The role of policy and corruption in human trafficking research

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own account of my own research. It contains as its main content work which has not been previously submitted for a degree at any university

signed

James Alexander Benjamin
Acknowledgments

God – My personal faith, has lead me down the path that I take, to the convictions that I hold in my heart.


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Abstract

Human trafficking is a global phenomenon that has taken the world by storm. Media and advocacy campaigns have paraded the atrocities of human trafficking, and with little empirical support of the claims that are being made about human trafficking. Researchers and experts alike agree that the empirical studies and support for human trafficking are lacking, while at the same time believing that human trafficking is definitely a serious problem invading the world. What this paper seeks to achieve is to gather the different stakeholders involved in two major areas of human trafficking, namely policy and corruption, and analyse the functions of the stakeholders with policy and corruption.

By no means do we present a solution of any sort, rather we intend to provide an avenue for future research and highlight certain practices. What this review has pointed out is that there is a need for combined efforts in researching and countering human trafficking, that the disjointed efforts that are currently in place cannot and do not begin to adequately address the complex and clandestine nature of human trafficking.
Chapter 1
Introduction

Background

The origins of human trafficking go back to the 1400s when the European slave trade in Africa started to grow, contrary to the common belief that globalization brought the advent of human trafficking. When the African slaves were bought and sold however, slavery had not yet been abolished, and so the whole system was considered a legal transaction, not what we presently consider to be human trafficking. The intent of transporting the humans for slave-like or forced labour purposes was still there nonetheless, and such actions were not considered illegal until the passing of the law that abolished slavery. In the advent of globalization, the freedom of movement and ease of transporting persons across borders or countries robustly changed the way we perceive and conceptualise the understanding of what people have named, human trafficking. Across the world human trafficking is becoming more widely publicized, and in various countries, instruments and policies have been developed and implemented in order to address this global issue of human trafficking, albeit with little to no success. In the year 2000, the United Nations (UN) implemented the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC). Further in 2003, three protocols were designed in order to supplement the CTOC, the Palermo Protocols, of which one was specifically designed to focus on human trafficking; the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. These instruments are an attempt to globalise and unify the definition of human trafficking and to provide a model for action to prevent and punish perpetrators of trafficking, as well as protect victims. The United Nations defines human trafficking as:

"the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the
consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;”

This is where the international discussion on human trafficking revolves around; consolidating the accepted global definition and understanding of what human trafficking is and what it looks like. Human trafficking evolves over time and place accordingly to the culture and circumstance of each locality in line with the advancement of technology and society. The depth and complexity of human trafficking has developed to a point where researchers have come to agree that there is no simple solution, and that there is no single model that can effectively address human trafficking holistically and across nations. Factors such as the profile of traffickers, victims and conspirators are varying and often not generalizable aside from the common belief that victims are vulnerable and mostly affected by poverty (Bales 2007), which in reality still does not encapsulate the entirety of human trafficking victims. Consequently, it becomes difficult to capture the entire scope and reach of the human trafficking process as a crime. The Palermo protocols, although designed with the right intent, have been criticized to be dissatisfactory in addressing the entire scope of human trafficking, missing out on sub populations of traffickers and victims alike. The definition stated in the protocol against human trafficking certainly did originally intend to cover holistically the entire scope of human trafficking, however there has been debate that the protocols no longer suffice, both conceptually and practically.

In reality organizations, campaigns and agencies have been known to tailor the definition of human trafficking to a specific section of human trafficking, for example, focussing entirely on sex trafficking, either as the focus or as an all-encompassing portrayal of human trafficking. Sex trafficking, however, only constitutes a portion of the total human trafficking victim population. This is but one example of the many problems and difficulties faced in the human trafficking research field, nonetheless a major problem, a problem that pervades all sectors of the human trafficking research field, causing
disjointed anti-human trafficking efforts and impeding further research and understanding into the problem of human trafficking. Literature surrounding human trafficking research is now in unanimity and agreement from all major stakeholders, that there is a desperate and sure need for stronger data and evidence that does not rely on secondary sources, but comes from valid and reliable sources. Primary sources of data, however, do not come by so easily due to the clandestine nature of human trafficking, and is currently one of the major roadblocks hindering effective progress in human trafficking research.
**Need for Study**

The need for stronger evidential support for the design and implementation of anti-human trafficking instruments, policies and programs is well established. Primary data sources and data in general are required to facilitate informed decisions by government, law enforcement and civil social organizations. Many, if not all academics and agencies agree unanimously that the weak evidential support and empirical support for anti-human trafficking programs and policies is one of the biggest fall backs currently hindering progress in the anti-human trafficking field. Without a strong empirical background to provide evidence-based rationales regarding the scope, magnitude and reach of human trafficking systems and processes, designing policies and programs for anti-human trafficking is significantly more ineffective and inaccurate. This is because without data that fully and accurately portrays the reality of human trafficking, policy cannot be designed according to realistic representations regarding the current state of human trafficking (U.S. 2006), and this is something that is constant across all nations, not just one specific locality. A heavy focus for this paper in analysing the data in human trafficking research will be on hidden populations. Hidden populations, the sub population of human trafficking victims that are disregarded for various reasons, poses a major problem to studying human trafficking research because of the unknown number of victims that comprise the hidden population and the complexity of understanding why these populations exist or how victims end up in this population. Human trafficking research as we have mentioned requires accurate data, and hidden populations are a major source of distortion to that data; the undocumented victims, although potentially covering only a relatively small portion of the total population of human trafficking victims, still are very significant in every respect (Tyldum and Brunovskis 2005), and this concept is represented graphically in Figure 1.
What the graph shows is that there are victims of human trafficking that are unknown to the current research of human trafficking, that the cases registered by law enforcement and by NGO’s, constitute only a portion of the total actual population of human trafficking victims. In order to shed light to the hidden population, and in doing so assist in the human trafficking research, finding where these hidden populations are, what causes these hidden populations and how these hidden populations can be integrated into the human trafficking research is critical. There is a close link between finding these hidden populations and assessing the anti-trafficking models and programs of states and countries.

The difficulty lies in the fact that each country has its own form and circumstance of human trafficking; therefore not every model or program can be replicated across countries to address human trafficking victim populations. This is the major problem with adopting universal models for anti-trafficking, that no one model can be used across countries due to its individuality in circumstance and situation. This brings up the question of whether an overarching model is appropriate in the current situation, like the Palermo Protocols that were created to combat human trafficking. To further complicate things, the data collected across different countries can be different in nature because each country measures the human trafficking issue according to their unique circumstances,
and this consequently means that not all data is constant and at times not even comparable between countries (Aromaa 2007). These are the considerations that need to be made in order to keep human trafficking research up to date with the changes in the human trafficking industry, where change and flexibility have been embraced to keep the lucrative industry in the dark.

So, in order to address the issue holistically, the major areas of human trafficking and human trafficking research needs to be viewed objectively. Due to the complexity however, there are few researchers who have taken a broader perspective of human trafficking research, and often only look at a specific problem within human trafficking, for example, corruption or migration policy, and taken the topic into deeper analysis.
Aims and Purposes

The aim of this paper is to analyse how the major stakeholder functions within the two major areas of policy and corruption, in order to identify areas where hidden populations can be found and where weaknesses in the human trafficking research and counter efforts are evident. Specifically we will look at the different stakeholders such as government, law enforcement, international agencies, and how we can determine hidden populations of human trafficking victims from looking at the interaction of the stakeholders with policy and corruption. The larger the hidden population the more inaccurate human trafficking research becomes, and so by setting out the relevant stakeholders and their interactions with relevant research areas, this paper seeks to place the relevant stakeholders into one setting and looking at the from one perspective so as to gain a possible viewpoint of how human trafficking research has developed and can develop. It is important to note that in no way do we purport to provide solutions or a model to be implemented, but to set out the various issues and pitfalls of human trafficking research onto one setting.

In order to do this, I need to identify the literature surrounding each of the relevant stakeholders and analyse how each functions within the bigger system of human trafficking and the hidden populations that pervade research. From this we can attempt to analyse which actors have areas that need improvement and which areas can be used to step up the momentum in human trafficking research. New methodologies of gathering data on human trafficking will be briefly mentioned and discussed so as to highlight possible upcoming methods in the human trafficking research field. These are methods that have not been commonly used which have potential to be used effectively with thorough further research. All of this will aim to assess ways to improve actor involvement in human trafficking research, or areas that need to be given more attention to improve the research in human trafficking.
Chapter 2

Corruption

Corruption is one of the largest known problems that exacerbate human trafficking; researchers and agencies are unanimous in their attitude towards corruption, that it is one of the key issues that feed into the human trafficking industry and process (Sacco Studnicka 2010). This is significantly important for human trafficking research because in every way possible, corruption in any and all levels impede human trafficking research; corruption conceals victim identity and populations, and trafficker identity and populations, as well as allude the human trafficking process. In every case of corruption regards of which stakeholder is involved, corruption increases the population of human trafficking victims that are unaccounted for, the hidden population, and this causes underestimations of relevant factors such as prevalence of human traffickers in a given location or underestimation of the number of possible victims in a given location. Also, depending on how high up the hierarchy of law and justice the corruption extends, human trafficking research becomes progressively more difficult to initiate and advance due to blockages by authorities and those higher up in status.

Corruption is a problem because it implies that governments have little to no transparency, accountability or possibly no motivation amongst the various levels of government and law enforcement to engage in the anti-human trafficking agenda. A major consideration to be made in analysing corruption is whether there is an active and direct role in the human trafficking process, or whether they are indirectly involved in the process as some officials may not be aware of the larger crime that they are inadvertently assisting. Another factor to consider when analysing the human trafficking process in respect to corruption is the location within the hierarchy of government officials where corruption is located, ranging from higher ranks to the lower ranks of a border control official. Persuading these key players such as judges, migration officials, all the way to
the local police, human traffickers will target the key players that hold the required status, power and authority that will assist the human trafficking process. How this is relevant to human trafficking research is that it provides insight into the human trafficking process taking place, as we have earlier established that the processes and circumstances vary according to location and situation, and so by being able to determine where corruption is converging and thriving, there we can find the key players that are involved in maintaining the human trafficking routes and processes.

Instead of trying to provide a solution to the corruption problem, we will look at indicators and examples of where corruption has taken place so as to identify the key roles of corruption in human trafficking, and to indicate the severity of corruption. Providing a solution to corruption is a highly complex endeavour that reaches beyond the scope of this paper, and similar to tackling the issue of human trafficking, there is no simple solution or single model that can address corruption in the governments and rid a country of corruption so easily. Instead we can gather various examples of corruption in the larger international arena, and in government and law enforcement, looking at specific localities where corruption is known to be a major issue, and analysing how it interacts with human trafficking processes.
Government and Law Enforcement

In Russia, the extent of corruption in the human trafficking process is well spread across the government and largely controlled by organized crime syndicates who hold power in the economy and government (Dietel 2008). Government officials in Russia interact with corruption in several ways. Firstly, government officials don’t address human trafficking in order to intentionally downplay the problem of human trafficking. This problem can be found at all levels of government, but it is most deterring when it is found at higher levels of government hierarchy. The next interaction is when migration officials and border officials provide illegal documents for the illegal transportation of victims for bribes (Tverdova 2011). Enck (2003) then shows that the law enforcement in Russia also has issues with corruption where enforcement of prosecution or conviction is either non-existent or unusually minimal. Otherwise, as Richards (2004) reports, victims are deported before given a chance to testify because of the hand that the justice system has in human trafficking as well. As part of the human trafficking research objective to bolster efforts of anti-human trafficking, successful prosecution of traffickers is one of the key priorities that needs to be reinforced (Friesendorf 2007). In the Russian context, corruption within government and law enforcement does not locate itself at a specific area of the human trafficking process, but instead engulfs the whole process of human trafficking in seeking out ways to decrease the risk and increase the profit as much as possible in the human trafficking industry of Russia. Corruption in the Russian government isn’t so hidden either. In a study by Kofanova and Petukhov (2006) on the public’s opinion of corruption in Russia, most Russians believe that corruption has become a part of daily life and that any initiative to stop corruption in Russia will not work. This poses a major problem for victims who are trying to seek help as they do not trust government officials, and when they do, it becomes a risk. Either they are falling right back into traffickers hands, or they are ineffectively aided, losing a great deal of confidence in the government officials and law enforcements capability and willingness to help them (Surtees 2008).

Another example is in the Eastern European governments, some government officials and politicians are known to actively participate in the human trafficking process by providing illegal documents to assist the transfer of
victims, or turning blind eye to known victims or traffickers, and some even offering immunity to brothel owners where sex trafficking victims are held, and in return are offered free sexual services in remuneration (Vandenberg 2002). By providing illegal or fraudulent documents for the transfer of victims, these victims legally are not victims of human trafficking, but are identified as migrants. This poses a huge problem as it creates a population of trafficking victims that are masked by the fraudulent migration documents. This then feeds into one of the bigger problems in human trafficking, finding an accurate estimation of the extent of human trafficking with large numbers of victims being hidden, and not just in this one way but there are several other circumstances where victim population is hidden or masked.

In the Philippines, research has shown that corruption in the government has rendered the countries anti-trafficking (Republic Act 9208) ineffective, and this is portrayed in the low conviction rate of traffickers, due to traffickers being set free or programs and legislation addressing these problems blocked from being passed or implemented (Guth 2010). There are many reasons as to why legislation and enforcement is not happening, and as with most corruption cases, it impedes both anti-human trafficking efforts and human trafficking research (Graycar and McCusker 2007). also suggest that corruption in some of the nation-states in Philippines facilitates the human trafficking conundrum in various ways that favour the human traffickers, not the victims. The relationship that exists between the human traffickers and officials needs to be addressed before policy and legislation can begin to take effective measures in researching and implementing human trafficking counter measures.
Transnational Organized Crime

When it comes to human trafficking and its global spread, we cannot deny that transnational organized crime has its hands in human. We have established that corruption in the government is prominent, and that corrupt government officials have a huge part to play in exacerbating human trafficking, but now we look at the stakeholder that initiates the process of human trafficking and corruption, the traffickers. Not all traffickers are involved in transnational organized crime syndicates, but the structurally more pervasive and penetrating trafficker profile would be the organized crime syndicates that network across the world. An important part of understanding how transnational organized crime works within the human trafficking field is understanding how demand and supply dynamics work with human trafficking. To begin with, the demand for the commodities of human beings come from three major sources of enterprise; the private household where services and labour are required, small to large enterprises where cheap labour is sought after, and the sex industry (Anderson and Davidson 2004). Attention must be placed however on the supply side of human trafficking, which would be the victims of human trafficking.

There is a portion of human trafficking victims that can be identified as foreign to the destination country and have specific characteristics or traits that make them more vulnerable and desired as a supply of human trafficking. The first is the concept of the foreign ‘exotic other’, whom clients of the sex industry in the Western culture are attracted to, specifically being foreigners from Asian or Latin American origin (Bales 2003). Briefly explaining, the ‘exotic other’ are bodies that are foreign to the Western society, and are considered bodies of exotic nature and thrilling; different to the homogenous Western women, who generally are not as submissive compared to the weaker, poorer ‘exotic other’. As such, much of the supply moving into Western countries come from Asian source countries such as Thailand, Philippines and the underdeveloped areas of Asia, and the Latin Americas where underdevelopment is characteristic.

In the United Kingdom, labour trafficking is a more prominent issue than is sex trafficking. A study by (Anderson and Rogaly 2005) showed that labour trafficking into the U.K. showed no discrimination of where the supply of human
beings was coming from, and that the labour trafficking demand, ranging from construction workers, personal residence labour to factory workers, often were coerced by gang members who chose no specific ethnicity when it came to forcing labour. Although this makes it more difficult to find victims through ethnic indicators, what the study has found was that there was a specific form of coercion that was common in the U.K., debt-bondage. These don’t necessarily speak of corruption in the government, but it shows that the people of the world are just as involved in the process as much as government and law enforcement. There is an issue that does not just involve the political and legal side of human trafficking, but socially as well there is a fundamental need to be addressed.
Discussion

These examples give light to where research and counter trafficking efforts are impeded in the government and law enforcement official’s failure to attain data from victims and trafficker populations that they are in direct contact with. Both victims and traffickers are primary data sources, something that the human trafficking research field is in need of, and the governments that hold corruption play an active and direct role in widening the number of victims and traffickers that are left undocumented or hidden. We also find that the issue does not just solely lie in the government and law enforcement. Society itself also has a part to play in creating the demand for the supply of human beings, either for sexual exploitations purposes or for labour exploitation. The demand side of human trafficking helps to explain movements and general patterns in source, transit and destination countries of human trafficking victims, as well as understanding patterns in the supply side of human trafficking victims; knowing where victims can come from.

Should trafficking research seek to continue advancing and progressing, corruption is certainly one of the areas that need to be addressed, both nationally and internationally. There is no way to dichotomize human trafficking and corruption, as researchers have shown so, and all relevant authorities and stakeholders need to agree and hold the sense of moral justice so as to eliminate corruption from the human trafficking process. If this is achieved, then human trafficking research and counter efforts could begin to advance significantly. Mass media, although portrayed negatively by researchers, can in fact have a positive effect here in making aware the public about these issues of corruption and immoral actions of those in authority, in the hopes to garner international traction for the support of eliminating corruption in authorities around the world. There are many different ways corruption can be approached, but for future endeavours of human trafficking, the crucial objective is to take action. Until corruption can be minimized, human trafficking research and counter measures are limited in effectiveness where corruption is at large. Addressing corruption is however very difficult and complex. Just like human trafficking, there is a need to cover the problem holistically. Addressing corruption in one location does not help either, there has to be a simultaneous addressing of corruption throughout every institution where corruption is present.
Chapter 3
Policy

Government policy plays a major part in understanding, researching and countering human trafficking. The role policy plays is so crucial in being able to successfully identify and protect victims of human trafficking and to prosecute and convict traffickers, yet researchers and experts suggest that the current policies are inadequate to fully compromise human trafficking in the world. The reason adequate policy is important, for the purposes of human trafficking research, is twofold; extracting as much data of the human trafficking process from the victims or traffickers as possible so as to inform human trafficking research, and to unify human trafficking research and counter efforts. The government and law enforcement, as well as international agencies, need to be able to align with each other to be able to effectively use policy towards enhancing identifying and protecting victims, and identifying and prosecuting traffickers, and this is one of the major contentions, that there is a lack of unity amongst stakeholders in human trafficking research, fragmenting united efforts to curb human trafficking.

In order to address the problem of policy and policy setting, we will look at how disunity has developed within the conceptual definition of human trafficking and what its implications have been so far on human trafficking research. The conceptual definition of human trafficking has been a focus point in uniting human trafficking research and counter efforts and we will explore the reasons as to why this is. This disunity has then lead to a lack of cooperation internationally, and so we will also seek to identify the weaknesses in the international arena of human trafficking research. Amongst understanding the conceptual definition of human trafficking, we have other major areas and stakeholders to address such as the feminist discourse of human trafficking, migration policy, international agencies and the role of the community. Each of these areas and stakeholders have a significant role to play in human trafficking research.
Government

The main focus with government involvement on a policy level is understanding the conceptual definition of human trafficking. When human trafficking is addressed in policy, legislation, advocacy campaigns or movements, mass media have portrayed human trafficking in such a way that attention is placed largely on human trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes, sex trafficking, due to its morally sensitive and contentious nature (Soderlund 2005), and little attention has been placed on human trafficking for involuntary or manipulative labour purposes, or labour trafficking. This poses several problems in relation to human trafficking research. Firstly human trafficking research consists of both sex trafficking and labour trafficking, but due to misunderstandings and unclear conceptual definitions, data on human trafficking varies from consisting of sex trafficking data only, labour trafficking data only, or as it should be, both. When the definition of a “victim of human trafficking” is understood inconsistently and used inconsistently, there will consequently be incomparability and inconsistency in data and measurement of human trafficking across data sets. Both scholars and policy makers are adversely affected by this inconsistency; research and policy is informed based on data that is inconsistent and one side of the human trafficking population gets left out underestimating the full population of human trafficking victims (Weitzer 2014). This becomes a vicious cycle of policy being informed by inconsistent data, and crippling the effectiveness of policy to not only address human trafficking, but to acquire data from victims and traffickers.

Another major issue that has been pointed out recently regarding the Palermo Protocols that were written to combat transnational organized crime, one of them specifically designed to combat human trafficking of women and children, is that human trafficking occurs not just from country to country, but within a country, from state to state (Kotrla 2010). Human trafficking does not just consist of transporting bodies from one country to another, as commonly portrayed, but occurs interstate as well. Iñiguez de Heredia (2008) argues that the trafficking protocol fails in this regard to account for domestic trafficking, and has effectively only been designed for international cases of human trafficking. The implications of this issue is the further addition of a population that is
undocumented and goes relatively unseen and excluded from statistics and policy decision making.
Law Enforcement

With law enforcement, problems can arise in countries with legislation that lacks the capacity to prosecute traffickers successfully due to how legislation has been written and has proven to be a deterrent to active participation of law enforcement officials in the human trafficking issue (Muftic 2013). This issue is in fact part of another vicious cycle wherein various other problems of human trafficking like victim identification and protection are involved. Victims of human trafficking are not properly identified and are considered as illegal immigrants coming in as sex workers or labourers, and are thus deported or treated as criminals whose testimony is not taken into serious consideration (Spohn 2014). The problem is that traffickers are only convicted on eye witness testimony, which by law has been deported out of the country or rendered invalid. This is a major problem as law enforcement becomes discouraged to work on human trafficking cases because they know that prosecution is unlikely, and even if they do decide to take a case, if traffickers and victims are apprehended, the likely result is release of traffickers and deportation of victims. In Russia, this problem occurs on top of the corruption evident, making law enforcement officials discouraged to attend to human trafficking cases (McCarthy 2010). The structure of law enforcement in Russia doesn’t help the situation either, where law enforcement officials are promoted on the basis of successful conviction of a case. The legislation and structure of the department make it difficult to prosecute traffickers, and so law enforcement are discouraged from taking on human trafficking cases.

Law enforcement is faced with another problem in regards to the conceptual definition of human trafficking, and that is identifying victims correctly. Human trafficking is often mistaken for human smuggling, and conceptually there is a distinct difference, and due to the similarity of these two, they are victims of each are often mixed up (Zhang 2012a). To clarify, human smuggling is the transportation of persons across an international border against the destination countries migration policy. In contrast, human trafficking is forced, coerced or manipulated transportation of persons across borders, and the major difference to be considered is that human smuggling ‘victims’, if we could call them victims, have the intent on crossing the border illegally or fraudulently.
Human smuggling poses a problem to human trafficking research because it results in an over estimation of human trafficking victims. In a study by (Wilson, Walsh, and Kleuber 2006), U.S. law enforcement officials were studied to determine whether or not law enforcement had the capabilities of identifying trafficking victims, and the results of their study showed that officials were not sufficiently able to identify victims of human trafficking, reinforcing the idea that law enforcement are not trained and capable of successfully and effectively identifying human trafficking victims, let alone telling them apart from human smuggling cases.
Within the feminist discourse of agency, there is another problem in identifying victims of human trafficking. There are debates that trafficking victims are often lumped together with sex workers who voluntarily are in the industry of sexual services. Law enforcement and governments are not always fully trained, or open to the possibility, to be able to identify and distinguish the difference between the two, and so not only do we open the possibility for overestimation of human trafficking victims, this opens up another issue of victimization of sex workers (Desyllas 2007). This argument is commonly known throughout the abolitionist movement of abolishing prostitution, where all prostitution is considered as harmful to women, and as a result of overgeneralisation, many non-victims of human trafficking are considered victims (Lobasz 2009). This concept of agency is an important debate because many scholars have criticized anti-trafficking efforts due to their overgeneralizing manner in defining who a victim of trafficking is. There has to be a defining line between helping a victim of human trafficking and helping a person who is in the sex industry voluntarily, both to effectively identify victims and to effectively implement anti-human trafficking programs without violating woman’s rights.

Then we need to consider the negative social stigma of being a victim of human trafficking. Being a victim of human trafficking carries with it a negative social stigma in some societies where being associated to a trafficked victim label has social consequences which, in a predominantly patriarchal society that originally places little value on women, can have life-long devastation on quality of living, so it is not necessarily the case that a true victim of human trafficking would want to identify themselves as a victim out of fear of ridicule and shame (Dutta 2011). The influence of the traffickers can also sometimes prevent a victim of human trafficking seeking help because of threats made by traffickers to harm them or families should the victim reveal or identify themselves to officials (Ecelestone 2013).
Migration Studies

Migration studies have been used to try and explain the movements of bodies across borders, both for human trafficking and the possible identification of human trafficking victims. Migration studies and migration policy and its role and effect in human trafficking is in fact contested; some argue that border policies designed to curb human trafficking have actually given rise to the increase of illegal movement of bodies, where some say that border policies are not strict enough to control human trafficking. By analysing the function of migration, there have been attempts to estimate the possible scale of international human trafficking by monitoring visa records and applications; due to the clandestine nature of human trafficking, however, we will not be able to get an accurate number, but at least there is a ball park estimation of what is at hand.

In order to understand the origins of the migration discourse and how migrants are purported to become high risk individuals, we need to look into the socioeconomic factors that underpin migration. Chuang (2006) paints a picture of a global movement in the rise of transnationalism and globalisation, where generally, poorer populations are seeking employment in richer areas, and so with the labour migration follows along higher risks of trafficking. With globalisation came cheaper, more rapid and easier access to global movement, and with global movement came the means to facilitate the international human trafficking routes (Aronowitz 2001). Lee (2005) goes further to suggest that the heightened restrictions on immigration policies have contributed towards the shift of human trafficking to the underground channels. A study in Eastern Europe reinforces this concept, stating that migration also increases trafficking risks, encapsulating both legal and illegal migratory movements as high risk factors for human trafficking potential (Omar Mahmoud and Trebesch 2010). This concept centres on understanding the economics of the global market in human trafficking; a victim-centred approach that looks at the victim and the underlying reason why a potential victim becomes high risk to begin with in order to tackle human trafficking victimization process at one of its root causes (Goodey 2008). Van Impe (2000) addressed a similar concept suggesting that there must be a myriad of measures taken such as punitive measures, protective measures and stricter movement monitoring; not just in origin country, but in transit and receiving country as well.
International Agencies

On the international arena, cooperation between international agencies and advocacy groups alike are a concern for policy setters. These agencies and groups whose efforts are to stop human trafficking in whichever way the run, are often in contact with victims of human trafficking, and are potential sources of primary data. The problem lies in the fact that often these agencies and groups don’t have the same data collection and analysis methods, if they do at all, and so with incomparable data, there is little grounds for research. This can be due to several factors such as research and development not being part of the agency or group’s scope, going beyond the skillsets of the hired staff, lack of resources to effectively collect and synthesise data from victims, and should an agency collect data, not all agencies adhere to a set data collection method (Laczko 2002). Without this unity in data collection and synthesis, research progress will more than likely remain slow because of the difficulty of comparing statistics across different variables and styles.

Within the global arena, there also needs to be a unanimous understanding that victims of human trafficking need to be handled carefully, not as illegal immigrants but as victims (Gallagher and Holmes 2008). There needs to be a mutual understanding and cooperation on an international level to protect victims from being criminalized, prevent future instances of human trafficking and to prosecute those who commit human trafficking; and the most effective way to do this is international policy. Some researchers suggest having a focal agency or body to regulate such a large scale initiative that can also serve as a uniting body for data collection methods and synthesis methods. The United Nations is the closest at present to a focal agency to unite the counter human trafficking efforts, and the methods used thus far by the United Nations are contested by some to be ineffective. The United Nations ranks countries according to their efforts towards anti-human trafficking, and researchers debate that this is counter intuitive as it discourages some countries from actively pursuing the issue, due to the “shame” associated with being ranked low (Simmons and Lloyd 2010). The effects of the “shaming tactic” is debatable, however, as the pressure associated with being ranked low in the Trafficking in Person’s report has in fact caused countries to act promptly when receiving a low rank in anti-trafficking efforts. How well this
fares for human trafficking research is something that needs to be researched on. There are huge implications on human trafficking research however, when countries are being forced or pressured into promoting anti-trafficking efforts such as credibility and reliability of the policy when there is a large political agenda to the formation of anti-trafficking setting and validity of the prosecutions resulting from the anti-trafficking efforts.
Community

A relatively recent method of data gathering suggested by (Zhang 2012b) is the idea of gathering information from auxiliary services involved in the human trafficking process, services such as beauticians, taxi drivers, motel owners, bar owners, bouncers, neighbours and other community members. This poses a potential outlet for reliable data, which has not been thoroughly explored in detail. The role of NGO’s and government in utilizing this method of gathering information regarding the human trafficking research could be useful and should be taken into consideration. Caution needs to be taken however, as the people questioned through this method need to be evaluated for potential misdirection or false information.

Another method that Molland (2013) has employed is ethnographic methodology. Molland has inserted himself into a community and built up relations and trust amongst the local community, so as to become an ingrained part of the society and gather information as much as possible as an insider, rather than as a stranger coming in to research. This methodology can open up doors that researchers coming in as strangers would not normally be open to. The effectiveness of this however is also questionable. As promising as this method is, the clandestine nature of human trafficking remains the same, and criminals by nature would not normally reveal information so easily. So to what extent can ethnographical methods reach in terms of revealing illegal acts and punitive material is questionable. The generalizability of the method also varies according to region and country. In another study by Molland (2010), findings showed that the general understanding that trafficking is highly profitable is contested. Ethnographic research along the Thai-Lao border has concluded that the profitable transactions of victims are not always true in human trafficking, and that within the geographical constraints the model of profitability is not applicable.

Stolz (2005) suggests another avenue of possible future research, that interest groups have a role to play in policy setting, where in the United Nations approach so far, little control if any is given to interest groups. This can possibly be an avenue for innovation and improvement as certain interest groups like
campaigns and movements may be in direct contact with trafficking victims and can provide useful information. Additionally, interest groups that are involved in protection and rehabilitation of survivors or escapees, have rapport and trust by the victims and can be used to inform policy and policy setting, based on actual experiences. The risk in doing this is determining whether or not the experiences gathered are generalizable or not, and whether policy, should it be informed by the information gathered from interest groups, and its capability to represent the larger population of victims.
Discussion

Setting policy that promotes the human trafficking counter measures and programs is tantamount to progress. Policy can significantly influence the progress of human trafficking research strongly, grasping within it the ability to reveal several sources of hidden populations; victims who are in plain sight but aren’t identified as victims, victims that are not protected and are highly rich in information that could aid the human trafficking field of research. Of course, it is easier said than done due to the high resource costs and complexities associated with tackling every known issue with policy. We know that there cannot be just one universal model to envelop every policy weakness, and we can conclude that policy needs to be developed by setting and culture due to the variability of human trafficking circumstances and situations.

Some governments need to reconsolidate the conceptual definition of human trafficking, some governments need to reconsolidate the implementation stage of human trafficking research methods, and some governments need to move forward to globalize the information network and take part in a global and public forum of human trafficking research. The emphasis lies in participating within the global and public forum of human trafficking research, where the future of trafficking research lies; in bringing together a joint effort to tackle human trafficking. Law enforcement similarly needs to address the structural and capacity building of officials to be able to identify victims appropriately, as well as address the three keys to human trafficking; protect, prevent and prosecute.

The feminist discourse has also brought forth significant issues that need to be dealt with in the human trafficking discussion, which is the agency of victims. The agency of victims affects the victim’s dignity and human rights as a human being, supposedly the sole purpose the human trafficking debate is at large currently. Arguments revolve around the lack of attention given to protecting women’s rights both as victims and as sex workers being victimized unduly. Both have effects on human trafficking research either by misrepresenting sex workers as trafficking victims, over inflating the true population of victims, or by failing to protect actual victims of human trafficking due to social stigmas such as patriarchal superiority or objectification of women.
Finally, we look at how the community can in fact have areas that have yet to be fully explored and researched to provide possible avenues of new research. The concept of using the auxiliary services involved in the human trafficking process is not as common, albeit risky, and may provide new ways of obtaining primary data on human trafficking victims’ identities, human trafficker identities and human trafficking processes. Interest groups also play a part in informing and setting policy and legislation due to their supposedly close contact with human trafficking victims, something that the government and law enforcement stakeholders may not have privy to. Lastly we look at how new approaches to data gathering, specifically ethnographic research, has provided new avenues into an up close and personal encounter with the environment that human trafficking victims are immersed in. By being able to immerse into the society and culture of the sex industry, an insider perspective of the functionality and processes of brothel owners and possibly human traffickers is made available. Although the generalizability of the research that has been conducted thus far is limited to prostitution, and not necessarily human trafficking, it still poses a possible avenue of research for human trafficking.
We have seen thus far that human trafficking research has still ways to progress in the efforts to curb human trafficking throughout the world. The research not only aims to bring about a clearer picture of the human trafficking research, but to bring clarity to the realities that the world faces in regards to the global phenomenon of human trafficking. Accurate research brings accurate representations of the reality of what is happening in the human trafficking industry, and thus accurate policy and legislation can be set to effectively counter human trafficking. What we have established throughout this paper is that this endeavour is a far more difficult task because of various constraints and limitations. Policy and corruption both play an integral part in human trafficking research and both areas need to be addressed simultaneously and holistically.

Corruption, a critical ingredient of the human trafficking process, is in itself a major issue that needs to be dealt with, first locally then internationally. Corruption in the government can start with the lower ranks such as border officials all the way to higher ranks such as judges, and is one of the known problems that facilitate the human trafficking process, in some but not all localities, and renders progress in stopping corruption has been up until the present, been generally slow. Research is adversely impacted by corruption because it continues to conceal trafficking victims and traffickers alike, building up on the hidden population that is left undocumented, aiding the human traffickers in the process keeping risk of business at a low. Corruption in the government is a major problem that can cover all faces of government and requires a holistic approach to change attitudes and reform government in order to begin to slowly peel away at corruption within a country.

Policy also has also been established to be vital in human trafficking research and counter efforts. Ensuring that all relevant stakeholders understand
and fully comply with the fact that human trafficking consists of both sex trafficking and labour trafficking is crucial so that human trafficking research is constant and consistent. Then there needs to be a distinguishing of human trafficking and human smuggling so that we are not misidentifying victims of human trafficking to those who are not victims but compliant in the illegal transporting across borders and nations. Moving from the international arena to the domestic, there is a need to recognize that human trafficking occurs not only across international borders, but within domestic arenas as well. Human trafficking does not necessarily involve country to country alone, but within a country from city to city. At the core of all these policy centred issues is the idea that victims aren’t being identified and are being deported, released or convicted of crimes. This is where governments, international agencies, local agencies and interest groups need to come together and combine efforts to achieve a unified understanding of what human trafficking is and what the definition of human trafficking is for research purposes.

Migration studies have shown movement patterns in human trafficking and reveal some of the root causes of human trafficking and how individuals became high risk individuals. This information can be very helpful in mapping the beginning processes of human trafficking and shed light to the general patterns of human trafficking, which we know to be trafficking of third world citizens afflicted with poverty or unemployment to the first world countries where job opportunities are large and rewarding. The migration patterns of known victims of human trafficking, and human traffickers alike, can help to develop indicators of future victims as well as to draw inferences on areas that have high levels of human trafficking already at large.

All these issues mentioned so far have a significant effect in understanding the human trafficking process, and understanding the issue of human trafficking. By placing all these issues, which realistically does not encompass the entire array of issues in human trafficking, we can hopefully gain insight into how they all can interact with each other and how these issues are set in the larger picture of human trafficking. By no means do we intend to criticize any current models being used in any way, rather, we hope to bring into the conversation of certain models and theories currently being used, other areas that
may have significant value when looked at from the perspective of certain models. A holistic and united effort to tackle every issue prevalent in human trafficking would only be the beginning of engaging in this global scale problem. There are limitations to how this paper can be viewed. What this paper has presented is merely a small portion of the various issues that exist in the human trafficking research field. There are many other issues that need to be dealt with, but the issues brought up within this paper are the common issues that arise when considering the human trafficking research field.

There are several considerations to be made about the limitations this paper holds. First is that not all the concepts and theories discussed are applicable throughout every country. The circumstances of human trafficking are too unique in each country to be able to generalize any concept or theory, and it remains the dominant understanding that a case by case analysis of each country’s situation is the preferred method of addressing human trafficking, but ultimately coming back together on a global scale to address the issue at hand with a global scope. The reason why we say that case by case is preferred is because human trafficking intersects in too many variables to be able to generalize the issue into categories or theories, and so at a national or local level, interactions with society, culture, government, history, political environment, geographical constraints and demographical constraints all need to be taken into consideration.

Another limitation to this paper is that, as we continuously emphasize, there is no solution proposed in this paper. We propose conjectures on human trafficking debates and research based on what is currently available in the human trafficking literature pertaining to policy and corruption so as to fulfill the purpose of this paper; to create a setting where the stakeholders involved in policy and corruption can be brought together and viewed from a single perspective, in hopes to bring an avenue of future research into consolidating the research into human trafficking and its extend across the world.
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References


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