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Book Review
Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (JEMS)

27. 08. 07

Christien L. van den Anker and Jeroen Doomernik, (eds.), *Trafficking and Women's Rights*, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2006, 239 pp., £ 45, hb, (ISBN 1-4039-4995-6).

A wide-ranging and very accessible introduction to the topic of human trafficking, this edited volume provides a good overview of current debates. The contributors of this volume are based in and concerned with trafficking issues in Europe. Consequently, human trafficking in this book is mainly analysed as an issue of *immigration* to or within the continent. Discussions in the volume are predominantly conceptual, but implications at the level of policy are referred to throughout. With a few very good theoretical points and some interesting empirical material, the volume provides good starting points from which to conduct theoretically informed and empirically more grounded research.

The volume brings together twelve contributors from different fields within academia, as well as from the field of practitioners. Contributions to this volume range from political analysis, conceptual debates and philosophical considerations to economic approaches and legal discussions. This heterogeneity precludes coherence, but manages to capture the main debates and tensions within today's debate on human trafficking. To imply in the introduction that a set of legal instruments on trafficking is meant to have overcome the "deadlock of opposing moralities on prostitution"¹ seems too optimistic a reading. Indeed, opposing views on prostitution and sex work run through the book itself, and the ambiguities of legal instruments are also reflected upon in the contributions. More intense cross-referencing within the book itself could have rendered these internal debates more explicit and productive.

The contributions are not all of the same quality. The main theoretical caveats, as well as the political dynamics of the trafficking debate are outlined by O'Connell Davidson and Anderson already in the first chapter. Challenging questions are raised about why human trafficking receives greater attention than the protection of migrants' rights and about the implication of state policies in trafficking. Unfortunately, these points do not get developed further in the contributions that follow. Maybe, however, different kinds of research are needed to shed light on the challenges that are put forward in this contribution, such as for example the choice of some migrants to work in indentured labour or the exploitative nature of smuggling.

One can regroup the different essays into three groups: contributions to theoretical debates, those that are dealing with the issue of prostitution, and contributions empirically grounded. Van den Anker, van Liempt, Doomernik and Garofalo all place trafficking in a wider framework of migration, development, globalisation and political economy. Van Liempt gives some examples of how the trafficking debate translates into government policy. Doomernik lets a trafficker whom he met in a taxi speak about his business involvements in Poland, Ukraine and Slovakia. The taxi

¹ P. 1.

driver's view on Dutch trafficking legislation does not fit standard academic analysis. Garofalo conceptualises the relation between a trafficked person and a trafficker as an economic transaction and suggests that a trafficker can be considered as an employer, helper, friend or lover. Dickenson, Reilly and Bindel take us back to discussions on prostitution. Dickenson does so from a philosophical angle. Informed by an abolitionist stance, Reilly gives an overview of legislation on slavery and trafficking.

Contributions by Wylie, de Jonge and Smit, Gallagher and Konrad are based on case studies and legal material. Aware of institutional tensions, Konrad refers to contradictions between trafficking laws and legislation on immigration. Gallagher reminds us that the Palermo protocol is not a human rights convention, but an instrument for law enforcement against crime. She then explores alternative legal instruments, such as the asylum regime, for the protection of human rights of trafficking victims. De Jonge and Smit begin to overcome the limitation of trafficking as an issue of female prostitution. They present a few interesting case studies on restaurant and domestic work that expose some of the complexities inherent in narratives of exploitative labour migration.

One of the strong points of this volume is that it does recognise at least in part that human trafficking cannot be limited to issues of prostitution and that exploitative and coercive labour migration into other industries needs to be addressed, too. Whilst the issue of sex work and sexual exploitation still dominates the contributions, some first preliminary research outside this area is addressed in this volume. Yet, the next logical step is not fully taken in this volume. Empirical material gathered through research with migrant men and women is not at the forefront of the book. The reader learns more about trafficking debates, than about exploitative and coercive labour migration itself.

As set out by Doornik and van den Anker in the introduction, there is a need for research on both the "demand for cheap, flexible and compliant labour", as well as on the "supply of people who are willing to take the risk of migrating under less than ideal circumstances to fulfil these demands".² Whilst this volume does not live up to these great expectations, these introductory conclusions do indeed seem very promising lines of enquiry. What different kind of research locations and methodologies will it take to go beyond this state of the art?

² P. 2.