

Book Reviews

Laura Dean (2020), *Diffusing Human Trafficking Policy in Eurasia*, Bristol, Policy Press, £75.00, pp. 286, hbk.

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Following the passage of the UK Modern Slavery Act in 2015, its main sponsor, Theresa May, first as Home Secretary and then Prime Minister, insisted on referring to it as ‘world-leading’ – a claim which bore little scrutiny. The UK actually had a reputation for dragging its feet in signing up to international/European legislation, preferring to work in isolation from prospective partners. The fact that countries such as Australia used it as a template but produced legislation which was considerably improved, that the non-English parts of the UK produced more effective provisions, and, perhaps even more damningly, that the government itself capitulated to a chorus of very wide-ranging criticism and instituted a Review of the Act, after only three years on the statute book, suggests that this claim had a very shallow basis. But it did raise the question of against what was the MSA 2015 being compared? The US’ Trafficking in Persons programme was fairly widely understood as were the legal provisions of countries such as the Netherlands, Portugal and Finland, each of which could claim to have superior provisions. The UK’s annual count of suspected victims of modern slavery have also led to enhanced police and/or Anti-Slavery Commissioner contact with countries such as Vietnam, Albania and Rumania, countries which have been identified as major source countries: but there has been very little detailed discussion of legal and policy frameworks in most other countries of the world.

Given that context, the appearance of a substantial book on human trafficking in Eurasia (defined, in line with most protocols, as countries to the east of the EU including all the former constituent now-independent countries in the former south of the USSR and, slightly oddly, the three Baltic States, and Russia itself) is rather unexpected but very welcome.

This is a dense and very informative account of what the author chooses to refer to as human trafficking practice, law and policy in these countries: continuing the global confusion of nomenclature (promoted by the US in its TIP programme and by the UN itself which continues to have separate rapporteurs for trafficking and human trafficking), the author prefers the term human trafficking. This term is used in the UK and elsewhere as one manifestation of modern slavery, particularly trafficking for the purposes of providing sexual services, alongside what the Home Office has estimated to be 16 other forms of modern slavery, notably forced labour/severe labour exploitation, which is actually the other major focus of the book.

The picture painted by Dean is a complex one: all of the 15 countries analysed are seen as source and transit countries, perhaps amongst the most prolific within the global context, and several are also destination countries. Thus a young woman or young man from Kazakhstan or Ukraine might be trafficked or manipulated to travel to Russia and may then either be put to work there in slavery conditions or moved on further west depending on the state of the market, costs and opportunities. We also know that victims from further east, such as China and Vietnam, will pass through many of these countries en route to the west. Interestingly, men and boys predominate across the piece according to Dean’s data (although in narrow

trafficking terms, women tend to outnumber men in the modern slave trade). Much of the policy framework that exists is narrowly directed towards women being trafficked for sexual services and this is a limitation on many countries' approach. The author notes these countries generally have some sort of legal or policy framework in place but that this is frequently used as a cover for other human rights abuses and the policing aspect is also severely deficient despite some input from EU countries.

At present the activities of traffickers in these countries has little impact on the UK; thus, for example, of the more than 10,000 victims recorded in the UK in 2019, against the 1,500 or so from Albania, there was only one victim referred of each of Azerbaijani and Uzbek nationality; Lithuania being the largest source country from Eurasia at 51 identified victims. It might be thought then that these are, to paraphrase, 'faraway countries of which we know little' (and therefore of little concern) but, as recent data analysis shows, the only way these numbers are likely to go, especially from countries with highly questionable human rights records, is up, and therefore what happens in these 15 countries is of concern and will be all the more so over the coming years. This kind of detailed policy-oriented scrutiny offers, as has been the case with UK development aid being linked to anti-poverty initiatives, some sort of lever for the improvement of provision and action in these countries. This is where Dean's use of the term diffusion is most relevant since it refers to the question of whether the development of policy and practice depends on internal determinants or on external pressures.

We owe a considerable debt of gratitude to the author for what is a painstakingly detailed and quite comprehensive survey of the situation, a very substantial piece of research which, moreover, may have placed her and her impressive range of correspondents/respondents in some very difficult situations at times for expressing what will often have been a critical stance. The detail of this research is impressive and useful particularly because, as she notes, although there is a considerable amount of 'research' on these countries, most of it is very anecdotal. This is far from the case here and the book offers an important window for international engagement with these countries. Although the author is only able to provide very detailed information on three countries – Latvia, Ukraine and Russia – the book offers improved access to understanding the situations in the twelve other countries and pointers for such engagement. For example, in terms of ranking, it should be of concern to the EU that Estonia turns out to be 13th out of 15 in terms of its performance: the worst performer? Russia. Broadly, the more authoritarian a country's political stance, the weaker its anti-trafficking work turns out to be.

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Lutz Leisering (2019), *The Global Rise of Social Cash Transfers: How States and International Organizations Constructed a New Instrument for Combating Poverty*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, £70.00, pp. 453, hbk.

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The global career of social cash transfers, non-contributory regular payments to poor individuals and households, is the most remarkable development in global social policy over the last two decades. On this extensive topic, Lutz Leisering has presented a monograph that is comprehensive in every respect and can serve as a guideline for all future research in this field. It