Book Review

Trafficking and global crime control

Maggy Lee

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Trafficking and Global Crime Control is a candid and comprehensive assessment of the complex nature of human trafficking. Given the growing interest in human trafficking crimes among criminologists, sociologists, policymakers and non-governmental organizations, Maggy Lee's book is a timely and critical analysis of the contemporary discourse and policies directed toward trafficking. Perhaps, the most significant contribution Lee makes in her book *Trafficking and Global Crime Control* is her argument to reframe the discussion on human trafficking from an enforcement paradigm to understanding trafficking as a social problem.

In Chapter 1, Lee outlines the six existing frameworks for understanding human trafficking. She points out that the definition and scope of trafficking research often varies based on the agency and their conceptualization of trafficking. Given the multiple ways human trafficking is framed, Lee continues by outlining the methodological problems associated with trafficking statistics. Lee also notes that the predominant framework of trafficking is through an orientation of transnational, organized crime and immigration control, which she acknowledges have direct policy and policing implications.

Chapter 2 provides further insight into the purpose of contemporary human trafficking and patterns of global trafficking. Although a great deal of attention in previous literature has been garnished toward human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, in this chapter Lee also discusses trafficking for labor and organs. More significantly, the author examines recent studies that provide a framework for understanding the social and structural context (for example, the feminization of poverty) for trafficking to originate and be sustained within the global economy.

Chapter 3 draws on literature from victimology to examine how the notion of victimhood is constructed through an enforcement-led approach to handling human trafficking. Lee includes examples of survivor testimonials, which she argues are often found in anti-trafficking campaigns. She goes on to explain that these images of sexually abused women create stereotypes and prototypes of what a trafficking victim looks like within the criminal justice system. According to Lee, this impacts the extent that other victims who do not display such characteristics will be recognized and protected. For example, the author includes a discussion on men as victims of trafficking in this chapter. This leads into a discussion of a 'hierarchy of trafficking victimhood' where the status of victim is interpreted by law enforcement and the criminal justice system and where assistance and protection are given to some victims but not others. Lee illustrates this process through a discussion of the T-Visa in the United States, temporary residence permits in the United Kingdom and a case study of arrest rates in Hong Kong.

Chapter 4 details the trafficking as a transnational, organized crime framework. Lee highlights competing literature on whether or not human trafficking is linked to organized criminal networks. Despite the existing transnational crime syndicate debate among scholars, Lee points out the perceived organized trafficking framework is further supported within state and international sponsored policies and contracts, such as the UN Trafficking Protocol. As such, the perceived threat of organized transnational trafficking narrowly frames the criminal justice response. Furthermore, the author links the heightened emphasis by the United States and United Kingdom on criminalizing unauthorized border crossings and stringent immigration policies in the name of national security to a migration–crime–security complex.

Chapters 5 and 6 further consider the policing and crime prevention strategies associated with the conceptualization of trafficking through the transnational organized crime and illegal immigration approach. Chapter 5, draws attention to the growing ‘war’ on human trafficking. The author pays considerable attention to five characteristics reflected in anti-trafficking campaigns and criminal justice policies, including: anti-prostitution, securitization, criminalization, militarization and privatization. Lee further examines each characteristics connection to the migration–crime–security complex. Lastly, in this chapter, Lee discusses how border control measures have had a limited effect on prosecuting trafficking offenders. Rather, Lee outlines how such measures have resulted in considerable collateral damage to migrants attempting to flee poverty or prosecution. Chapter 6, expands on the discussion of transnational policing through examples of global policing agencies, new intelligence gathering practices and an examination of the limitations to counter-trafficking mechanisms. Special attention is paid to the development of transnational policing. According to Lee, the acceleration of transnational policing in part can be attributed to advanced technologies, international agreements and training networks. Lastly, Lee devotes attention to the limitations of this model of policing. She calls into question the use of private security companies and non-state actors (that is, airlines) as an extension of transnational policing.

In Chapter 7, the author advocates first and foremost for a re-evaluation of the language of human trafficking. She addresses the ambiguity associated with contemporary definitions of trafficking and smuggling. Lee also reiterates the complexity of global migration and how current trafficking definitions do not take into account varying motivations and in some cases an individual’s agency in trafficking experiences. She also eludes to the range of exploitation that can permeate trafficking, smuggling and migration experiences. Instead, Maggy Lee calls for a reflexive understanding of human trafficking that begins by examining the social origins associated with trafficking. This includes recognizing the links between different forms of exploitation and inequality that migrants may experience. Furthermore, Lee argues that there is an implicit need to understand the complex power dynamics associated with immigration control policies. Lastly, Lee argues that a reflexive approach to assessing trafficking as a social problem will also examine the varying experiences and needs of victims from a human rights perspective.

The lasting contribution of *Trafficking and Global Crime Control* is the call by author Maggy Lee to reassess the way in which human trafficking is conceptualized. She encourages scholars to critically scrutinize the enforcement-led immigration control paradigm, currently framing a global response to human trafficking. Instead, Lee notes that an emphasis needs to be placed on understanding the social issues surrounding trafficking and the state’s role in

protecting and aiding exploited peoples. Only then can effective policy and crime prevention programs truly be established. This book provides a strong foundation for those new to the subject of human trafficking. While, also encouraging those versed in the literature to critically evaluate contemporary understandings and crime prevention strategies directed toward human trafficking. Lee bridges growing security and immigration control measures with literature on migration and a human rights framework. *Trafficking and Global Crime Control* is a comprehensive overview of current theoretical, prevention and policy implications associated with human trafficking. Maggy Lee offers important insights and critiques for the future directions of human trafficking discourse and practices.

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