficult to quantify yet it remains an everywhere* phenomenon. 'Modern slavery is closer than you think' cautions the UK Government in its 2014 awareness campaign (UK Government, 2014a), although 'understanding the true scale of the problem is complicated' suggests the UK National Crime Agency in its assessment of threat to the UK from serious and organised crime (NCA 2014: 26). Once uncovered, often as an outcome of police anti-trafficking 'raids' (see Ditmore and Thukral, 2012), trafficking is routinely individualised and attributed to 'evil' traffickers and their disempowered victims by concerned and alarmed politicians,[3] media, celebrity advocates (Haynes, 2014), and the anti-trafficking 'rescue' industry (Agustin, 2007).

Problematized as *a stand-alone phenomenon* of organised criminality, trafficking, the Government suggests, can be conceptually and practically separated from other phenomena, including 'minor' labour law infringements (such as not paying someone the national minimum wage[4] or employing 'illegally staying third-country nationals'),[5] or 'illegal immigration' with the National Referral Mechanism as a tool to separate 'genuine' victims from 'illegal immigrants' (UK Government, 2011: 17, 20). As such, trafficking can be fully understood, isolated and eradicated.

The eradication of trafficking, as 'a truly international crime' (UK Government, 2011: 5), can only be achieved through *partnership work* with international 'stakeholders' –

law enforcement and immigration authorities in countries categorised by the UK Government into: 'priority source countries' (UK Government, 2012a: 4), 'countries that pose a greater threat' (UK Government, 2012a: 35), 'poorer countries' (UK Government, 2011: 6) from which people move 'across borders, both legally and illegally' (UK Government, 2011: 6), uncivilised countries failing to consider 'human trafficking as a priority and therefore being reluctant to engage in disruption activity' (UK Government, 2011:13) - as opposed to 'civilised countries' that should not tolerate trafficking (UK Government, 2011: 3). This partnership work is centred, primarily, on tackling and disrupting 'criminals…who target the UK from overseas' (UK Government, 2011: 12). Such dispersal of responsibility for eradicating trafficking among 'international partners' runs parallel to the narrowing down and individualisation of responsibility for the crime of trafficking to organised criminals. Within this context, *criminals are represented as the main beneficiaries of human trafficking*. 'Offenders', the Government asserts, 'are primarily driven by profit' and 'have significant profit at stake and run businesses in order to maintain it' (UK Government, 2011: 6–7), while 'profits they generate are too high and too secure' (UK Government, 2011: 21). One of the underlying policy assumptions is that labour provided by victims of trafficking is devoid of any economic or social value other than the value derived by traffickers in the shape of 'high profits'. This assumption becomes a key element in understanding how government policies effectively disconnect human trafficking from the 'law-breaking of the powerful' (Bacchi, 2009:108): corporations reliant on subordinated migrant workers to meet the demand for low-cost production and service provision (Cohen, 2006); Western governments and their biopolitics of migration (FitzGerald, 2012), which maintain migrant workers in a state of vulnerability and 'exception' - available as a pool of cheap labour but

excluded from belonging to the nation and the benefits of citizenship that come with it (Walia 2010); and the growing number of consumers wanting to consume 'more for less' (Sharapov, forthcoming 2015) with 'entire populations, ethnicities, tribal areas, and regions…tolling away to produce the conditions of the good life in Europe and the United States' (Povinelli, 2012: 173).

Within the Government's anti-trafficking discourse, *irregularity and 'illegality' become an individual status and an identity marker*. One of the UKATP's key priorities is stopping 'illegal immigrants before they get to the UK' (UK Government, 2011: 20) – at the stage of visa application, when their journey to the UK commences, or, at the UK ports of entry. In this way, nationality, gender, age and socio-economic status of 'potential victims' are amalgamated by the Government into a status of illegality and suspicion, and ascribed to a potential 'would-be illegal immigrant' even before they cross the UK border. Such a biopolitical regime of *'Othering'* legitimises racialized profiling of 'illegal', dangerous and threatening 'Others' - the 'wrong people' to be stopped at the border[6] including 'foreign nationals with serious criminal histories' (UK Government, 2011: 18), 'high risk individuals' (UK Government, 2011: 19), people who 'may not be known to UK authorities, but fit a trafficker or vulnerable migrant profile' (UK Government, 2011: 19), 'people known to pose a threat' (UK Government, 2011: 19), 'Albanian nationals' (UK Government, 2012a: 25), 'specific Central and Eastern European nationality passengers' (UK Government, 2012a: 50) and nationals of other countries, identified by the UK Government as 'priority countries' – 'breeding ground for serious crime such as human trafficking' (UK Parliament, 2005: 91)

Crime, Criminals and *Their* victims

The interpretation of trafficking as, first and foremost, a matter of organised and transnational crime is now firmly embedded in the UK anti-trafficking policy. It conjures images of an uncontained security threat from ruthless, mostly foreign, organised criminals. The key message of the UK Home Secretary in the 2011 UK Human Trafficking Strategy - the need for a 'stronger border at home' and 'tougher law enforcement action to tackle the criminals gangs that orchestrate [this horrific] crime' (UK Government, 2011: 3) – is reflective of the overall biopolitical regime of securitising public and private life in the UK (Fisher, 2015). Within this regime, the rhetoric and, increasingly, the practice of exclusion and fear of the foreign 'Other' have been combined with the political and public demand[7] for the increasing control of cross-border movements of people.

The qualitative analysis of the 2011 Strategy relied on a 'word frequency' query function of NVivo to generate a rank order of the first thirty most frequently used words in the document. Before generating a 'word cloud', the Strategy was pre-coded using 'umbrella codes' to cluster similar words based on meaning (for example, an umbrella code 'Law Enforcement' summarized second-order codes National Crime Agency, police, policing, intelligence, enforcement, officers, investigators) or morphological similarity (for example, a code 'Criminals' included second-order codes Criminal and Criminals). These meta-codes were also relied upon in identifying key anti-trafficking vectors, described above, with the core vectors – crime, immigration and victims assistance – clearly identifiable in the graphic representation of the resulting rank order list. Figure 1 provides a 'word-cloud' view of the resulting umbrella codes with the size of these codes reflecting their frequency in the Strategy.

[FIGURE 1 HERE]

Figure 1. 2011 UK Government Human Trafficking Strategy word-cloud (NVIVO, based on pre-coded categories)

Table 1 summarises frequency counts and provides contextual clarifications for the thirty most frequent codes.

Table 1. Thirty Most Frequent Umbrella Codes Identified within the UKATP
[TABLE 1 HERE]

Law enforcement, prosecutions, disrupting and targeting criminals and crime of trafficking (including its international dimension), risk and threat (to the UK from organized crime and 'illegal immigrants') account for about 14 per cent of the total words counted in the document (excluding words that are less than three characters in length and some 'stop words' such as 'human', 'trafficking', 'beings'). Victims and victim support account for about four per cent. Words 'tackle', 'prevent', 'strengthen', 'targeting', 'disrupt' feature highly and reflect the overall law enforcement/crime vectoring of the document. In order to benchmark the problematisation of human trafficking in the UK policy, similar analytical procedures were performed for two other countries:[8] Ukraine (Government of Ukraine, 2012; Parliament of Ukraine 2011) and Hungary (Government of Hungary, 2013). Figures 2 and 3 provide the 'world-cloud' views for these two countries (frequency count tables are omitted due to space restrictions).

[FIGURE 2 HERE]

Figure 2. Anti-trafficking national framework in Ukraine: word-cloud (NVIVO, based on pre-coded categories)

[FIGURE 3 HERE]

Figure 3. Anti-trafficking national framework in Hungary: word-cloud (NVIVO, based on pre-coded categories)

Although the scope of this article does not allow for a comparative analysis of national anti-trafficking legislation and policies, one of the key features of the UK Strategy is the dominance of the crime and law enforcement vectors in comparison to Ukraine with its key policy focus on victim support, reinstatement of victims' human rights, and broader measures to combat trafficking. In Hungary, the Government strategy is centred on victims and victim support in the first place, with a secondary focus on law enforcement and crime prevention conceived broadly rather than reduced to the issues of threat and risk from 'illegal' immigration and organised crime. Described as 'horrific' (UK Government, 2011: 3), 'terrible' (UK Government, 2011: 3, 11) and 'abhorrent trade' (UK Government, 2011: 3, 7), the UKATP constructs trafficking as a problem that can only be addressed through combined criminal justice and UK border control response. Although the policy problematisation of trafficking as crime is commonplace among European countries, the distinguishing feature of the UK government response is its emphasis on locating the origin of the problem outside

of the UK: outsourcing the responsibility for committing the crime of trafficking to organised criminals 'who target the UK from overseas' (UK Government, 2011: 12), and reallocating the responsibility for 'stop[ping] this horrible crime' to 'international partners in transit and source countries' (UK Government, 2011: 3). Within this context, 'traffickers and their victims' merge, symbolically, into a single category 'traffickersandtheirvictims',[9] where material concepts of 'traffickers/criminals' and 'victims' act as an ideology in much the same way as abstractions like 'equality', 'democracy', 'freedom' do (Lippe and Väyrynen, 2011) despite the materiality and immediacy of victims and traffickers, and of their enfleshment (Povinelli, 2012: 4) with 'the good life' of consumer-citizens in the West.

The policy priority of 'stop[ing] trafficking before it reaches the UK' (UK Government, 2011: 12) allows for clearly defined and pronounced policy binaries of 'us'/'their criminals', 'this country'/'the rest of the world' amplify the sense of external threat from international organised crime that can only be countered, the UKATP suggests, by cooperative working with overseas governments and law enforcement agencies. The criminalisation and securitization of trafficking create their own categories of deviance and illegality - identity markers attributed to racialised, gendered and deviant 'Others'. Trafficking is something that 'criminals' do to 'their' victims - impoverished and naïve non-citizens: they 'use poverty, war, crisis and ignorance to lure vulnerable migrants to the UK for exploitation' (UK Government, 2011: 6), prey 'on vulnerable people to make money' (UK Government, 2011: 5), and 'use threats, force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power and payment to control their victim' (UK Government, 2011: 6). On the other hand, victims are represented as 'deceived and exploited…frightened and vulnerable' (UK Government, 2011: 3). As a result, policies to combat such individualised acts of

illegality avoid any scrutiny as they appear natural, necessary and justified in the name of fighting crime to ensure 'our' security and help the victimised 'Other'. At the same time, victims' naivety and powerlessness must be manifest to meet the government-set benchmark of 'genuine' and 'deserving' victimhood. The binary of 'deserving victim - non-deserving illegal immigrant' runs through a range of UK government documents, including, for example, an allegation that the increasing number of 'Albanians claiming to have been sexual exploited in Italy and Greece before fleeing to the UK' is due to such claims 'being manufactured in order to further an asylum claim' (UK Government, 2013a: 8). The foil of passive victimhood and violation - reinforced by the sexualised media spectacle of private suffering and abuse as public entertainment (Galusca, 2012; Small 2012) – serves as a wrapping paper for a deeply flawed approach of victim identification through the UK National Referral Mechanism based on the restrictive criteria and exhibiting features of racial profiling directed at 'illegal' immigrants (Stepnitz, 2012).

'Illegal' Immigration

The representation of trafficking in the UKATP as an issue of crime-facilitated 'illegal' border crossing is closely related to the vector of trafficking as crime, and reflects a spectrum of dichotomies and contradictions around the 'management' of migration by the UK Government. The current government regime of 'managing migration' serves a dual purpose: on the one hand, it keeps the UK borders open for global finances, information, political and cultural 'elites' – a kind of immigration, which, according to the UK Home Secretary, 'works in the national interest' (UK Government, 2012b). On the other hand, the political priority of keeping the very same UK border tightly controlled and impenetrable for 'illegal' migrants, asylum

seekers, smuggled or trafficked border-crossers raises a question on the extent to which a broadly defined 'national interest' overlaps with the increasing involvement of the UK businesses in the exploitation of irregularised, subcontracted or offshored labour (Skrivankova, 2014; Urry, 2014), and with the interests of the UK consumers who increasingly benefit from the outcomes of such exploitation. Within this context, the UK border has become a key instrument of incorporating and maximising the utility of the subordinated, disciplined and marginalised 'Others' for market capitalization, and, at the same time, of security control and social segregation in response to increasingly racialized and nationalist exclusionary discourses on the nature of 'belonging' and 'Britishness'.

In keeping with the overall objective of the UK immigration policy to 'ensure that only those with the right motivation, values, and plans cross the border in the right direction' (Anderson, 2013:180), the UKATP boldly simplifies the complexity of migratory movements by enacting two broad categories - the 'right people' (UK Government, 2011: 17) allowed to enter the UK, and all the 'wrong people' - including 'traffickers and their victims'- to be stopped before they commence their journey by 'disrupting at visa application' and by 'disrupting at the border' (UK Government, 2011). The key message of the UKATP is straightforward: trafficking can be eliminated once the UK border is made impenetrable to 'traffickers and their victims', who 'enter the UK illegally with false documents or by clandestine entry' (UK Government, 2011: 20). Within this context, the intensified moral panic around 'the dark reality of modern slavery in the UK' (BBC, 2014) justifies the strengthening of immigration controls and law enforcement efforts to create a 'strong border' - 'an offshore line of defence' (UK Government, 2011: 17) to keep the dangerous 'Others' out. On the other hand, the UK Government's role in producing and reinforcing

migrants' vulnerability and dependency by denying mobility to gendered and racialised migrants has avoided any serious scrutiny under the foil of harm prevention and fight with serious and organised crime 'that can affect everyone' (NCA, 2014: 1). Within this context, the central epistemological and ontological assumption underling the UKATP is that trafficking is a stand-alone phenomenon that can be fully understood, explained, isolated and eliminated: by stopping 'criminals and their victims' from crossing the UK border in the first place; by imposing severe criminal penalties on individual criminals who manage to get through the 'ever more invisible, electronic, and mobile' UK border (Vaughan-Williams, 2010), and by un-doing the victimhood of 'genuine' victims through time and resource-limited rehabilitation interventions without attending to the structural factors behind complex individual decisions to cross international borders as clandestine or 'illegal' migrants in search of a better life. Human trafficking, from this perspective, can be conceptually and practically separated from smuggling, 'illegal' immigration and labour exploitation, and from violations of migrants' human and labour rights.

Prostitution Market, 'Bad Apple' Employers, and Poor People 'Out there'

In addition to the three core vectors, three secondary vectors were also identified in the process of exploring the UKATP's problematisation of trafficking. Their 'secondary' status can be attributed to the fact that they do not require, within the context of UKATP, any direct action by the government. The role, however, is important in understanding the diffusion of responsibility among the less dangerous yet still threatening 'Others' of the 'second order': prostitution markets and its actors, 'bad apple' employers, and poor people 'out there'.

The attribution of trafficking to prostitution within the UKATP falls short of drawing a direct equation between abuse and violence inherent in trafficking with the actual site of sex work (Sanghera, 2011) and of collapsing the categories of a trafficked person and a woman into one another (Kempadoo, 2005) – a persistent feature of media discourses of trafficking in the UK (Davies, 2009) and of some national policy frameworks including, notably, Sweden.[10] The latter continue to reduce the complexity of individual migratory responses to the narratives of sexual trauma and cautionary tales of deceived, exploited and abused 'womenandchildren' sex slaves (Galusca, 2012) in need of rescue and protection (Kempadoo, 2015). At the same time, the UK Strategy describes people who pay for sexual services as a 'key part of the chain' that leads to women being trafficked and identifies 'targeting' such people as a key element in disrupting the market for trafficking. Trafficking for sexual exploitation represents, in this context, the only time when the UKATP articulates a link between demand generated by a specific group of people - people who, the policy assumes, rely on sexual services provided by trafficked people on the one hand, and a specific group of victims (women trafficked for sexual exploitation), on the other hand, rather than reinforcing the assumption of criminals being fully responsible for and being the only beneficiaries of human trafficking. The policy makes no distinction between people who may rely on sexual services provided by sex workers and people who pay for sexual services provided by coerced victims of trafficking, reflecting the Government's approach to criminalise 'paying for the sexual services of a prostitute subjected to force' even if the person paying for such services was unaware that sexual services were provided under coercion by a third party (CPS, 2015). The introduction of this provision in 2010 contributed to the already heated debate about the (de)regulation of prostitution in the UK in response to the pressure

from a variety of interest groups to introduce the 'Nordic' model. The 2014 Report by the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Prostitution and Global Sex Trade, for example, suggests that prostitution remains incompatible with measures to tackle human trafficking for sexual exploitation and recommends an overhaul of the legal regulation of prostitution in England and Wales to transfer the 'burden of criminality' 'from those selling sexual services onto those who facilitate or create the demand for its sale' (APPG, 2014: 9). The Strategy, however, falls short of identifying a set of measures to 'target' those paying for sexual services and creates a rather abstract prostitute-using male 'Other'. Recent UK media revelations of 'trafficking horrors' have embedded a second ethnicity-based identity marker of a 'sexual predator' into the public imagination - Asian men targeting vulnerable children (Daily Mail, 2015; ITV News, 2014; Trilling, 2012). On the ground, anti-trafficking/prostitution activities took shape of 'dawn raids' (Metropolitan Police, 2013), 'crackdowns' (BBC 2007), project-based interventions (BBC, 2010) and police anti-trafficking operations (ATMG, 2013) aimed at targeting organised groups of criminals 'who have been profiting from the abuse of women' (Metropolitan Police, 2013) further blurring the line between sex work and trafficking for sexual exploitation and, in the process, as FitzGerald (2015) and Hubbard et. al (2008) argue, repressing spaces of street prostitution and fuelling stigma and discrimination associated with sex work.

Another secondary policy vector is that of a problem of poverty and inequality in countries where victims of trafficking come from. The 2008 Update to the Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking (UK Government, 2008), a predecessor of the current Strategy (UK Government, 2011), made a direct connection between the increasing number of people trafficked into the UK and global poverty and inequality. It diagnosed the problem by stating that although 'we [the UK] are spending more

money in 'fragile states', the governments 'we give money to' fail to 'tackle poverty, uphold human rights and keep a tight grip on finances' (UK Government, 2008: 8). The 2011 Strategy acknowledges the link between inequality and the increasing number of people moving across borders, however its focus remains on containing the 'illegal movement' of people disregarding the drivers of such movements. UK borders, the UKATP suggests, must be shut to the 'wrong' people and their problems, as they inhabit uncivilised, undemocratic and impoverished spaces 'out there'. As a token of its project-based 'commitment' to international development, the UK Government announced the launch of the 'Work in Freedom' initiative in July 2013 (Sharapov, 2014) in order to 'empower' 100,000 women and girls from India, Bangladesh and Nepal and to prevent them from becoming a victim of trafficking. The Government's interpretation of the 'problem' appears to locate its 'source' within female victims themselves. Their individualised victimhood needs to be un-made by targeted interventions whilst the complexity of broader economic and social contexts - that disempower rather than victimise - remains largely unacknowledged and unchallenged. Along with other smaller – in terms of funding - anti-trafficking projects run by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office to address potential victims' 'vulnerability' (Sharapov, 2014), such short-lived initiatives fall within a narrow project-based approach to migration and development focused on economic rather than human development (Keijzer et al., 2015) and should not be confused with 'cooperative working' with law enforcement authorities of transit and source countries, highlighted by the UK Government as one of its key priorities of reducing trafficking as a crime of illegal border crossing. Within this context of the government's and public unwillingness to acknowledge any links between 'living well for less' here and poverty, suffering and insecurity 'out there' (see Sharapov,

forthcoming 2015), a clear dualism of 'us' (our prosperity, good life and security) and 'them' (and 'their poverty') achieves a status of 'hyperseparation' (Rose, 2011: 12) - a process of stretching dualisms so that the two poles have nothing in common. 'Our' wealth and good life have nothing in common with 'their' poverty, which needs to be stopped before it crosses 'our' borders and reaches all that is 'Great' about Britain - including, according to the latest government campaign, its 'dynamic economy and business-friendly environment'[11] assessed as one of the most de-regulated labour markets among the OECD countries.

Within this context, the final secondary vector represents limited government acknowledgement of the connection between the growing reliance on unfree labour[12] in an increasingly deregulated UK labour market on the one hand, and human trafficking on the other hand. The 2013 Report by Rowntree Foundation discusses an economic basis to exploitation of migrant labour (Allain et al., 2013) reinforced by economic marginality, racialised and gendered 'otherness', and a sense of impunity among employers. Despite the accumulating evidence of mistreatment and exploitation of migrant workers in industries across the UK and in other European countries (Skrivankova 2014; Geddes et al., 2013), the role of the UK Government in irregularising migrant workers, including 'failed' victims of trafficking who did not meet the Government-set threshold of 'genuine' victimhood, has failed to enter political, public or media imagination as a pressing concern in need of political and public response. Some elements of the UKATP acknowledge, in passing, a link between the crime of trafficking and the exploitation of migrant labour by unscrupulous employers. The Human Trafficking Strategy, for example, highlights the need to 'tackle the demand for inexpensive, unprotected and often illegal labour' (UK Government, 2011: 23). However, as of June 2013, no dedicated policies,

strategies or budgets to address the exploitation of trafficked labour existed at the central government level (including the UK Government Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; Revenue and Customs; Office of Fair Trading; Department for Work and Pensions; or Gangmasters Licensing Authority) with the bulk of the existing funding allocations dedicated to border control and crime prevention vectors (Sharapov, 2014). In addition, the UK Government's decision not to opt in to the EU's Employer Sanctions Directive (2009), its explicit refusal to protect labour rights of 'illegally staying third-country nationals' including the right to back-pay (UK Government, 2011a; Costello and Hancox, 2014), and its opposition to an all-encompassing 'transparency in supply chains' legislation (Chandran, 2015) signify the normative direction of UK Government's neoliberal de-regulation, vulnerabilization and abandonment (Povinelli, 2012) pursued under the foil of economic recovery and re-structuring.

Overall, the vectoring of trafficking in the UK policy reflects what Cox (1986) theorised as a conservative approach to problem-solving. The UK Government propagates the idea of its international leadership in the fight with 'modern-day slavery' and constructs human trafficking as a phenomenon of criminal and illegal cross-border movements that can be resolved by adopting specific policy measures: 'offshoring' the border', making trafficking less 'attractive' as a crime, and 'rescuing' victims already in the country. Within this context, the problem of human trafficking is expected to be 'solved' without calling into question the general pattern of institutions and relationships, which make human trafficking possible, and without an 'appraisal of the very framework for action…which problem-solving theory accepts as its parameters' (Cox, 1981: 129). It means that the role of capital and its biopolitical entanglements with the state aimed at maximizing the capacity of

gendered, racialised and classed populations as human resources and their utility for market capitalization (Nadesan, 2008) – are invisibilised and appear as irrelevant as the UK Government's moral and political crusade to 'stamp out the evil' runs apace. Such policy 'invisibilities', or silences, represent a complex set of processes of cultural production of ignorance (Proctor and Schiebinger, 2008) as a biopolitical tool of fashioning and managing populations. The study of ignorance – 'agnotology' – explores how ignorance is made, maintained and manipulated by powerful institutions to pursue their own needs. Its central question - 'Why don't we know what we don't know' - aligns well with Bacchi's query: What is left unproblematic in the dominant problem representations? What are the silences and can the 'problem' be thought about differently? The following section discusses key silences within the UK policy discourse: the location of the UK government, businesses and consumers vis-à-vis human trafficking.

Policy Silences

A key feature of the UKATP is a separation of human trafficking and irregular immigration from the matters of economy and labour market regulation. The UKATP and 'Securing borders and reducing immigration' policy (UK Government, 2013b) are based on a key assumption that irregularity is an individual status - an objective problem to be addressed by identifying and removing 'illegal' immigrants. A growing body of literature however interprets irregularity not as a status but as a condition produced through various processes of (ir)regularisation by national, international and/or transnational agencies (Squire, 2011), and highlights links between mobility and political economy. Current immigration policies in economically developed countries, normally 'destination countries' for human trafficking, have become a

place where racialised and gendered migrant bodies - an essential instrument in ensuring a flexible supply of low-paid exploitable labour for jobs that are unattractive to 'native' citizen workers (O'Connell Davidson, 2013) - are constituted as a disposable resource – a tool in 'adjusting the skills, age and sectoral composition of national and regional labour markets' (Taran, 2006). On the other hand, national policies, media and public opinion construct them as the abnormal criminal 'Others' – threatening 'Our' borders and security. Relations of domination and exploitation are immediately at stake in the management of mobility of non-citizens, including irregular migrants (Mezzadra, 2011: 132), with ways of being a 'migrant' and a 'victim' shaped and divided by the lines of class, gender, nationality and 'race'. Within this context, the ideology of fear of the threatening 'Other', firmly embedded in political and media discourses in the UK, serves to disguise the operation of neoliberal power – the entanglement of state and the capital - vis-à-vis labour, and reinforce asymmetrical roles and tiered-citizenship by creating subsets of rights based on the conditions of entry, stay and work in the UK.

Inserting a complex reading of neoliberal power in and through the state-constructed and managed identity of a 'victim of trafficking' reveals victims' vulnerability not as an outcome of an 'evil-doing' by traffickers but as a product and condition located at the nexus of gendered and racialised vulnerability, specific immigration and labour market policies, and individual and corporate economic interests these policies respond to. In other words, victims of trafficking only become victims once they are (a) irregularised – socially and legally produced as 'irregular' - by state, which acts as an instrumental feature of capital, and its immigration policies designed to include migrant labour by illegalising it (Mezzadra, 2011), and (b) incorporated as non-citizen economic participants – 'excepted' and exploited despite labour protection regimes

available to 'native' citizens within the context and politics of 'nativism' (De Genova, 2005: 7). By constructing exploitation of victims as a discrete act of evildoing by traffickers within the context of labour market de-regulation and increasing acceptability and reliance on the exploitation of 'precarious workers', the UK Government has effectively abdicated from its responsibilities to ensure adequate protection of migrant workers, including victims of trafficking exploited for their labour.

If the previous silence of 'what or who makes a victim of trafficking a victim' drew attention to the role of the Government and its policies in (ir)regularizing migrants and in failing to protect their rights, the silence of 'who benefits from human trafficking' challenges a deep-seated policy assumption that traffickers remain the only beneficiaries. Multi-billion estimates of human trafficking profits are often relied upon by the media to prime the public imagination for a simple loop: traffickers – victims' exploitation – profit – traffickers. In a similar vein, the UKATP represents traffickers as sole beneficiaries of victims' exploitation as it affords 'legitimate businesses' a status of victims since they get exploited by traffickers 'in order to run their trade' (UK Government, 2011: 8). Such policy interpretation effectively removes any links between trafficked and exploited people on the one hand, and companies relying on exploited migrant labour and consumers benefitting from products of such labour on the other hand. Arguments about the extent to which political and economic institutions, and ourselves, as consumers and as moral agents, are implicated in benefitting from labour exploitation of the gendered and racialised 'Other' are far from being settled. Within this context, the extent to which the acknowledgement of individual entanglements in the production of others' vulnerability offers any avenues for what Rose describes as 'recuperative work',

which 'engages with our moral relationships with the past, acknowledges our violence, and works dialogically towards alternatives' (Rose, 2004: 31) remains uncertain. What remains clear, however, is that consumer demand for cheap and readily available goods and services remains a significant factor in the vulnerability of 'Others' to exploitation both in our own 'backyard' and at every level of offshored production chains. At the same time, the removal of the link between wealth and a 'good life', on the one hand, and the cost to waters, soils, plants, animals, and marginalised people, on the other hand, is augmented by the power of marketing and branding, and makes exploitative conditions under which commodities are produced less and less visible. Exploitation and coercion within this context become delegated, reshaped and invisibilised through the process of 'adiaphorization', theorised by Baumann (2000) as evicting the 'Other' from one's universe of moral obligations. Within this context, disengagement and self-distantiation from the 'Other' become 'celebrated as another huge leap forward in the progress of freedom' (Baumann 2000: 95) defined as a binary opposition to 'slavery'.

Policies Produced and Policies Productive

It is not possible within the limits of this article to fully address each of the six WPR dimensions. This section provides some outline ideas and areas for future research in responding to the last two WPR questions: what effects are produced by specific problem representations; how these representations are produced, disseminated, and how they could be challenged. In discussing how policies become productive by constituting their subjects, meanings and understandings, Bacchi (2009) suggest three types of effects as they stand to harm some and benefit others: discursive, subjectification and lived effects.

The discursive effects follow from the limits imposed by policies on what can be thought about a particular problem. The dominant representations of trafficking as a problem of crime and 'illegal' immigration make it difficult to think about it as a form of migratory movement taking place within a larger structure of exploitative relations of labour in the global economy. The over-focus on rescuing and identifying 'genuine' victims makes it difficult to think about human rights of all migrants and respective government obligations to protect both citizens and non-citizens from abuse and exploitation.

The subjectification effects reveal how policies set up and stabilise certain types of social relations and create subjects of a 'particular kind'. These subjects assume a range of socio-economic, cultural and political positions made available by the policy and set in opposition to each other: victims - criminals, genuine victims – 'illegal' immigrants, concerned employers and citizens – ruthless criminals exploiting their 'slaves'. Further research is required to understand the location of these subjects within discursive and institutional frameworks, including those situated at the margins of the discourse and bearing the brunt of the 'lived effects'. These represent the impact of problem representations on people's embodied existence by setting and enforcing limits on what, where and when they are able to do. Further research is needed to assess the impact of the UKATP, which overlooks and manufactures doubt as to the structural causes of human trafficking within the context of neoliberalism, not only on policy-sanctioned 'genuine victims' but also on 'illegal immigrants' whose very existence is contested, and whose suffering is dispersed by policies as irrelevant to the 'now' and 'here' of life in the UK.

The final WPR question interrogates what enables dominant problem representations to reach target audiences and achieve legitimacy; and how they can be questioned,

disrupted and replaced. The focus on the production and dissemination of policy 'truths' about human trafficking highlights the ability of economic and political power to set and stabilise particular ways of thinking about the 'problem' in promoting its own vested interests and in governing populations. Further research is needed to build on the existing discussions of biopolitics of human trafficking (FitzGerald, 2012; Sharapov, forthcoming 2015) - the process where new social problems are created and tackled by means of new techniques of knowledge and new modes of scientific rationality. Further research is also needed to explore how the ethics of victims' salvation co-exists with denial of relationship and responsibility, where a monologue of rescue and 'giving voice to victims' dominates and substitutes conversation, and stifles a possibility of any dialogue between those who have been radically harmed and those who harmed them. The role of the media in the process of meaning-creation and framing of trafficking should also be further investigated within the context where only a handful of citizens come 'face-to-face' with the 'crime of trafficking' as interpreted within the dominant discourse.

Conclusion

By drawing on recent anti-trafficking policy developments in the UK considered through the lens of the WPR approach (Bacchi 2009), this paper identified a series of policy representations of human trafficking – discussed in the paper as vectors and underlying assumptions - embedded within the UK Government's anti-trafficking policy. Critically 'de-constructing' government policies approaches policy-making as a process imbued with relations of power and domination invisibilised in the language of taken-for-granted 'good-s' and 'bad-s'. Such binaries are not only produced; they become productive by constructing and maintaining a social order that governs by

recasting the racialised and gendered 'Other' as a simultaneously exploitable labour force and as a threat within the context of increasing securitisation of everyday life. This paper identified six policy vectors of trafficking as government tools to control and manage population within the context of its neoliberal contract of political and economic power: trafficking as a 'problem' of crime, 'illegal' immigration, victim rescue and assistance, prostitution, poverty 'out there', and isolated labour law infringements. These representations are reinforced by assumptions and categories embedded within the policy to stabilise trafficking as a stand-alone phenomenon that can be fully comprehended and eliminated. These vectors, assumptions and categories cohere to produce a specific anti-trafficking narrative, which de-links trafficking from the operation of neoliberal market governance and effaces the role of governments, business and consumers in invisibilising and benefitting from exploitation, coercion and dependency of the non-citizen 'Others'.

As a direction for further discussion and research, this paper suggests a move to theorise trafficking as lying on the continuums of exploitation, movement and individual agency embedded within the context of neoliberal economic systems. Drawing upon this framework at least three levels of counteracting trafficking can be identified: (re)individualising responsibility, (re)focusing national efforts, and (re)setting the international framework.

The individualisation of responsibility for human trafficking at the level of 'criminal-victim' dichotomy remains a persistent feature of the dominant anti-trafficking discourses, which often reduce trafficking to the level of a transaction between two constituents – 'criminals and their victims'. Harsher punishments for criminals and better care for 'genuine' victims are represented as indicators of governments' 'commitment' to eliminate 'modern day slavery' constructed as something shameful

but episodic - something that gendered and racialised criminal 'Others' to do equally gendered and racialised vulnerable 'Others' - in our otherwise moral and normally functioning society. These attempts at 'ethics' of encounter and recognition appear to corrupt the very terms of debate by subverting our understanding of what and who are at stake. Inserting modalities of individual responsibility for the presence of the exploited 'Others' in 'Our' supply chains of 'happy' life may counterbalance the turning away of one's ethical gaze theorised by Bauman and Donskis (2013) as moral blindness and negligence. Current ethical consumption initiatives may be the first but hardly sufficient step in shifting our thinking towards the fundamental assertion that the unit of freedom, dignity, respect and human rights is not the individual, but the individual and its environment in relationship. The extent to which current discourses of human trafficking close down and un-do any opportunity to respond, on an individual level, to our social, temporal and spatial relatedness, or enfleshment (Povinelli, 2012), with the 'Others' must remain a key point of debates and future action.

At the national level, the increasing reliance on exploitable labour must not be considered as an outcome of poor knowledge of systems of economic and political subordination, but as an outcome of cultural and political struggle situated within the complex systems of production of ignorance (Slater, 2012). Approaching anti-trafficking policies from the perspective of policy ignorance reveals the complexity of political and economic power entanglements, which, through the operation of policies, translate into a pattern of inequitably distributed gains and losses criss-crossed by the lines of gendered, raced and ethnicised othering. This suggests that conversations we need to have should encompass both short-term and long-term issues. The short-term policy 'fixes' must include the reversal of labour market deregulation, improvements

in labour rights protection globally, action on fair trade and sustainability of products. The long-terms issues require a fundamental re-configuring of the political and economic entanglements of power, of complex socioeconomic matrixes, which connect us to so many people, entire continents and our neighbours even though they are perfect strangers (Povinelli, 2012).

At the international level the challenge and complexity is at its greatest given the consolidation of neoliberal hegemony and weaknesses in the international system for human rights protection. The lack of binding and enforceable frameworks to regulate the conduct of translational corporations in relation to both human and non-human life provides a carte blanche to the 'totalising monological narratives' of suffering, extinction and un-making, with 'the damage we do on our way to the future...already destroying the future we hope to inhabit' (Rose, 2004: 18). From this perspective, addressing the 'big' issues requires a fundamental shift in thinking from a perpetual growth oriented models of economic and social development to a new global economic and social architecture capable of re-incorporating the human being and respect for their human dignity as a centre point.

Notes

1. Due to the scope of this paper and word limit, inverted commas are used to highlight the contested meaning of a term or concept without providing a discussion of their contested nature.

2. For a detailed overview of these see Chapter 7 in Anderson (2013).

3. See, for example, a speech by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Minister Hugo Swire (UK Government 2013c), who reported on having 'a sense of the moral imperative to act against' traffickers after meeting 'a victim of human trafficking'.

4. In February 2014, the UK Government (2014b) announced that it was getting 'tough with employers failing to pay minimum wage' and 'named and shamed' five employers for underpaying 6 workers a total of over £6,800.

5. In 2011, the UK Government (2011a) cited the following reasons for not opting into the European Union Directive on minimum standards and measures against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals (Directive 2009/52/EC): additional administrative burdens on both employers and the public sector; extending the legal definition of employment resulting in further costs and liabilities to both employers and the authorities; giving additional rights to illegally-staying employees, including provision of back payments where an employee has earned less than the minimum national wage.

6. References to 'the wrong people' are based on the language used by the UK government in its 2011 Strategy. In advocating the strengthening of the UK border as one of the primary means of combating human trafficking, the Strategy suggests that only 'the right people' should be 'allowed to come to

the UK', making the UK border impenetrable for, one may assume, 'the wrong people' (UK Government 2011: 17).

7. According to the 2014 assessment of the UK public opinion towards immigration by the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, approximately ¾ of people in Britain favour reducing immigration (Blinder, 2014).

8. This research forms part of the UP-KAT project, which received funding from the People Programme (Marie Curie Actions) of the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013/ under REA grant agreement PIEF-GA-2011-298401.

9. In a manner similar to how women and children are merged into infantilised collective subject 'womenandchildren' who are accustomed to being 'helped' by society or men (Enloe, 1990).

10. See, for example, a recent comment by Ronald Weitzer (2014) on challenges of comparatively assessing the impact of such policy and legal frameworks.

11. See www.gov.uk/britainisgreat

12. The concept of 'unfree labour' referred to throughout this chapter should be understood as theorised by Robert Miles (1997) and Tom Brass (1999) with the latter noting that '…unfree labour is not only compatible with relatively advanced productive forces but also fulfils the same role as technology in the class struggle: capital uses both to cheapen, to discipline, or as substitutes for free wage labour' (1999: 9). In addition, the complexity of unfree labour must be understood within the context of 'continuum of exploitation' described by Skrivankova (2010) as a continuum of exploitation and interventions, ranging from decent work to extreme exploitation. The term 'unfree' labour is used in

preference to a limited interpretation of certain forms of labour as 'forced labour' by the International Labour Organisation due to its de-politicised nature linked, according to Lerche (2015), to the abstraction of 'forced labour' from capitalism.

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