The Trafficking Patchwork

Dr Sanja Milivojevic
Monash University
ANZSOC Conference
Canberra November 2008
Sex Trafficking in the News

- “UK plans *clampdown* on sex trafficking” (CNN, 19 Nov 2008)

- “Selling sex is like the weather: you just can’t legislate for it” (Telegraph, 22 Nov 2008)

- “Will this be *the end of prostitution*” (The Times, 19 Nov 2008)

- “*Damaged women* are safer now, thanks to Jacqui Smith” (Independent, 22 Nov 2008)

- “*The Body Shop*” (Financial Times, 19 Nov 2008)

- “*Women Trafficked For Sex Freed* in South Florida” (CBS, 22 Nov 2008)

- “*Four People Arrested For Sex Trafficking Of Immigrant Women* in South Florida” (10 News, 22 Nov 2008)
Sex Trafficking in the News

UK plans clampdown on sex trafficking

LONDON, England (CNN) -- Paying for sex with trafficked or exploited women would be banned if new laws proposed by the UK government Wednesday.

The act of purchasing sex is illegal in England and there are laws against paying for sex in many places and persistently selling.

Now UK Home Secretary Jacqui Smith has stakeholders to tackle the problem of prostitution. But the move faces strong opposition.

From The Times
November 16, 2006

Will this be the end of prostitution?
Jacqui Smith, Britain's first female Home Secretary, wants to tackle the problem of prostitution. But the move faces strong opposition.

Alice Thomson

When Richard Bera picked up Julia Roberts in his Lotus Esprit in Pretty Woman, it was the start of a great Hollywood romance. The classic prostitute with a heart of gold, she was transformed almost instantly into a glamorous sex kitten, equally at ease shopping on Rodeo Drive, decorating his arm at the opera in San Francisco or playing the drums at a polo match. And, of course, there was a
Terminology and Issues

- Clampdown
- Selling sex
- The end of prostitution
- Body Shop
- Damaged women
- Immigrant
- Freed

- Trafficking = Sex work
- Vulnerable, injured female bodies
- An ‘other’ that needs to be rescued
Predominant narratives around women trafficked for sex

- Define how we approach sex trafficking
- Women’s experiences after the intervention

The premise is that (women) are poor victims with the history of violence, stupid and naïve ... or the moral one: they are all whores.

**Sandra Ljubinkovic**, NGO Anti-Trafficking Centre, Belgrade, Serbia

Women are viewed as totally hopeless victims, unable to look after themselves, naïve and stupid, or as streetwise and manipulative, ready to take advantage of the situation. In both cases they are expendable. They are just objects.

**Solicitor**, Victorian Legal Aid, Melbourne, Australia
Contrasted Images of Trafficking

It is a contradictory situation. When people imagine the worst-case scenario of trafficking, when women are abducted or completely deceived, abused and raped, they have such a sense of outrage about (trafficking); I think people believe it is the worst crime of all. But most women do not have this worst-case experience and they fall very quickly into the category of prostitutes. Women who have been trafficked and who end up having lots of boyfriends, engage in prostitution and are party girls, they are not seen as real victims. *Victims are not defined by what has been done to them. If they are not sobbing in the corner they are not seen as victim.*

*Kathleen Maltzahn, NGO Project Respect, Melbourne, Australia (emphasis added)*
Responsibility to Protect?

- Prevent, React, Rebuild
- Just cause, right intention, proportional means, reasonable prospect of success, and right authority
- Just cause, right intention, right authority:
  - Poor, innocent women
  - “21st Century Abolitionist Movement”


- Proportional and reasonable?
The Harm

- Moral panic around 2006 FIFA World Cup
- Uncontested figures, range of actors
- Trafficking DID NOT happen
- Outcomes:
  - Crackdown on sex industry
  - Tough visa regimes
  - No critical evaluation
Burning Questions

- Critical voices in contemporary trafficking debate?
- Contesting ‘guestimates’?
- Sex trafficking, and not other forms of exploitation?
- Broader concepts of globalisation and migrations?
- Are we taking the attention away from serious analysis by slogans and campaigns?
- Are we making self-serving assessments that are just masqueraded as humanitarian intervention?
- Acknowledging the harm?
- The responsibility of the destination countries
- ‘One size fits all’ trauma/welfare intervention
- Making migrations more flexible and available
- Why, if the intervention is so good, women run away from their rescuers?
- Do we really need saviours vs. people with no agency divisions in trafficking?
- Where are the voices of beneficiaries that we want to protect?