The Invisibility of Male Victims of Human Trafficking: Causes and Consequences

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What is this research about?

• Trafficking of men (adult men and boys)

• Holding to the advocacy / participatory worldview, this research addresses important social issues, namely:
  - Alienation
  - Suppression
  - Oppression
  - Gender discrimination
  - Gender inequality

Towards a marginalized group of people – male victims of human trafficking
Male victims of human trafficking have been exploited for different purposes and by different means.

In accordance with the **Internationally accepted human trafficking definition** they fall under the definition of victims of human trafficking;

But are facing discriminative conduct on the part of the law enforcement, assistance and aid organizations as well as donor organizations.

MT victims may not have access to support services, specialized rehabilitation centres, shelters, aid programs and corresponding institutions.

Male victims are neglected within the aid sector, within academia and within policy and law enforcement.

**Aim**

To identify the causes and consequences of the invisibility of male victims of human trafficking by doing a thorough analysis of male trafficking discourses using:

- The concept of Masculinity
- Victimization
- *Hierarchy of Victimhood* theory
What will this study address?

- The types of exploitation men are subjected to
- Programs and policies designed specifically at assisting men and boys who have become victims of human trafficking
- The assistance provided to male victims of human trafficking
- How the international criminal justice system and the criminal justice system of the Russian Federation respond to male trafficking.

Methodological Framework

Qualitative empirical case study

- Semi-structured interviews
- Observations
- Documentary research

- Anti-trafficking actors: Governmental (FMS, Police, MIA, FSB, Medical facilities) and International organizations (donor organizations, UN agencies and aid organizations) dealing with human trafficking

- Labor migrants (potential or actual victims of human trafficking)

Material → Discourse analysis
Why Russia?

- Population: 143.5 million, with 11.5 million living in Moscow
- Due to the high rates of irregular migration the true numbers of the population of Moscow may be somewhere between 13 and 17 million
- Russia is a host country for thousands of irregular migrants, both from other federal districts and from outside of the country
- Sending, receiving and transit country for HT
- A very large number of exploited migrants are men
Labour Migrants in Russia

- According to the Russian Federation Statistics Service in 2015 a total of 435,434 migrants reside on the territory of the Russian Federation. Of them 392,896 are citizens of CIS countries. The majority are labor migrants.

- Many of the labor migrants are seasonal workers.

- According to Ryazantsev (2005) 85 – 90% of the labor migrants in Russia are men between the ages of 30 – 39.

- According to the documentary analysis, literature review and interviews conducted within the framework of this research many labor migrants have experienced some instances of exploitation and may be identified as victims of human trafficking.
Trafficking stories

- Exploitation may already begin on the way to the final work destination: **purchase of free migration cards**

- Some instances of male trafficking are very evident:

  17 young men aged 17-18 recruited in Uzbekistan, transferred to Chechnya, locked up, forced to work long hours without pay, endured violent treatment

- Some instances are not so evident and thus may be overlooked:

  Middle aged man recruited in a country in Africa, bought a ticket to Moscow, ended up alone on the streets, then was offered to distribute leaflets in return for lodging and 1 meal a day

Worldwide Human Trafficking is commonly associated with:

- Women
- Children
- For the purpose of sexual exploitation

Whereas, according to IOM, the majority of victims of HT in South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia regions are men exploited in the labor sector
**Good identification and assistance tools are needed**

Trafficing in persons’ shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the 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.

(The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons, Especially Women and Children, Art. 3)

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In the course of this research many questions have been raised with regards to:

- **Investigation**
- **Identification**
- **Definition**
- **Understanding of human trafficking and human trafficking victims**

A review of the existing trafficking literature poses another question:

Why have men – not in their roles as perpetrators – been excluded from the trafficking problem?
Male victims of HT

- Existing studies that refer to the male trafficking phenomenon usually focus on physical labour exploitation
- Most scholars who look at exploitation of men within the human trafficking discourse restrict their research to manual labour
- They provide evidence of exploitation of men in the following fields:
  - Construction work
  - Agriculture
  - Factories
  - Mines
  - Fisheries

- Some studies on male sexual exploitation have been done
- The female reference in human trafficking literature still prevails over that of men
- Literature that concentrates on male trafficking exclusively is still very limited

GAP AND NEED FOR RESEARCH

Literature Review

Adult men and young children being forced into slave labour in illegal mines and brick factories. This type of exploitation of men is distinctive to the Asian region.

Aronowitz (2009):
In Brazil foreign victims tend to also be exploited in factories, whereas local male victims of internal trafficking are usually exploited in agricultural labour
Cullen-DuPont (2009):
Types of labour trafficking that men can become part of: fields, factories as well as trafficking of men and boys in the fishing industries

Adult male victims may be of various age groups. For example male victims between the ages of 18 and 50 were found on a Russian fishing boat in the Sea of Japan. Male victims of the same age group were identified in the Balkans

Copic et al. (2012):
The majority of trafficked male victims in the Western Balkans are adults, which contradicts the common perception that male victims of human trafficking are usually children.

Christophe Gille in Shelley (2010):
Sex Trafficking cases in Germany

Surtees (2008b):
Sex Trafficking cases in Russia
Male trafficking is very rarely identified and male victims are seldom assisted as:

- Human trafficking is mainly associated with women being trafficked for prostitution, in some countries the 'identification tools' are designed to identify the victims that fit the latter profile.
- It is very difficult for a sexually assaulted man to (1) admit to himself that he has been assaulted and (2) to seek assistance from someone. This results from a man's ascribed role within a society.

Theoretically speaking:

Connell (1995) states: Masculinity is defined through symbolic differences, contrasting 'masculine' and 'feminine' and neglecting the level of personality

Masculinity is defined as 'not-femininity'

Men who's characteristics or actions do not correspond to what the society has identified to be masculine, would be considered as non-masculine

One of the reasons to a man's denial of deception or exploitation and rejection to receive assistance.
Moreover

• Piper (2005):
  In a trafficking context men are usually treated as smuggled labour migrants, whereas the trafficking classification usually falls on women and children.

• Carling:
  Trafficking studies usually centre around women. This is reflected in various empirical case studies where male respondents are hardly ever included.

• Rosenberg (2010):
  Male victims are not identified as victims; rather they are seen as irregular migrants and are deported without an investigation of their case.

Fact: scholars today tend to restrict trafficking to sexual exploitation of women

• Recent case studies on human trafficking in Russia have predominantly focused on sex trafficking and women (Finckenauer 2001, Stoecker 2005, Tverdova 2011).
• The most frequent form of human trafficking in Russia is labour exploitation, where men constitute the majority (Levchenko 2009).
• US Trafficking in Persons report (TIP 2014) claims that in certain Middle Eastern countries sex trafficking is more common among boys than girls.
• According to the 2012 International Labour Organization Estimate of Forced Labour: 20.9 million people today are victims of forced labour (sexual and labour exploitation) women and girls constitute 55%, and men and boys 45% of the overall forced labour flow worldwide.
This affirms the importance of looking at human trafficking from a local perspective, rather than fitting every case into one global internationally perceived definition.

Hierarchy of Victimhood

- McEvoy, K & McConnachio (2012) suggest

“The ‘innocent’ victim is placed at the apex of a hierarchy of victimhood and becomes a symbol around which contested notions of past violence and suffering are constructed and reproduced.”

FEMALE VICTIMS  INNOCENT

- **Evoke more sympathy** from the society due to the role they play as vulnerable and deserving of protection.
- Men are placed at the bottom of this hierarchy as a masculine man is considered to be less likely harmed than a woman, is better able to shield himself from violence, is strong and always in control (Connell 1995, Groth and Burgess 1980, Smith et al 1988), which suggests that a man is less likely to be exploited.
Surtees argues that migration is more socially acceptable for men than for women, because of “men’s ascribed breadwinner role”

- Men who migrate are seen as “active, adventurous, brave and deserving of admiration”
- Women who migrate are viewed as "passive, foolish and naïve, deserving either rescue or punishment”

Within the human trafficking discourse and practice, assumptions about gender, migration and vulnerability are emphasized in a way that female migrants that are subjected to exploitation are frequently seen as trafficked, whereas it is very common that male migrants who face the same kind of exploitation, violation and abuse are pictured as irregular migrants (Surtees 2008b)

THANK YOU