

Human Trafficking: The Complexities of Exploitation

Margaret Malloch and Paul Rigby (eds)

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In this edited volume, Margaret Malloch and Paul Rigby bring together academics and practitioners from across a range of disciplines to discuss the 'contexts and complexities' of human trafficking. They foreground the wide range of topics covered in this volume with a clear rationale for why it is necessary to investigate the phenomenon of human trafficking in a more nuanced way. The various authors in this volume discuss international and national legislation relevant to human trafficking and identify ways in which practitioners working with/on behalf of people victimized by human trafficking can navigate these systems to bring about safety, justice, healing, and the restoration of rights. Examples from practice and discussions of emerging empirical research make the complex content accessible and relevant to a wide audience.

The first four chapters explore, and explain, international (primarily European Union) and national (UK) legislation that can work simultaneously for and against promoting victims' rights and welfare. In chapter two, Kiril Sharapov draws upon his research on public attitudes towards human trafficking across several European countries to offer a clear and convincing critique of current anti-trafficking efforts that largely ignore the wider socioeconomic and political processes allowing human trafficking to flourish. Adam Weiss' chapter follows by explicating the difficulties of implementing international legislation in local, domestic contexts, and how these difficulties complicate the lives of trafficked people. Kirsty Thomson's chapter carries this conversation further by examining how international and European standards relevant to human trafficking influence how public authorities respond to victims and survivors. In each chapter, the authors draw upon examples from practice as a means of helping readers navigate through the system and understand how legislation is not always fit for purpose in protecting victims whose experiences cross multiple (i.e. criminal, immigration, welfare) domains. The emphasis on explaining and applying relevant legislation is among the book's most useful contributions.

The next several chapters consider the UK national and local responses to adult and child victims of trafficking by analysing the ways in which identification and referral processes are (in)effective. Paul Rigby and Philip Ishola's chapter explains the development of the National Referral Mechanism and provides a measured critique of its current structure, particularly regarding its (limited) ability- as a system prioritizing asylum and immigration- to effectively engage in child-centred practice. They unequivocally state the problem with giving responsibility of identifying and safeguarding child victims to agencies responsible for controlling borders. Jim Laird, along with Sheila Murie and Liz Owens, offer insight as practitioners in Scotland regarding how they navigate this system with service users victimized by trafficking. The chapter by Sharon Doherty and Rachel Morley is particularly relevant to practitioners as it explores cumulative trauma and complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in relation to human trafficking victimisation, and applies a well-known three-stage trauma treatment model (e.g. Herman, 1997) to reducing trauma symptomology among trafficking victims. They model here what Dodsworth (2014) recommends by applying what is already considered best practice in other areas of service provision.

The remaining chapters consider issues relevant to both national and international audiences. Claire Cody's chapter sheds light on an under-emphasised aspect of service provision by discussing the challenges of monitoring and evaluating reintegration efforts for separated children, including those who have been trafficked. Stefano Bonino raises issues of gender-based violence and social justice in exploring forced marriage among Pakistanis in the UK and

Margaret Malloch expands on issues raised earlier in the volume by digging (theoretically and practically) deeper into the ongoing practice of criminalizing victims despite the presence of laws intended to protect them. Jackie Turner's and Hazel Cameron's chapters add additional layers of depth and nuance by confronting the wider historical, socioeconomic and political forces that have shaped the ways in which gender norms, gender-based violence, and ongoing armed conflict have created pathways through which vulnerable children and adults are trafficked. Cameron's implication of neoliberal policies as powerful forces in creating an environment where vulnerable women and children become 'raw resources' in informal and illegal economic transactions is particularly compelling. In the final chapter, Bill Munro expands upon this critique and the claims made in the introductory chapter that modern day trafficking continues because of both criminal/illegal and 'legitimate' economic interests.

While this volume addresses an incredibly wide range of issues relevant for understanding human trafficking in its myriad forms, the editors do an excellent job ensuring that a victim/survivor-centred thread runs throughout. It is highly recommended for anyone looking to understand human trafficking for the complex issue that it is (O'Connell Davidson, 2010); the book offers a tangible and hopeful starting point for considering what we must now do to fight for, and alongside, trafficked individuals across the globe.

References

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