

Creating Clarity

Ethnic and Sexual Politics of United Kingdom's Human Trafficking Discourse

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Abstract

Human trafficking has become a prominent political issue in the United Kingdom since 2001, with all major parties in the country agreeing on the importance of abolishing trafficking. However, the political discourse is riddled with two frameworks, with each party supporting one or the other at various times: trafficking as a border security issue versus trafficking as a human rights issue. In order to examine the relationship of this discursive political dichotomy with the journalistic understanding of the issue, the paper examines discourse on sex trafficking among four major newspapers, each with a different political affiliation: *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Independent*. The study finds that the nineteenth century perception of innocent, and usually white and virgin women being lured into trafficking by “evil” foreign traffickers is still implicitly present in modern-day journalistic discourse. The presence of these ethnic and sexual politics, which influence the border security and human rights frameworks, respectively, confound the reality of trafficking with a discursive myth. The journalistic discourse thus has a policy implication of victims needing to fit the discursive mold of a trafficked person in order to receive human rights protections. Though finding a factual account of trafficking is difficult, adding voices of trafficked persons to narratives may create a clearer picture of the issue, and lead to better protections for trafficked persons in U.K. policy.

Introduction

In September 2010, the deputy leader of United Kingdom's Labour Party, Harriet Harman, asked Prime Minister David Cameron to update the Houses of Parliament on the government's commitment to ending human trafficking. In response, the Prime Minister responded, "We are committed to working across the Government to do everything we can to help the police, to help at our borders and to make sure that we have in place all the laws and system to bring this evil trade to an end" ("Hansard Column 863," 2010). When Harman further inquired about the government's commitment to opting into the European Union directive on trafficking in human beings, Cameron suggested that it may not opt in as doing so may have "consequences for our security and borders," thus contradicting his earlier statement ("Hansard Column 863," 2010).

The EU directive, finalized by the European Parliament, broadens the definition of trafficking, increases penalties for traffickers from 8 to 10 years, and guarantees that member states make efforts to prevent trafficked persons from being punished for being involvement in the trafficking business. The directive additionally ensures that member states provide free legal assistance to any trafficked person, train officials to recognize trafficking cases, and create awareness-centered campaigns within the state (UN.GIFT). When the measure was first introduced in 2010, the government, mostly Conservative members, decided to opt out of the directive, claiming that Britain already followed the guidelines proposed by the directive. Critics of this decision claimed that the Conservatives' euroskepticism prevented them from opting into a key human rights legislation; the party sought to assert British independence rather than agree to fight trafficking with fellow EU members (Benning-Prince, 2011). These critics included the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats, both of whom were proponents of the directive, mostly because it would increase human rights for victims (Benning-Prince, 2011). The non-governmental organization Care confirmed this claim in its report, which highlighted seven key

areas of improvement that could be made by opting in, including protection of victims and a broadening of the definition of trafficking to include forced begging (CARE, 2011).

Soon after the announcement showing resistance, the website “38 degrees” and the newspaper *The Independent* joined forces to rally over 48,000 people for a petition to support the EU directive. After a delay of ten months, the Conservative-Liberal Democrats coalition agreed to join the directive in March 2011 (Dugan, 2011). The unfolding of the story regarding the EU legislation, though, showed some deep political divides regarding the importance of improving human trafficking policy in relation to other key issues, such as immigration, border security, and nationality.

Over the years, human trafficking has become politicized in the ways it has been discussed and addressed. Within the U.K., these political divides lead to differences in the way language is used; for instance, Conservatives are likely to refer to trafficked women as “sex workers,” equating prostitution with exploitation of women, whereas Labour Party members are more likely to distinguish prostitution from trafficking (“Hansard Column 1WH,” 2010). Such subtle differences in politics leads to shifts in policy preferences, where right wing individuals have historically discussed trafficking as an issue of border security stemming from organized crime, while left wing members have drawn attention on exploitation of and the need of protection for trafficked persons. These generalizations, though, aren’t always apparent and are difficult to ascribe to particular parties at all times. The confusion arises from the mixture of framings of trafficking used for political means by all parties.

Whereas the Conservative Party initially resisted opting into the EU directive, it urged Britain, then under Labour government, to sign the European Convention Against Trafficking in January 2007. The Convention was adopted by the Council of Europe in May 2005 and cited providing rights to trafficked persons and combating trafficking as the “paramount objectives” (Europe, 2005). Its stated goals were to provide minimum standards which signatories should reach, including providing a basic standard of living, emergency medical care, counseling and information, and translation services to

trafficked persons. The document also required access to education for trafficked children, and other services to provide social, psychosocial, and physical to all trafficked persons without grounds for discrimination, especially based on gender. Perhaps the most contentious part of the provision was a minimum thirty days reflection period that allows the trafficked person to stay in the country to recover, as well as make an informed decision on cooperating with the authorities (Europe, 2005). The U.K. was initially reluctant to sign the Convention, with the Home Office arguing, “[T]hey could be misused by individuals seeking to extend their stay in the U.K., where they do not have a genuine claim as a victim of trafficking. Dealing with fraudulent applications will slow down our ability to respond to genuine claims” (2006). However, due to pressure from NGOs such as Amnesty International, other stakeholders, and the opposition, Tony Blair signed the Convention on 23 March, 2007, thereby holding the region accountable to providing basic protection for trafficked persons (Skrivankova, 2007).

The Labour Party’s discourse then was similar to the Conservative Party’s discourse now, and vice-versa. In both cases, the parties utilized the central theme of border security to contend with increasing rights for trafficked persons. Ultimately, the border security issue lies in the context of immigration, or the social construction of ethnic and national identities which create distinction between who ought to be allowed into the country and who ought to be excluded. Conversely, the discourse of protecting exploited trafficked women is ultimately one of sexual politics, in which the language focuses on the moral concern of who is in control of a woman’s body (Doezema, 2000). These two core concepts of boundaries – ethnic and feminist – aren’t a product of the modern-day discourse on trafficking, but emerged in the nineteenth century with the public campaigns on the white slave trade and the exploitation of white girls and women for sex work. The significance of this relationship will be explored further in the paper, but understanding that modern-day trafficking has its underpinnings in an earlier part of history highlights the fact that much of today’s discourse is a re-construction of an already existing one.

Historically and in the present-day, the differences in language within politics do not solely affect policy but also have an impact on journalistic discourse on human trafficking and thereby the general public understanding of the issue. Ostensibly, outside of the active membership of non-governmental organizations such as Unseen(U.K.) and Anti-Slavery International – both of which fight trafficking – the media serves as a primary source of information regarding trafficking for the average U.K. resident. As various academic discourse shows, the media has a significant power, especially in terms of informing the public who rely on it. As McCombs argues, “The press plays a major role in public life...providing many of the facts and opinions that shape perspectives on the topic of the day” (156). Within the British media, the press extensively shapes such a role and has two distinct categories: the quality, or journalistic press and the popular, or tabloid press. As opposed to the tabloid press, which markedly falls under the soft-news circuit, the journalistic press attempts to present an unbiased landscape on any issue or topic. The latter can thus serve as an important source of information for the general public, whereas the former is traditionally utilized for entertainment purposes – albeit, the roles often intersect.

Given the three key areas of discourse – political, journalistic, and public – surrounding trafficking, an ideological chain is ostensibly created. Political parties use different avenues to discuss trafficking, journalistic newspapers disseminate this information, especially based on their political affiliation, and the general public understands trafficking based on their journalistic preferences and party affiliation. As evident with the push for U.K.’s opting in to the EU directive by campaigners, the public’s understanding then often results in citizen’s support or lack of it for a particular issue. The key relationship in this chain, though, is one between the source of information for citizens and the citizens themselves. A better understanding of how different journalistic newspapers frame human trafficking will lead to a better understanding of how citizens understand the issue compared to how political parties frame these same issues. In order to better understand the dynamics at play, this paper will

examine four key journalistic newspapers in the U.K. – *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Independent* – each of which has its unique political affiliation. Through these newspapers, I ask three main questions regarding the narrative of trafficking. First, how do political affiliation and partisanship shape human trafficking discourse? Second, how does the discourse regarding ethnicity and sexuality, two key themes in historical narratives, play a role in the contemporary trafficking discourse in newspapers? Lastly, what is the relationship between the two key players being examined – political parties and newspapers – in creating a discursive understanding of human trafficking?

Literature Review

No explicit research has been conducted to look at newspaper discourse regarding trafficking in the United Kingdom, though similar information is available from the white slave trade of the nineteenth century. The lead academic to draw parallels between the historical movement and modern-day trafficking is Jo Doezema, who argues that the white slavery “myth” of “innocent, virginal victims” has re-emerged in narratives of trafficked persons today (2000). White slavery is additionally a notable movement to understand for not only the campaigns it created – which will be explored later – but also for the narrative precedent it set for modern-day trafficking discourse. The language of race and sexuality utilized during white slavery both mobilized citizens to demand for abolition and ultimately led to policy changes.

City of Dreadful Delight by Judith Walkowitz perhaps best provides an understanding of white slavery discourse. Walkowitz’ analysis of William Stead’s journalism in “Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon,” which spoke of the dangers facing young white women in England at the time, suggests that the newspaper articles played a significant role in utilizing melodrama and sensationalism to describe prostitution. The exposé told a narrative of the sexual dangers that await young women who are lured into the field by evil villains. Such a story merged politics with the culture of Puritanism in the Victorian era, and impacted the feminist discourse of the time, thus creating gender and class divides, particularly

among feminists. Middle-class women especially found a space to discuss feminism within the public sphere, specifically to speak out against the “privileged class of sexually dangerous men who preyed on the innocent” (Walkowitz, 1992).

Most of the political debate, though, revolved around abolitionism and regulationism, coalitions that still exist in trafficking campaigns. One group, called purity campaigners, sought to completely rid society of prostitution with a particular focus on “youthful sexuality” (Doezema, 2010). While purity reformers were sympathetic to enslaved women, they were also judgmental of them due to their “immodest behavior” that led them to their positions. They thus sought the prohibitionist approach to the white slave trade which would illegalize prostitution and punish both prostitutes and procurers. Regulationists, on the other hand, sought to institute state regulations which would protect innocent persons from entering prostitution and medically control for the “immoral women” who chose prostitution in order to protect society against them (Doezema, 2010).

A similar dichotomy has emerged in modern British politics. Scholars Johanna Kantola and Judith Squires discuss the differences in discourse between prostitution and trafficking in “Discourses Surrounding Prostitution Policies in the U.K.” The authors argue that while the discourse around prostitution has been regarding the “public nuisance” of kerb-calling, or soliciting women from cars for prostitution, the discourse around trafficking has been on “moral order” (2004). These two frameworks are distinct in that in prostitution and kerb-crawling, the prostitute is viewed as willingly choosing a lifestyle most consider as immoral, unhygienic, and in need of regulation. On the other hand, the trafficked prostitute is considered to be a forced victim in need of protection (Kantola & Squires, 2004).

This dichotomy, though, ignores the reality of trafficking, where many women migrate for sex work but find themselves under coercive and unsafe working conditions. Modern feminist campaigns thus focus on liberal feminism rather than abolitionism and regulationism. The brand of feminism gives women liberation or ownership and right to her own body, but seeks protection when sexual violence or

forced prostitution comes in the way. The problem, then, according to Doezema, becomes one of consent, where one must distinguish between a woman willingly agreeing to be a prostitute versus a woman who is forced to act in the role (2010).

Walkowitz' and Doezema's analyses provide important historical underpinnings of trafficking discourse and provide potential implications for the relationship between policy and journalistic discourse. Paletz and Entman's framework, though, provides a more explicit understanding of the relationship between the two discursive methods. According to the model, the media is thought to be a circular loop – informing the public of institutional strengths and limitations while challenging these institutions to improve (Paletz & Entman, 1981). Given this framework and each newspaper's unique party affiliation, the paper will examine newspapers reflect the political debate on human trafficking and connect it with the historical framing of the white slave trade. In order to do so, the paper will first provide the methodology for the research. The second chapter will provide a scholarly understanding and landscape of trafficking in the U.K. by defining the term, the current policy, and the current scale of trafficking within the region. Chapter three will then outline the political debate on trafficking, particularly among party lines, followed by chapter four which will examine the framing and prescription of trafficking, particularly regarding victimization of trafficked persons and the role of ethnicity in trafficking discourse. These themes will provide a more contextualized framework for the relationship between journalistic discourse and its implications for understanding human trafficking policy in the United Kingdom.

1 • Methodology

In order to understand the role of migrant and gender identities and their utilization in the discourse of trafficking, the paper uses qualitative data analysis to research trafficking articles in four major newspapers in the U.K., *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Independent*. These newspapers provided a broad, yet thorough understanding of journalistic framing of human trafficking, especially along party lines. The coupling of the research with literature review on white slavery discourse, as outlined earlier, set the historical understanding of trafficking language.

Choosing Newspapers

The U.K. has two main journalistic traditions: the traditional broadsheet press and the popular tabloid press. The research sought to understand trafficking language as presented in an allegedly unbiased setting, which could only be studied through broadsheet newspapers as the tabloid press in the country is known for sensationalizing the news for readership. Broadsheet press, on the other hand, is well-established and attempts to present a fair and equal account of current events.

Britain has five major broadsheet newspapers: *The Financial Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Independent*. Of these, I did not analyze *The Financial Times* as it is primarily a source of financial and business news rather than political news. The research sought to focus on political leanings rather than economic ones, leaving the other four newspapers for analysis. These newspapers were unique as they each identify politically differently. While *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* are labeled center-right newspapers, *The Independent* and *The Guardian* are labeled center-left (Ipsos, 2005). Despite these broad affiliations, the newspapers are all unique. *The Daily Telegraph* has consistently supported the Conservative Party, while *The Times* supported New Labour under Tony Blair but returned to supporting the Conservative party during the 2010 elections. On the center-left, *The Guardian* is seen to be close to the Labour Party, though it supported the Liberal-

Democrats in the 2010 general elections. *The Independent*, the youngest of the newspapers and officially unaffiliated with any political party, has been perceived as socially and politically liberal. Given such diverse ascriptions, I chose each newspaper to understand if and how discourse of human trafficking differed based on political leanings.

Compiling Articles

The articles were compiled using the database Lexis-Nexis Academic. I searched for the articles using the terms “human trafficking” or “sex trafficking,” as preliminary readings of articles showed that some articles only used one of these terms. Additionally, the search was constricted by the time period December 2001 to February 2011. The first act to officially introduce trafficking as an offense was the *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002*, which received the royal assent in November of 2002. The search thus sought to include any discussion of trafficking or the act itself in the newspapers that occurred in 2002. By chronicling discourse since the implementation of the first U.K. policy on trafficking until February 2011, when the study began, I sought to examine language as it related to political events.

The search resulted in 139 articles; eight articles were from *The Daily Telegraph*, 35 were from *The Times*, 63 from *The Guardian*, and 33 from *The Independent*. These articles featured not only local and national news stories, but opinion and editorial pieces, as well as arts-focused stories such as book and movie reviews. I chose to include all article types in the research as they all signified how trafficking is being discussed across fields, whether in terms of politics, social culture, or fictional arts.

Content Analysis

I coded the articles using the themes shown in chart 1.1. By utilizing these categories, I sought to do different things. One, the coding first established how many articles used the term ‘human trafficking’ as opposed to ‘sex trafficking’ as opposed to referring to a condition that implies labor trafficking. Second, I coded for language that may allude to the victimization of the trafficked person. I

coded positively for rescue language and slavery language when the articles specifically used the term ‘rescue’ or ‘slavery.’ Additionally, I coded positively for ‘victims speaking for themselves’ when trafficked persons were directly quoted for when they were paraphrased. The ethnic coding was partly descriptive, stating specifically the ethnicity victims or perpetrators were stated as being from. The major limitation to the coding was that only positive numeration was utilized. For instance, if the article used the words “police freed the woman,” I positively coded the article. Conversely, if the article did not mention the language *or* argued against the language the language, I did not code for the variable.

Chart 1.1 • Codes for Article Analysis

Language used for trafficking	Language of Victimization	Ethnicity
Human Trafficking Sex trafficking Labor trafficking	Rescue language Slavery language Police freeing the victim? NGO freeing the victim? Victims speaking for themselves	Victim Ethnicity Victim referred to as an illegal immigrant? Perpetrator Ethnicity Perpetrator referred to as an illegal immigrant?

Despite these limitations, the codes sought to see if the language of victimhood was being utilized and if certain ethnicities were being ascribed to victims or perpetrators. The articles thus allowed me to analyze how trafficking is being talked about and by whom.

Further research was utilized to understand the findings. A literature review of the white slave trade provided a historical understanding of the evolution of modern discourse. Additionally, an analysis of political stances and parliamentary debates on U.K.’s trafficking policy provided context into the relationship between newspaper discourse and politics. Through these three methods, I was able to use a multi-faceted approach to understanding the trafficking language in the media and in politics.

2 • Background

Defining human trafficking

Trafficking, though not a new phenomenon, has taken on new meanings as of late due to its transnational, globalized nature. Over the years, theorists have defined human trafficking in various ways, the most traditional of which has been as involuntary prostitution. Within U.K. policy, this definition has since evolved to include labour trafficking and trafficking as an organized crime.

The U.K. first criminalized trafficking as an offence in February 2003 with the *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, 2002*, which illegalized the act of a person arranging or facilitating the arrival to, departure from, or travel within the U.K. of another person for the means of prostitution ("Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002," 2002). The measure, however, was largely a stop-gap measure and was soon replaced by the *Sexual Offences Act, 2003*. The act broadened the offence to trafficking into, within, or out of the U.K. for sexual exploitation rather than simply prostitution. Additionally, the act criminalized the sexual exploitation of children under the age of eighteen ("Sexual Offences Act 2003," 2003). However, it did not require the trafficker to use "coercion, deception or force in the process of recruitment" as mentioned in the UN Trafficking Protocol, thus illegalizing procuring those who consent to engaging in sex work (Skrivankova, 2007). The *Sexual Offences Act, 2003* is unusual in that it applies not only to anyone in the U.K. regardless of nationality, but also to acts that occur outside of the country by a British person or company. The *U.K. Borders Act 2007* amended this aspect in section 31 by criminalizing trafficking anywhere by anyone, regardless of their nationality as a British person. In 2009, the *Policing and Crime Act 2009* added another provision which made it an offence for a man to pay for sex with a trafficked prostitute, though the Metropolitan police's anti-trafficking department has said that the provision is "very difficult to enforce," adding that the unit is also unsure whether a majority of sex workers are trafficked ("Policing and Crime Act 2009," 2009).

The definition of trafficking as linked to prostitution, however, ignores a large sector of the trafficked population used for bonded and forced labor in sweatshops, agricultural fields, and homes, or in other situations through overly exploitative labor contracts (Lee, 2007). The U.K. legal system expanded its classification of trafficking in 2004 to include trafficking for labour exploitation in the *The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act, 2004* (Almandras, 2010). The act defines exploitation as “behaviour that contravenes Article 4 of the Human Rights Convention (slavery and forced labour),” or an act that would be an offence under the *Human Organs Transplant Act 1989* (Doughty Street Chambers (Firm), 2004). The *Human Organs Transplant Act 1989* prohibits ‘commercial dealings’ of organs or the transplantation of organs between unrelated persons (“Human Organ Transplants Act 1989,” 1989). *The Asylum and Immigration Act, 2004* also defines the means by which a person is trafficked, specifying the use of “force, threats or deception” to get an individual to engage in an act that someone who does not have “the illness, disability, youth or family relationship” would refuse.

Additionally, on 8 July 2004, the government adopted the *Gangmaster Licensing Act* and in 2005, an adjoining *Gangmaster (Licensing Authority) Regulations*. Though the *Gangmaster Licensing Act* and the Gangmaster Licensing Authority were not explicitly written with the intention to stop trafficking, they did curb labor exploitation in the agriculture, forestry, agriculture, shellfish, and food processing/packaging industries. As these industries often have a high likelihood of hiring trafficked persons, the act and particularly the agency play a role in identifying trafficked migrant workers (Skrivankova, 2007). The acts allow the Gangmaster Licensing Authority to issue licenses to legitimate businesses with basic workers’ rights, or to arrest those who do not have licenses or who are holding false documents. Violators are subject to 12 months in prison and repeat violators can be sentenced up to 10 years (Skrivankova, 2007). The Authority, in conjunction with the previously mentioned

legislations, makes up the key legal framework for trafficking in the U.K., but lack the integral protection necessary to protect trafficked persons.

The third conceptualization of trafficking, and the one the United Kingdom acknowledges in its policies, is that of trafficking as organized crime by large networks that is to be regulated with state control. Though traditionally thought of in context of large, inter-connected, mafia-like crime groups, some academics have pointed out that organized crime also exist through smaller, local crime networks formed by a few people (Lee, 2007).

U.K. Policy on Trafficking

As evident from U.K.'s legislation, there is a clear lack of a holistic, comprehensive policy that covers all aspects of trafficking in a single policy. Recognizing this problem, U.K.'s Home Office launched a consultation with 206 individuals and organizations from both within and outside the U.K. in January 2006 to recommend changes to the draft U.K. Action Plan on Human Trafficking (Skrivankova, 2007). A majority of the recommendations concluded there was "a need for the action plan to have at its core, a focus on human rights and an emphasis on the protection of victims as well as the prosecution of traffickers" (Home Office, 2006). Additional recommendations included ensuring that the issues of child trafficking, organized crime gangs, and development of intelligence of trafficking are addressed (Home Office, 2006).

The Home Office incorporated many of these recommendations in its final copy of the *U.K. Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking*, published March 2007; the plan thereby became the first comprehensive policy on the issues which focuses on a human rights approach rather than an organized crime approach (Skrivankova, 2007). The plan addresses gaps in previous legislations by proposing 62 actions in four areas: prevention, protection, prosecution, and child trafficking. To prevent trafficking, the plan suggests the Home Office invest in increasing knowledge of trafficking and entry points for traffickers; decreasing demand by supporting information campaigns on the illegality of trafficking in the

U.K.; and supporting anti-trafficking projects in the U.K. and in the countries of origin and transit. The plan suggests that prosecution of traffickers can improve through an increase in enforcement, intelligence, and officer training. In order to provide increased protection and assistance to adult trafficked persons, the action plan recommends to the Home Office to establish a multi-agency group to consult victim-centered trafficking measures; develop a national referral system for support services; increase access to support services; and develop minimum standards that ought to be available to trafficked persons. With regards to reducing child trafficking, the plan also recommends for various actions to increase identification of trafficked children, both in the U.K. and during transit to the U.K., and provide appropriate staff members with the tools to identify trafficked children utilizing various actions (Home Office, 2007).

The time frames for the actions proposed in the plan vary, though they have been described as “rather ambitious” and “difficult to achieve” (Skrivankova, 2007). Regardless of the number of actions, the plan does fall short of addressing trafficking for labor exploitation, stating that, “At the moment we do not have sufficient evidence regarding trafficking for forced labour to enable us to make a full assessment of whether it poses a significant problem for the U.K.” (Home Office, 2007). The plan further states that the nature of labor exploitation, often carried out within families and communities, makes the crime very difficult to detect and thus act against (Home Office, 2007).

Organizational Structures to Address Trafficking

In addition to legislations and policies, the U.K. government has also set up various organizations and projects to address trafficking. The earliest of these is the POPPY Project, which was set up in 2003 by the Home Office and the feminist charity Eaves, and funded by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (reporting to the Ministry of Justice). The project provides support, accommodation, and outreach for up to 54 women over the age of 18 who can show they were sexually exploited, trafficked, and forced to work in prostitution within the U.K. (“POPPY Project,” 2010). This necessity of proof is also one of the

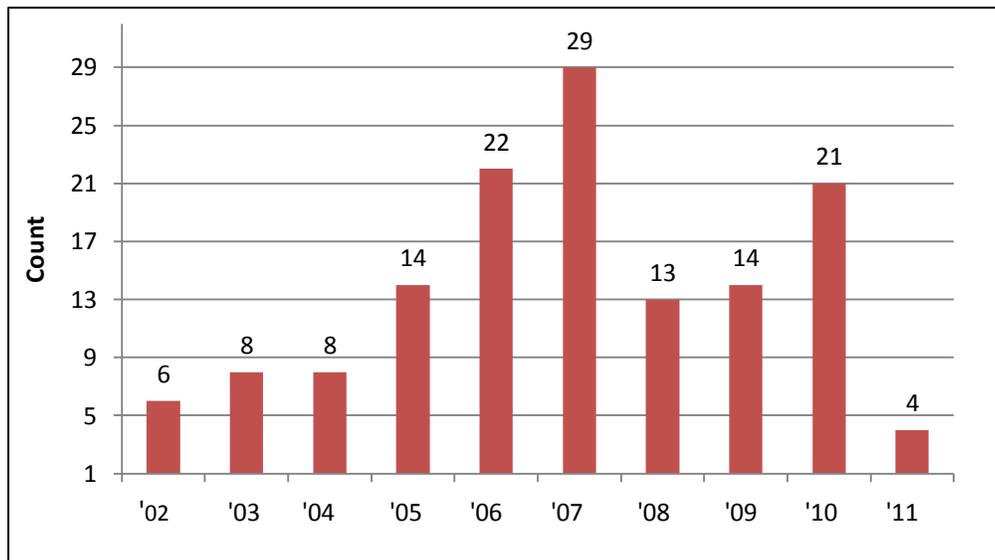
leading criticisms of the program as by law, trafficking is not simply limited to sexual exploitation (Young & Quick, 2005). With a government-supported budget of £5.8 million, the service provides everything from food and healthcare to legal advice and education sessions to its users. However, after four weeks, such support is conditional on the trafficked person's cooperation with prosecutors (Young & Quick, 2005). Regardless, the POPPY Project is one of the very few governmental organizations targeted specifically towards trafficked persons.

Following in the "victim"-centered approach of the POPPY Project, the Metropolitan Police, in conjunction with all the police forces in the U.K., launched a networked effort to enforce trafficking laws in 2006 called Operation Pentameter. The operation led to 88 trafficked persons being recovered, 232 people being arrested, and 134 persons being charged with various trafficking-related offences ("Pentameter 2," 2010). Operation Pentameter 2, similar to Operation Pentameter but with a more explicit intent of addressing child trafficking and labour exploitation, ended in 2008 and led to the arrest of 528 criminals (Davies, 2009). Despite the seemingly impressive results of the operations, they have been criticized by human rights groups and the media. The English Collective of Prostitutes and Amnesty International claimed that Operation Pentameter was used to deport illegal immigrants rather than protect trafficked persons, a dangerous act because women were returned to the same countries where they were trafficked from (Lewis, 2006). *The Guardian* also found that Operation Pentameter 2 was not as effective as the Home Office claimed. Of the 528 criminals arrested over the course of six months of the operation, only 96 were arrested specifically for trafficking, and of whom 67 were charged. In the end, only 15 individuals were convicted (Davies, 2009). The operation's results, thus, seemed to be exaggerated by government officials.

After the first Operation Pentameter, the government created the multi-agency center U.K. Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) in October 2006, aiming to use it as an integral part of implementing many of the U.K. Action Plan's proposals. UKHTC plays "a key role in co-ordinating work across...various

stakeholders and, with its partners, delivers a diverse set of programmes, including targeted campaigns to prevent and reduce THB [trafficking of human beings]" ("About the UKHTC," 2008). The biggest benefit of UKHTC is that it has the ability to connect expertise from the key areas from trafficking: prosecution, prevention, and protection with a "victim"-centered approach. The organization also seeks to continue research on trafficking and build on the best intelligence practices ("About the UKHTC," 2008). Though the organization is young and has done an effective job of raising awareness on trafficking through campaigns, UKHTC has been criticized of being dominated by the police and the U.K. Border Agency, leading to trafficked persons being treated as illegal immigrants, an issue that will be discussed later (Home Affairs Committee, 2009).

Chart 2.1 • Article Count by Year



Impact of Initiatives on Newspaper Discourse

These initiatives have ultimately led to the generation of trafficking discourse in U.K. newspapers. An analysis of article count in the four major newspapers showed that the number published was highest in 2007 at 29 articles (chart 2.1). This trend was likely due to Operation

Pentameter, which launched in 2006, as did UKHTC. The UK Home Office also published the *UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking* in March 2007. The impact on such institutionalized government actions in 2006 and 2007 is evident in the amount of coverage trafficking received in the media, which dropped again in 2008. The data thus supports that the generation of policy proposals, especially public ones such as Operation Pentameter, is linked to the generation of discourse.

Scale of Human Trafficking in the U.K.

The United Kingdom is often deemed a “major destination” for trafficked persons, especially from Eastern Europe, Africa, the Balkans, and Asia (Office To Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, 2009). However, neither the non-governmental organizations nor the governmental agencies working on the issue provided estimates of the number of people trafficked into the U.K. in 2008-2009. The House of Commons’ Home Affairs Committee reports Chief Constable Maxwell of the U.K. Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) as saying, “At the minute I do not think we have got a real handle on what the figures are” (Home Office, 2006). The difficulty of obtaining data mainly stems from the fact that trafficking is illegal and thus either unreported or largely underreported. Additionally, the lack of cooperation between agencies that hold the relevant data has prevented proper numbers from emerging (Home Office, 2007).

3 • Political Discourse

Examining the political discourse around the legal and policy framework on human trafficking is a difficult task, especially because it is a bipartisan issue that all parties acknowledge exists. The Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats, currently heading the U.K. government under a coalition, both mention human trafficking in their party manifestos under immigration. Both parties are dedicated to creating a national border police force, partly to “crack down” on human trafficking (Liberal Democrats, 2010; *Where We Stand-Immigration*, 2010). The two parties differ in that the Liberal Democrats additionally mention working closely with the European Union. This is evident in the party leadership’s push in recent months for the government to opt into the EU directive. The Liberal Democrats’ home affairs spokesperson Nick Clegg justified the directive by saying, “The European Union has bent over backwards to accommodate the British Government’s concerns. I can see no reason why not to sign up to the directive. It would make a clear statement of the Government’s support for trafficked women and its willingness to provide protection and secure convictions” (Benning-Prince, 2011).

The Labour Party has shared similar sentiments regarding the EU directive, expressing that the opting in would improve cross border cooperation in addressing trafficking in Europe, as well as improve protection for child victims and independent monitoring of U.K. policies on trafficking (Labour Party, 2010). Unlike the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, however, the Labour Party does not mention trafficking in its manifesto, suggesting that the issue may not be a priority for the party (Labour Party, 2010). The lack in the topic being in the forefront, though, is contradicted by the fact that all the policies and laws on human trafficking thus far, with the exception of the EU directive, have been enacted under the Labour government.

Regardless of party stances or actions, parliamentary actions show that cross-party cooperation on the issue has been present from early on. The support is perhaps epitomized by the creation of the

All-Party Parliamentary Group on human trafficking (APPG), which was created in 2006 by the Conservative Member of Parliament, Anthony Steen. The group seeks to “raise awareness of the scale and effects of human trafficking into the U.K. and the EU; and to seek solutions to reduce supply and demand; and to improve welfare provisions for victims” (“APPG Objectives,” 2009). The APPG members include MPs and representatives from all three major parties which have worked together to bring the issue into parliamentary debates, as well as raised national awareness issue through the Blue Blindfold campaign and the establishment of the annual Anti-Slavery Day (“APPG Objectives,” 2009).

These all-party efforts, though, seemingly fade away during political debates on trafficking, especially when related to EU policy as shown by the two examples in the introduction. All parties acknowledge that trafficking is a national concern but take self-contradictory stances in framing the debate as one of nationalism versus one of human rights. Such contradictions, though, aren’t limited to debate but also extend to policy. Regardless of the bipartisan support on the issue, there are clear gaps in the intention versus the implementation of current U.K. policy on trafficking across parties. This gap is especially present in the prosecution of traffickers and the protection of trafficked persons.

Prosecution

The Pentameter Operations, as outlined earlier, have provided evidence that in terms of prosecuting traffickers, the Government has been moderately successful in its efforts. One of the first prosecutions under trafficking was under the *Sexual Offences Act, 2003*. Two Albanian traffickers were prosecuted for bringing two Lithuanian women into the U.K., taking their passports, and forcing them to work as prostitutes to pay back their air travel costs (Craig & Joseph Rowntree Foundation., 2007). Between the implementation of the act and December 2008, 92 total convictions were made for sexual exploitations (Home Affairs Committee, 2009). Given the estimated scale of trafficking, this number seems significantly low. Unfortunately, the results were even lower for prosecution under trafficking for labor exploitation.

As for labor trafficking, prior to spring 2008, no convictions were made under *The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act, 2004*. The UKHTC reported that between January and March 2009, however, four convictions were made under the act, though their sentences were unclear (UKHTC, 2009). Between April and June 2009, two additional convictions were made for labor exploitation, each trafficker being sentenced 2 years in prison in addition to a confiscation order (UKHTCb, 2009).

These figures seem unusually low given the time frame, which certain governmental agencies, including the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR), have acknowledged. However, the JCHR has compared the figures to those in the EU; the European Commission has stated that across all EU Member States, there are generally 100 to 300 convictions per year (Home Affairs Committee, 2009). Additionally, both the European Commission and Europol have included U.K. in its list of most effective Member States on trafficking bases solely on the number of criminal prosecutions (Home Affairs Committee, 2009). Despite the presumable comparative success in prosecuting traffickers, it is clear that improvements are possible. In the current interpretation of trafficking legislation, two main factors must be proven for Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to “review, advise upon, charge and prosecute all cases of human trafficking”: sufficient evidence and public interest, the former of which prosecutors find highly problematic (Johnson, 2006).

Often, trafficked persons are either uncomfortable or feel threatened serving as witnesses in public trials given the psychological or physical trauma they have undergone. Children and migrant workers also tend to have very few incentives to serve as witnesses in trials as there are currently no programs similar to the POPPY Project to support these two groups (Home Affairs Committee, 2009). Thus, in cases where police cannot find sufficient corroborative evidence against a suspected trafficker or in circumstances where the trafficked person cannot serve as a witness either anonymously or without being present in court, the CPS has often resorted to claiming alternative charges for suspected

traffickers. JCHR, based on hearings with numerous trafficking experts, found this to be the case and included facts in its 2008-2009 report (Home Affairs Committee, 2009):

They [witnesses] said that, given the difficulty of finding enough convincing evidence to obtain a conviction for trafficking, the police and CPS often resorted to joint or alternative charges such as rape, sexual assault, blackmail, coercion, violence, false documentation and money laundering. They cited the examples of two police operations, Operation Pentameter 1, which resulted in 134 people being charged, only 32 of whom were charged with trafficking and the rest for rape, and Operation Glover (relating to the trafficking of a child within the U.K.) when the perpetrator was convicted of rape.

Various organizations have supported such methods. The UKHTC has referred to the method as the 'Al Capone' approach, where authorities are justified to use any legitimate means to prosecute the trafficker and protect the trafficked person(s), additionally stating that the organization is satisfied with the length of the sentences for convicted traffickers. Europol has also agreed with the method, stating that, "From our viewpoint, the trafficker is still a trafficker, it does not matter if he is prosecuted for another crime" (Home Affairs Committee, 2009).

The approach has two substantial downfalls. For one, it provides a distorted view of the existence of trafficking in the U.K., making it seem as if there are fewer cases of trafficking than actually exist. Such a misconception can have a significant effect on the resources that are allocated to agencies and organizations to fight trafficking or even for protection of trafficked persons (Home Affairs Committee, 2009). Funding cuts have already affected certain organizations, such as the Metropolitan Police's Human Trafficking Department, which received £435,000 in 2009 from the Home Office as opposed to £600,000 in 2008-2009 (Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2006). The cuts stemmed from a reorganization of government priorities away from immigration under Labour, as well as structural reorganization due to the establishment of UKHTC and the Serious Organized Crime Agency (SOCA), the latter of which partly deals with trafficking as an organized crime. The cuts, stated the unit's officers, would result in the group moving its resources to address criminal networks rather than individual traffickers who are at the end of the supply chain in the U.K. They also stated that the cuts would affect

their ability to find trafficked persons (Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2006). The Al Capone approach could thus exasperate such allocation of resources away from necessary units and tasks.

Secondly, the approach means that traffickers will often receive less stringent sentences than they would have otherwise. In certain circumstances where traffickers are convicted of acts such as living on immoral earnings, their sentence could be so short that they are released from prison before the trafficked person's immigration status is determined, or before the trafficked person has had sufficient time to safely integrate in the U.K. or her or his home country (Home Affairs Committee, 2009).

Thus, rather than acting on injudicious grounds, a better approach to increasing prosecution is the human-rights approach, which the government has claimed to embrace. The key to proper prosecution is the trafficked person's willingness and ability to serve as an effective witness, and this can only be achieved if the victim is protected against possible dangers, provided proper counseling to deal with trauma, and treated as a trafficked person rather than a violator of immigration laws.

Protection of Rights for Trafficked Persons

As evident with certain legislations and the provisions regarding the U.K. Action Plan on protection for trafficked persons, the government has come a long way in the past decade to ensure that basic rights of trafficked persons, especially women, are protected. The POPPY Project has served as a significant tool for not only assisting victims, but also serving as a means of ensuring that trafficked persons feel safe in bringing legal cases against traffickers. However, past cases have shown that despite human rights-centered legislations, trafficked persons are being treated as illegal immigrants. Additionally, despite the good intentions of the POPPY Project, the program has significant limitations in providing proper justice to trafficked persons.

The current U.K. approach to trafficked persons varies according to the way in which they were exploited, though certain themes are present across the board. As far as women who are trafficked for

sexual exploitation are concerned, the POPPY Project has the potential to serve as a useful and beneficial organization. However, the Project only accepts a woman on the basis that she was forced to make money for others as a prostitute no longer than 30 days before her admittance into the Project. Such a limitation may serve as a significant deterrence for women who are legitimately trafficked and require assistance. Between March 2003 and July 2004, 126 of the 169 women who were referred to the POPPY Project were refused service, mainly because more than 30 days had passed since they had prostituted themselves (Skrivankova, 2007). Such a limit is unprecedented anywhere else in the world. Not only does it discriminate against a woman who is too afraid to come forward within 30 days, it also excludes anyone who managed to escape from the trafficker before the exploitation actually started (Skrivankova, 2007).

Additionally, the biggest problem with trafficked persons, whether or not they are sexually exploited, is that the current legislations treat trafficked persons on a case-to-case basis rather than as a whole. Specifically, there is no provision in current legislations that allows trafficked persons to stay within the U.K. solely based on the fact that they were trafficked (Skrivankova, 2007). They are eligible to apply for asylum but often, trafficked persons are treated as illegal immigrants and deported. The JCHR recognizes this, stating, “The immigration authorities are said to be under pressure to meet removal targets, and removal inevitably is going to be the priority for them. The process is speedy, and this, coupled with a lack of adequate knowledge and training, makes it difficult to identify victims properly” (Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2006). Such removal, which the government undertakes when the country of origin is deemed to be safe, is especially problematic as trafficked persons could be re-trafficked into the U.K.; POPPY Project stated that 20% of the women who use their services are re-trafficked (Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2006). Some of these ‘safe’ countries, however, are hotspots for traffickers, especially Albania, Moldova, and Romania, which U.K. has failed to recognize (Craig & Joseph Rowntree Foundation., 2007). The approach is thus not only detrimental in effectively

ensuring the protection of trafficked persons, but goes against the human-rights approach the U.K. government has claimed to take. Rather than protecting the person, the current approach punishes her or him for having been trafficked.

Overall, it is clear that despite the government's latest policies to approach trafficking via a human-rights approach, there are serious gaps between intended goals and realities. The lack of prosecution in traffickers—within the border security framework—and the lack of protection for trafficked persons—within the human rights framework— also contradict the two central themes in political discourse. The two-fold contradictions present a confounding problem. For one, parties change their internal framing of the issue between the need for border security versus the need for protection of trafficked persons. At the same time, an analysis of U.K. trafficking policy and actions indicates that these two frameworks are currently missing despite the almost decade-long focus on legal and policy action on the issue. An analysis of trafficking discourse in newspapers, though, clarifies the role of political affiliation in framing, as well as provides reasoning for the low prosecution rates and the poor protection laws for trafficked persons.

4 • Racial and Sexual Politics

Whereas political discourse is usually framed in terms of border security and human trafficking, these themes aren't as apparent in journalistic discourse. The research showed that only one of the 139 articles mentioned the words "border security" and one other "immigration control." The issue of immigration, though, does emerge in newspapers in the form of ethnic politics – discourse regarding racial or ethnic minorities in the U.K. which specifically defines who is a perpetrator and who is a victim of human trafficking. Likewise, the issue of human rights is reconstructed in terms of sexual politics which discursively constructs the image of a trafficked person. These themes, ethnic and sexual politics, have historical underpinnings in the discourse of the white slavery trade of the nineteenth century.

Victimization

The modern-day narrative of human trafficking, which brings about intersections in gender and ethnicity, is not a new one. The discourse finds its roots in the early twentieth century campaigns against 'white slavery,' the supposed phenomenon of trafficking in girls and women for prostitution, whether by force, deceit, or drugs against their will (Doezema, 2000). These campaigns' rhetoric heavily relied on the abduction of European, or white women for prostitution by foreigners in geographic areas such as South America, Africa, or Asia. Today, the geographical direction of trafficking seems to have changed. Modern-day anti-trafficking campaigns refer to South American, African, or Asian women being trafficked into Europe and the United States. However, the image of the trafficking "victim" is still that of a young, innocent woman being lured into "slavery" by evil traffickers – a state from which she cannot escape (Doezema, 2010).

This particular narrative began in Britain itself in the late 1880s. During this time, the public debate on prostitution was already well underway, with the focus on defining the causes, effects, and solutions to prostitution (Doezema, 2010). Amid this background, W.T. Stead, the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, published his findings from a four-week investigation on the traffic in girls in London

(Walkowitz, 1992). His series, "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," created a moral panic in the country as it outlined how "daughters of the people" were "snared, trapped, and outraged, either when under the influence of drugs or after a prolonged struggle in a locked room" (Stead & Simpson, 2007). Walkowitz has argued that Stead's account, in a way, started a tradition of melodrama around the discussion of sex discourse and especially trafficking. Through the political art form, Stead drew upon the vulnerability of the working class to tell a story of the victim being subjugated to the villain's control, usually an aristocratic British gentleman, only to be saved through a stroke of luck. More importantly, his accounts "diverted attention away from the economic and social issues relating to prostitution" (Walkowitz, 1992).

Walkowitz' analysis can be applied to modern-day discourse by defining melodrama in the context of providing power to the perpetrator over the victim in an inescapable context. Analysis of language in trafficking articles shows that newspapers still utilize power in describing trafficked persons. Of all the 139 articles that were coded, 15.1% used rescue language and of these, 76.2% used the term sex trafficking. The use of sex trafficking specifically invokes the image of a girl or a woman as the victim, and the term 'rescue' suggests that she doesn't have the agency to free herself from the perpetrator. The lack of agency is particularly implied when rescue language is tied to emotive adjectives, such as the following passage from *The Times* (O'Neill, 2007):

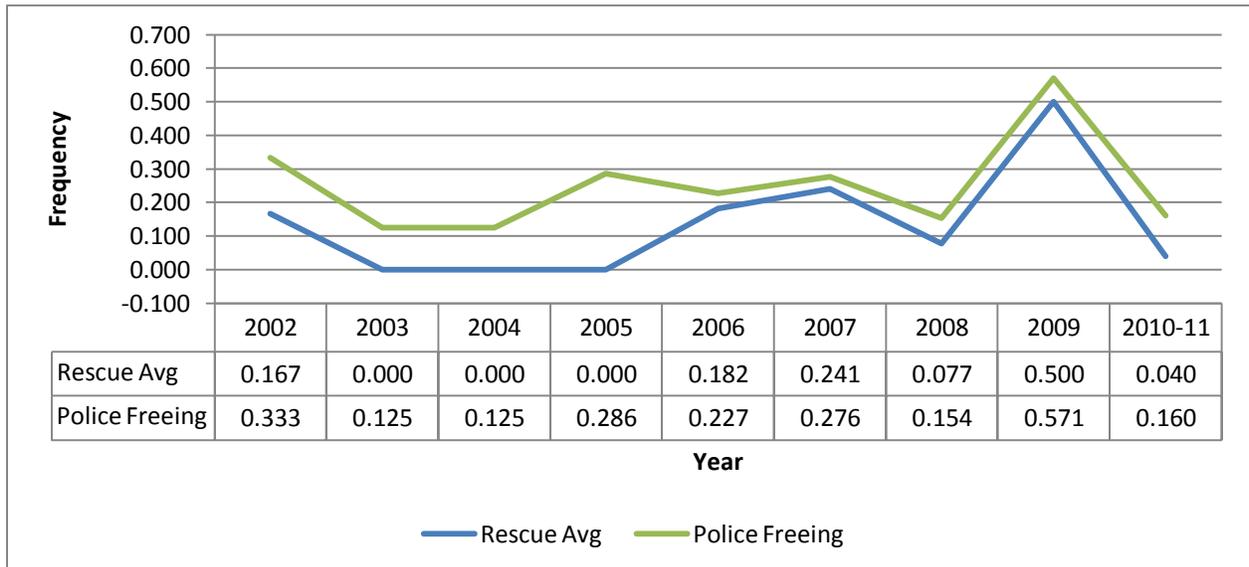
Immigration from Eastern Europe has brought a supply of women deceived into thinking good jobs await them. Instead they are sold to vice gangs for £ 500 and forced into prostitution. An investigation by *The Times* has found that one rural force has identified 80 brothels this year. The two women were frightened and nervous, regarding their would-be rescuers with suspicion.

Descriptors such as "forced," "frightened," and "nervous" imply innocence that lead the victim into a deceitful situation. This particular passage is unique in that it also alludes to what some academics claim is the reality: most people trafficked for sex purposes are aware they will be working in the sex industry, but unaware of the conditions under which they will work (Wijers & Lap-Chew, 1997). Though the

passage above is one of the few that acknowledges of this fact – albeit not specifically stating that “good jobs” refer to sex jobs – the passage remains riddled with descriptors of victimization.

Victimization through rescue language, though present in all newspapers, is more often used in right-winged newspapers. *The Daily Telegraph* used rescue language in 25% of its articles; *The Times* in 17.1%; *The Guardian* in 17.5%; and *The Independent* in 6.1%. This data thus empirically links political affiliation with the discourse of trafficking, whereby right-winged or conservative sex discourse tends to take away self-agency from women more so than left-winged or liberal sex discourse.

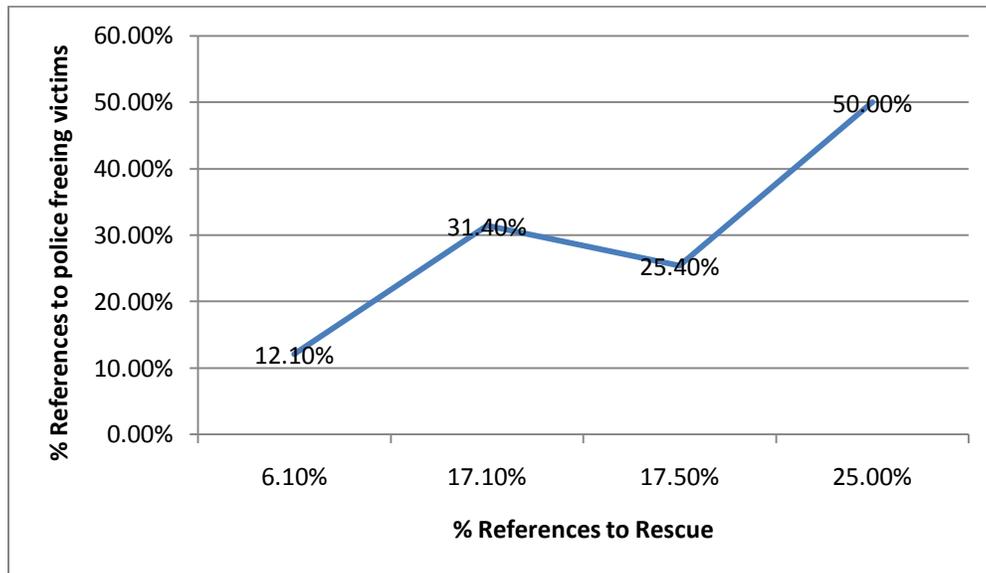
Chart 3.1 • Rescue Language and Police Freeing by Year



Additionally, the use of rescue language is inextricably linked to the language of police freeing victims. As chart 3.1 shows, articles have consistently associated police freeing victims in the context of victims being rescued. This narrative alludes back to Stead’s use of melodrama, where the victim is unable to escape her or his situation until a third party, then Stead himself but today, the police, rescues the person. This claim of rescue language being linked to police freeing victims is further supported by chart 3.2, which shows that articles with rescue language are more likely to mention police who could

be thought of as saviors of trafficked persons (with *The Independent* referencing police freeing victims 12.10% of the time, *The Times* 31.40%, *The Guardian* 25.40%, and *The Daily Guardian* 50%). The correlation has the underlying connotation of women having little to no autonomy over their lives under the control of perpetrators.

Chart 3.2 • Rescue Language vs. References to Police Freeing Victims



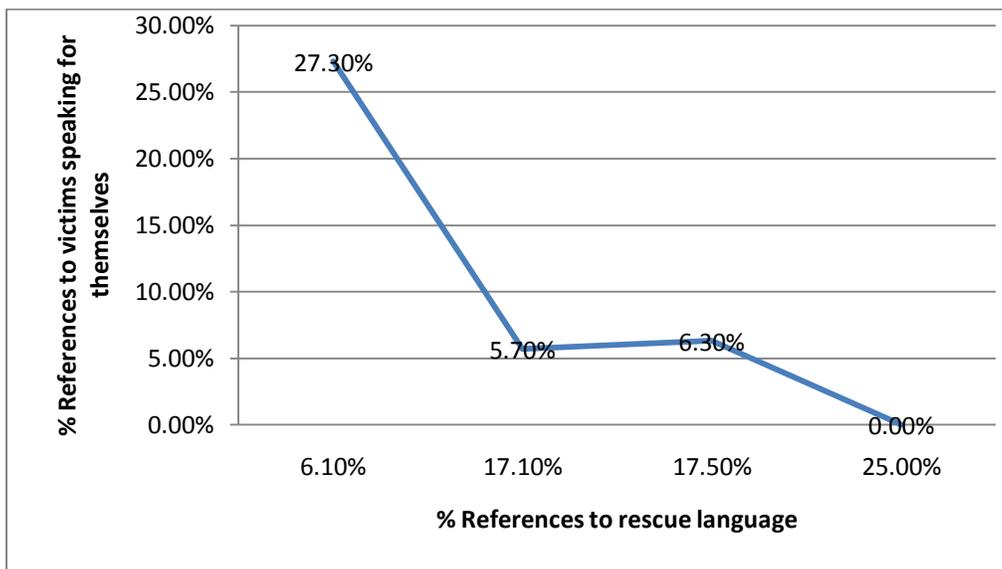
The lack of agency is further exacerbated when one examines the modern discourse on youth being trafficked. In the historical white slavery narrative, authors often capitalized on the innocence of the victim by emphasizing her youth and virginity. Today, the same language is utilized to blur “the distinction between child and adult [to help] fix the image of the “trafficking” victim as young and helpless” (Doezema, 2000). References to the victim being underage seem to be connected to political ideology, with *The Times* mentioning young victims in as many as 54.29% of its articles versus *The Guardian* in as few as 33.87% of its articles (chart 3.3). The data once again builds the case for right-winged discourse using victimization in greater frequency than left-winged discourse.

Chart 3.3 • References to Underage Victims

Newspaper	References to Underage Victims
<i>The Times</i>	54.29%
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	50.00%
<i>The Independent</i>	39.39%
Guardian	33.87%

One can further analyze such victimization through chart 3.4, which shows a clear association between references of rescues and references to victims speaking for themselves. The dependent variable was coded positively for when trafficked persons were quoted or paraphrased, indicating that the journalist had chosen to give an autonomous voice to victims.

Chart 3.4 • Rescue Language vs. References to Victims Speaking for Themselves



As chart 3.4 indicates, *The Independent* was most likely to directly cite a trafficked person and had the least use of rescue language at 6.10%. In the opposite regard, *The Daily Telegraph*, which used rescue language in 25% of its articles, never cited a trafficked person speaking about their situation. The data

further supports the claim that right-winged discourse more heavily focuses on disempowering themes of rescue, particularly police rescue, than its left-winged counterparts.

The discursive victimization of trafficked persons is further exacerbated with the prevalent use of the word 'slavery' to describe human trafficking across. The frequency of references to slavery is similar across the different newspapers regardless of political affiliation, with the highest being 57.60% in *The Independent* and the lowest being 46% in *The Guardian*. In most in media discourse, though, slavery is described to invoke an emotive reaction to women being forced into prostitution. The discursive use of slavery inherently alludes to the power of individuals within society. According to scholar Jennifer Musto, "slaves are represented as the least powerful within the global economy," with their previous economic or sociocultural status making them "more expendable and disposable" in modern-day capitalism (2009). They thus have little choice in the conditions and circumstances under their own conditions. As Bales states, modern-day slavery is "a person held by violence or the threat of violence for economic exploitation" (2004). Given Bales' assertion and trafficking cases, victimization certainly occurs at the hands of the traffickers. However, examining Musto's claim suggests that there is a double-victimization occurring, first by pimps and traffickers and again by newspapers through their representation of trafficked persons.

The effect of the newspapers using victimization through different motifs of rescue, deception, police as rescuers, youth, and victims speaking for themselves is to construct the individual as a victim of a crime as opposed to a prostitute, who could have chosen sex work (Doezema, 2000). The innocence and deceit undergone by the trafficked person ultimately has an impact on policy discourse. As with the white slave trade, the media plays a role in conjuring up images of trafficking in the public and among policy-makers, who then react to the images of "naïve" girls and women being forced into the industry. The focus, thus, becomes prevention of these women entering the sex industry rather than protection of women *within* the industry. As Doezema points out, the problem of whom the rights belong to

emerges. Women who knowingly migrate for prostitution but experience exploitation and abuse aren't considered trafficked, and are not considered worthy of receiving the same human rights protections as trafficked women (Doezema & Kempadoo, 1998).

This regulationist reasoning rooted in puritanical beliefs of the white slave trade of protecting the good women and believing that women who choose prostitution deserve has an inherent problem that today conflicts with policy implementation: women must prove their innocence in order to receive human rights protection. The flaw within this system is perhaps exemplified by the POPPY Project, which provides support, accommodation, and outreach for up to 54 women over the age of 18 who can show they were sexually exploited, trafficked, and forced to work in prostitution within the U.K. ("POPPY Project," 2010).

This necessity of proof is also one of the leading criticisms of the program, especially as by law, trafficking is not simply limited to sexual exploitation (Ministry of Justice, 2009). With a government-supported budget of £5.8 million, the service provides everything from food and healthcare to legal advice and education sessions to its users (Ministry of Justice, 2009). However, after four weeks, such support is conditional on the trafficked person's cooperation with prosecutors (Young & Quick, 2005). The protection being conditional on proof that the woman has been sexually exploited and trafficked, as well as conditional on the woman cooperating with prosecutors, often results in a deterrence from the victim-centered approach to trafficking being implemented. The deterrence could partly be attributable to the public perception of a trafficked woman that has been created by newspaper discourse—that of an innocent woman being put through misery. Thus, one could ostensibly argue that a woman must prove her innocence or non-consent to being trafficked in order to receive support after she is recovered.

The misperception became clearer with the 2006 and 2008 Operation Pentameters, which human rights groups and the media have criticized for deporting trafficked persons. The English

Collective of Prostitutes and Amnesty International both claimed that Operation Pentameter was used to deport illegal immigrants rather than protect trafficked persons, a dangerous act because women were returned to the same countries where they were trafficked from, once again putting them at risk of being trafficked (Lewis, 2006). The deportation of trafficked persons is unique in that it blurs two seemingly dichotomous frameworks of trafficking in political discourse – border security and victimization. The government as a whole creates contradictory lines, acting both as a rescuer of the innocent as well as a deporter of those who cannot prove non-consent. The critique thus re-affirms the earlier understanding of U.K. political frameworks of immigration versus human rights opposing each other.

Ethnicity

Historically, white slavery narratives have focused on the abduction of white European or American women being forced into prostitution (Doezema, 2010). The accounts stressed the “whiteness” of the victim, equating it with “purity” and conversely, blackness with “depravity” (Grittner, 1990). The term white slavery itself explicitly established the contrast with black slavery, implying that the slavery of white women was worse than the black slavery experience (Grittner, 1990). Additionally, a central feature of the narratives was the depiction of foreigners as a sexual threat. Eastern and southern European men were particularly singled out as being dangerous, but as were African-Americans and Chinese men (Donovan, 2006). In the U.K., Jewish males were an additional threat to young women (Walkowitz, 1992). These stereotypes stemmed from the social and cultural contexts of the time. With xenophobia and racism present in the U.S., and anti-Semitism popular in Britain, the cultures of the time represented these stigmatized groups as dangerous perpetrators to a violent crime against white, native women (Lazaridis, 2001).

Using a similar context of cultural and social debate, one can hypothesize that ethnic identification, especially when coupled with recent immigration, play an increasing role in the discourse

of trafficking in modern-day Britain. Since World War II, Britain has undergone a drastic demographic change. 'New Commonwealth' immigrants, or citizens of the Commonwealth who settled in the country, changed the traditionally homogenous landscape to a multicultural one. Such multiculturalism, however, has led to ethnic tensions, the most recent one in 2001 when ethnic minorities and the white majority of Bradford clashed after being provoked by far-right groups such as the British National Party. The riots are just one aspect of a continuing contemporary debate of creating and understanding a national British identity. Other contentious points, also part of the debate, are that of an increase in accepted asylum seekers in Britain and growing Islamophobia in the country (Coxall, Leach, & Robins, 2003).

These topics, prevalent in both political and social discourse, bring the focus back on the 'other' – the non-British minorities – that may pose a threat to a once-culturally homogenous society. How does this renewed focus on immigration tie into trafficking discourse and how does such discourse connect to the historical narrative of the white slave trade? Analyzing the ethnicities ascribed to victims and perpetrators in trafficking articles may provide some answers.

There is a significant disparity in ethnic identification between victims and perpetrators. As chart 4.1 indicates, 22.45% of the articles don't mention the ethnicity of the victim compared to 59.38% of the articles where the ethnicity of the perpetrator isn't mentioned. In as many as 40% of the articles, the victims are explicitly referred to as Eastern Europeans; African in 11.02% of the articles; and East Asian in 13.06% of the articles. These descriptors, though not explicit in racialization, inherently create a racialized image of the victim. The term 'Eastern European' specifically invokes an image of a white woman, whereas 'African' an image of a black woman. Though the language of "white" slavery is not present, the prevalence of ethnic descriptors of victims re-creates a racialized image of trafficking.

Along with using ethnic descriptors, all four newspapers refer to trafficking victims as illegal immigrants, with the label being especially prevalent in *The Independent*. The illegality, though, is

usually mentioned in terms of the limitations it brings in providing trafficked persons human rights and protection once they are recovered (Goodchild, Woolf, & Anderson, 2005):

The unofficial police estimate is that 10,000 illegal immigrants are working as prostitutes in Britain and more than three-quarters of women in brothels are from the Baltic states, Africa and South-east Asia. Police have been raiding massage parlours across the country. Last week, officers in the West Midlands found 19 foreign women in a Birmingham parlour suspected of having been trafficked.

But Amnesty International said women involved are treated as illegal immigrants and deported home to face social stigma, poverty and even death threats from the criminals who brought them to Britain.

The excerpt above from the left-winged newspaper *The Independent* highlights the problems women face when deported to their country of origin, but is still laded with what some scholars refer to as the “colonial gaze.” Though there is no explicit reference to racist discourse, the women are referred to as those from the third world or former communist countries scarred by poverty and unable to make an independent decision. Neo-abolitionist feminists today like Kathleen Barry analyze the racism present in such assumptions (Doezema & Kempadoo, 1998):

She[Barry] constructs a hierarchy of stages of patriarchal and economic development, situating the trafficking in women in the first stage that “prevails in pre-industrial and feudal societies that are primarily agricultural and where women are excluded from the public sphere” and where women, she states, are the exclusive property of men.

Conversely, developed countries with post-industrial infrastructure create norms where women have the means to achieve economic independence. This contradiction reinforces the assumption that the developing world has to evolve to the level that the western world currently is (Doezema, 2000).

Within this framework of the colonial gaze, a further look into the commodification of women, or the monetary valuation of trafficked women, suggests that race is still a factor in trafficking discourse (Doezema, 2000). All four newspapers suggest prices for a trafficked person, with *The Daily Telegraph* having a relatively high prevalence (4 references from 8 articles). Given the prices and descriptors, it is apparent that young girls or virgins are especially valued at higher prices. A look into the ethnicities of the women suggests that Eastern European women are most

likely to be commodified, with each newspaper referencing young Eastern European girls or virgins. Contrastingly, there is only one mention of South American women and one of African or East Asian women. The commodification of the Eastern European victim thus re-tells the myth of a white, young girl, usually a virgin, who is being sold at high prices to foreign perpetrators (Doezema, 2000).

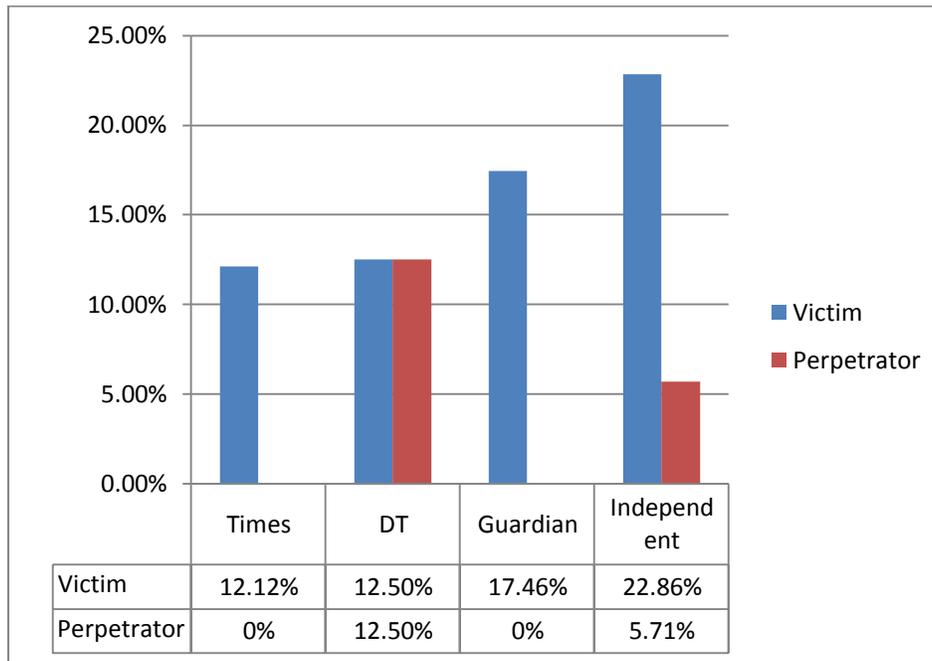
Chart 4.1 • Ethnicities of Victims and Perpetrators

% Victim	Country	% Perpetrator
40.00%	Eastern Europe	19.38%
22.45%	None	59.38%
11.02%	Africa	2.50%
13.06%	East Asia	6.25%
2.04%	Europe	0%
5.71%	South Asia/Asia	2.50%
1.63%	Middle East	3.75%
2.45%	South America	0%
0.82%	U.K.	5%

Chart 4.2 • Prices for Trafficked Women

<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	4000: 15 year old Lithuanian girl
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	8000: virgins
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	4000: teenage virgins
<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	1400: Eastern Europe
<i>The Guardian</i>	8,000: young girls, particularly virgins, from S. America
<i>The Guardian</i>	8,000: Lithuanian virgin
<i>The Independent</i>	2000: attractive; 800: 'loose, overused, diseased'
<i>The Independent</i>	5000: Lithuanian, 16 years old
<i>The Independent</i>	5000: women
<i>The Times</i>	400: underage girl
<i>The Times</i>	2500: Eastern Europe, Africa, or Far East
<i>The Times</i>	500: Eastern Europe

Chart 4.3 • % Articles Referencing Victims and Perpetrators as Illegal Immigrants



Such racism also seems to exist in the ethnic description of perpetrators. As opposed to the victims being unidentified 22.45% of the time, the ethnicity of perpetrators was unidentified almost 60% of the time (chart 4.1). This signifies the focus of the discourse being on the victimization of the trafficked persons as opposed to the trafficker. At the same time, when ethnicities are mentioned, the perception of human trafficking being the fault of foreigners re-emerges (Doezema, 2000).

As many as 19.98% of the articles referenced an Eastern European trafficker, with the frequency dropping to 6.25% of the articles mentioning an East Asian trafficker. Not only is the implicit message that foreigners are causing trafficking in the country, but also that they are operating in mafia-like, criminal gangs. An article in *The Guardian* exemplifies the use of racism in today's media (Topping, 2011):

The issue has come under the spotlight after cases in Derby, where ringleaders of a gang of Asian men were jailed for grooming girls as young as 12 for sex, and in Rochdale, where nine men, mainly Asian, were arrested on Tuesday last week on suspicion of grooming a group of white teenage girls.

Carrie warned of the risk of the issue becoming dangerously simplified after comments from the former home secretary Jack Straw, who said some Pakistani men saw white girls as "easy meat".

Of Barnardo's 22 specialist services surveyed for the report, 21 had seen evidence of the trafficking of children through organised networks for sex, often with multiple men.

The excerpt paints the traffickers, all men, as a gang of evil foreigners who prey on "white teenage girls."

This language is found not in an opinion column, but in a journalistic news article and brings back the same vilification of traffickers as foreigners to be feared that existed during the white slave trade. The excerpt is particularly potent because it adds to the already present Islamophobia in the country (Meer & Modood, 2009). By stating that the men are Pakistani, it implicitly suggests that Muslims are abusing local, young girls.

5 • Conclusion

United Kingdom's recognition of human trafficking has made significant strides in policy, politics, and general discourse since 2001. The issue has become prominent in the last few years, especially since 2007. The willingness of political parties to discuss the issue as a bipartisan one and in some cases, include it as part of the party manifesto, suggests that trafficking will have a presence in the political sphere in the future. However, examining the current framing and discourse in trafficking, specifically sex trafficking, suggests that there are many discontinuities in the field reflective of the white slavery movement of the nineteenth century.

The discontinuities stem from the dichotomy of political parties using trafficking as a border security issue versus a human rights issue, frameworks which confound the problem of the state acting both as a rescuer and a deporter of trafficked persons. All three major parties in the U.K. have utilized these different ways of approaching trafficking, all rooted in immigration and ethnic politics of who belongs in the U.K., as well as sexual politics of who is deemed a trafficked person. The complexities of these bipartisan, yet at times biased politics are evident in newspapers that reflect diverse political leanings, and are ultimately reflective of discursive trends that first emerged during the white slavery narratives of the nineteenth century.

The ethnic and sexual politics of modern-day trafficking, unlike the white slave trade movement, do not explicitly state trafficking as a "white" problem of moral women being forced into prostitution. As the discursive analysis show, though, the high number of references to Eastern European women and particularly, the commodification of Eastern European girls and virgins implicitly put a higher value on the trafficking of white women. Additionally, examining the diverse geographies and descriptors for victims and perpetrators show that *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Independent* all victimize women with an implicit undertone of the poor, misogynistic non-western world creating the problem of trafficking. Such victimization is

more prevalent in the right-wing leaning newspapers than left-wing newspapers, but the bipartisan prevalence of such language ultimately results in faulty consequences, especially for policy. Rather than garnering support for human rights protection of trafficked persons, victimized journalistic discourse creates a misunderstanding of who deserves to be called a trafficking victim and who doesn't.

Keith Vaz, the chairman of the Commons home affairs select committee warns of creating stereotypes where "victims will say: 'I don't fit into that pattern, so I'm not being abused'" (Topping, 2011). The same can be applied to policymakers. As described above, policymakers may believe that victims need to prove that their innocence rather than the presence of abuse and exploitation in order to receive protection. As evident by the high presence of deportations of trafficked persons during the Operation Pentameter operations, as well as the necessity of proof of being trafficked to receive support from the POPPY Project, misperceptions of trafficking is already present in policy and diverts the focus away from protecting rights of victims.

The complexity of discourse also creates a bigger problem of understanding the realities of trafficking. Like the nineteenth century white slavery campaigns, modern-day discourse has created a new "moral panic" stemming from the context of "boundary crises" in which ethnicity and women's autonomy are utilized as boundary markers (Doezema, 2000). The narratives presented in modern-day discourse may be true, but it is unclear if and how they are a reconstruction of an established framework to present a "myth" (Doezema, 2000). The contradictions in political and social spheres on trafficking additionally confound the problem of contrasting the reality of trafficking from the perceptions of the issue. When the accounts of trafficking in women merge the ideas of exploited innocents; despoiled virgin youths; the evil foreign trafficker; and the brave state rescuers; the fictional and exaggerated accounts of trafficking become indistinguishable.

This problem heightens when newspapers, with the exception of *The Independent*, discuss trafficking without giving voice to the trafficked person herself. The lack of autonomy given to the victim over her own experiences thus establishes the definition of trafficking from the scholarly or journalistic understandings of individuals who do not first-hand witness the issue. The reality of trafficking is confounded with the perception of trafficking, both in political and journalistic discourse, and the difference between fact and fiction becomes more blurred.

As trafficking continues to be a prevalent, morally charged issue in both the public and political spheres, creating a balanced narrative that combines the scholarly knowledge with experiential knowledge of trafficked persons becomes increasingly important. Though historical underpinnings of ethnic and sexual politics may mean that these factors are never completely eliminated from discourse, giving voice to the victim may lead to more balanced accounts of trafficking. Without clearer narratives, the blurring of lines between immigration policy and trafficking policy comes at a price of devaluation of human rights for victims. By expanding the understanding of trafficked persons from innocent, oppressed outsiders and perpetrators from evil foreigners, both the state and the media can play a significant role in re-creating clearer accounts of trafficking in women and thereby creating a better public understanding of the issue.

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