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## Re-considering Trafficking in Human Beings

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## Re-considering Trafficking in Human Beings

Dr Kiril Sharapov, Glasgow Caledonian University

'The number of victims trafficked to Europe might be hundred thousand yearly' (Europol 2010)

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## Introduction

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**Current research:** Trafficking in Human Beings: public opinion and factors of supply

**Previous research:**

- Scottish Resource Centre for Women in SET: equality in employment
- PhD (Politics, University of Glasgow): post-war reconstruction in Kosovo
- Pearson Peacekeeping Centre (Canada): gender, human rights and post-conflict recovery

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## Structure of the presentation

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### Discussing:

- THB as the matter of sexual exploitation of victimized 'womenandchildren' (Enloe 1990, 1991) ==> understanding THB as a matter of demand
- Demand for trafficked labour: ideology and practice of neo-liberal globalised capitalism + discourses of otherness and belonging, consumption and globalisation
- Outcomes of a pilot study of how students (GCU, social sciences) understand trafficking
- Larger study: Central European University + charities in Ukraine (subject to funding)

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## 1. Introduction: normative and interpretative approaches in understanding trafficking as a matter of demand

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**THB as a response to the new economic ideology and practice:** commodified labour + commodified sexuality + capitalist imperative to reduce costs, expand markets, consume and produce = globalised sex industry (Jeffreys 2009) & expansion of capital into new markets and new resource bases

**Responding to THB:** normative approach (human rights as the key referent) + interpretative approach (who, why, in what contexts, in response to what factors of demand) = THB as a function of hierarchies of 'race', class and gender

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## Vignette 1: What is neo-liberal capitalism?

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**Neo-liberal capitalism:** 'materialistic utilitarian anthropology'

**Humans:** autonomous rational subjects who act solely to maximise their individual self-interest, i.e. their economic possessions.

**The maximisation of economic wealth = human well-being = happiness**

Possessions = consumption

**Neoliberal capitalism:** open market + free trade

**Methods:** enforcing market liberalisation, deregulation of the economy, individualistic consumer-oriented market

Harry Targ (2006), Challenging Late Capitalism, Working draft: do not cite or quote without permission of the author  
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## 1. Introduction: normative and interpretative approaches in understanding trafficking as a matter of demand

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**Standard accounts of THB:** focus on victims, trafficking routes, prosecution, conviction rates, rehabilitation.

**Palermo Protocol (2000/2003):** covers the movement of people rather than their exploitation.

**Analysis of THB: factors of demand and supply ARE integral**

**Scope of THB:** people trafficked to be exploited + institutions and individuals who exploit labour ⇒ focus on issues of exploitation and forced labour

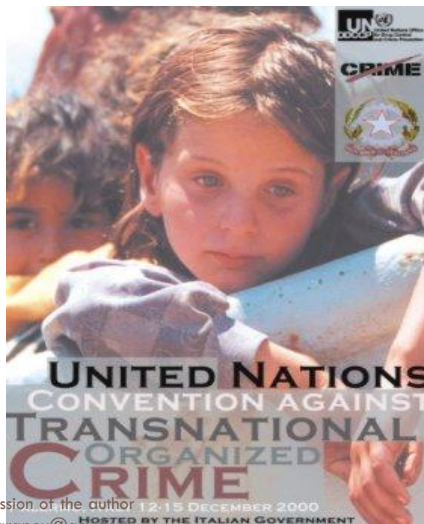
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## Vignette 2: Palermo Protocol's Definition of Trafficking

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*"Trafficking 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 consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth [above] shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth [above] have been used.*



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## 2. Exploited prostitutes or 'internationally shared resources': how to measure and understand trafficking?

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**Achilles Heel of THB:** lack of (reliable) data, feminist 'culture wars', variety of perspectives on THB ⇒ a set of deterministic narratives

**The term 'Trafficking in Persons':** misleading as it places '...emphasis on the transaction aspects of a crime that is more accurately described as enslavement' (UNDOC 2009, p.6).

**Greater visibility of THB:** charities + voluntary organisations + autobiographical accounts (for ex Kara 2008, Skinner 2008) + reports (2009 UK's Parliament Home Affairs committee).

**Predominant perspective:**

- understanding and acting from the standpoint of women (and sometimes men) trafficked into exploitation
- negative stance towards prostitution: all trafficking = prostitution, all prostitution = sexual exploitation

**Public opinion:** some people from certain places are victims and, at the same time, foreign agents of immigration threat and moral decay. They are exploited by other people, who traffic them and, in the process, generate considerable profit.

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### Vignette 3: Prostitution and Trafficking: ongoing 'wars'

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guardian.co.uk

#### Prostitution and trafficking – the anatomy of a moral panic

Nick Davies  
The Guardian, Tuesday 20 October 2009



A police officer finds a bag of condoms during a raid. Photograph: Johnny Green/Press Association

There is something familiar about the tide of misinformation which has swept through the subject of sex trafficking in the UK: it flows through exactly the same channels as the now notorious torrent about Saddam Hussein's weapons.

In the story of UK sex trafficking, the conclusions of academics who study the sex trade have been subjected to the same treatment as the restrained reports of intelligence analysts who studied Iraqi weapons – stripped of caution, stretched to their most alarming possible meaning and tossed into the public domain. There, they have been picked up by the media who have stretched them even further in stories which have

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### Vignette 4: Exploited workers or 'internationally shared resources'

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Philippines: migrant women - 'overseas Philippine investors' and 'internationally shared resources' (Eisenstein 2009, p. 159)



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## 2. Exploited prostitutes or 'internationally shared resources': how to measure and understand trafficking?

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### **THB: linked to a range of broader issues:**

- reconfiguration of the state and gender regimes
- changing labour regimes
- changing regimes of work and care
- changing patterns of consumption nationally and globally
- neo-conservatism
- racism
- body politics

**Theorising from the perspective of CONSUMERS:** curbing demand  
+ raising critical consciousness

**Palermo Protocol:** a deed + the use of improper means + the purpose of exploitation

**Problematic:** requirement of the international movement + failure to recognise the 'ad hoc' nature of THB (Guinn 2009).

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## 2. Exploited prostitutes or 'internationally shared resources': how to measure and understand trafficking?

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**The requirement to cross border:** obfuscates the relations of dominance and subordination

### **Destination countries:**

- focus on illegal migrant 'prostitutes' = no direct challenge to men/demand for sexual services
- focus is on illegality of farm or construction workers = no direct challenge to 'anything goes' approach in minimising costs

### **Countries of origin:**

Countries-suppliers of commodified labour: THB contributes to employment, national income and economic growth (Lim 1998)

International border crossing: is forced labour **here** more grave and serious than forced labour **there**? (especially if used in outsourced industries)

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## Vignette 5: Exploited workers or 'internationally shared resources'

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2006:  
Filipino remittances -  
US\$12.8 billion, above 10  
per cent of the GDP.  
The Philippines: the world's  
third highest remittance-  
recipient country after  
India and Mexico (Pernia  
2007).



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## 3. Trafficking as a function of demand

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**New globalised 'consumer' agendas:** expanded factors of demand that underpin the traffic in people for exploitation

**Factors of demand:** operate on an economic and social continuum – need to be challenged/addressed as a whole

**Factors of demand:**

- Competitive pressures to reduce production costs
- Growing consumer demand for products and services at low cost and with quick delivery
- Sub-contracting, outsourcing and downward pressure on wages
- Feminisation of labour
- Tendency of nationals to refuse employment in low-paid low-skilled jobs
- Sexualisation and commodification of female bodies
- Neo-colonial processes of 'Othering': hierarchies of race, ethnicity, class and gender + economic inequalities + failed promise of international human rights and 'development'
- Absence of effective international legal framework
- Corruption of immigration and customs officials
- Lack of public awareness of trafficking and exploitative labour
- Low-risk and high-profit nature of trafficking

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## Vignette 6: reducing THB to the issue of criminality and EU security

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The 2009 EU 'Stockholm Programme': a 5-year plan on justice and home affairs in the EU

THB, terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, computer crime listed under 'CRIME'

Narrow criminological approach to trafficking adopted in UK/EU



## 4. Normalisation of demand for cheap labour and lack of understanding of factors of demand

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Nexus between demand and supply:

- **Demand meets supply directly:** purchase of sexual services, reliance on domestic services etc.
- **Almost unnoticed:** indirect benefits - lower consumer prices: forced labour here (UK) and within the context of outsourced industries

Not all cheap goods and services are produced with the involvement of labour trafficked into the UK. **However:** evidence - agriculture, construction, and even care – industries that cannot be outsourced.

**Supply-transit-demand chain:** *not about the economic vulnerability of people in the countries of origin but the impunity of those who exploit them, and their continuing ability to benefit from such exploitation*

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## Vignette 7: 'Swedish Example'

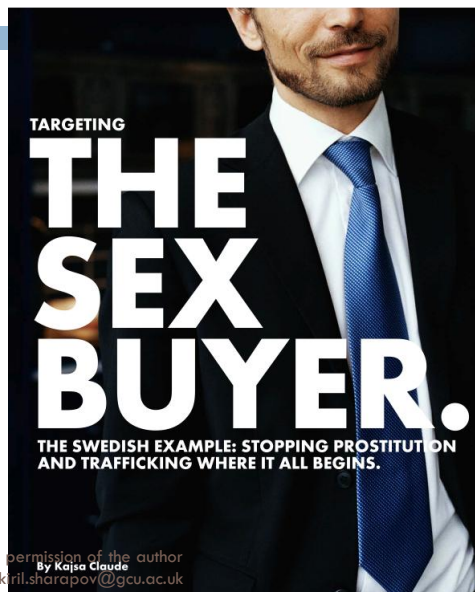
17

1998: legal ban on purchasing  
rather than selling sex in 1998

2010:  
Stockholm (1.3 m inhabitants):  
about 200 people engaged in  
street prostitution

Amsterdam (750,000 inhabitants):  
20,000 and 35,000 prostitutes  
(Claude 2010, pp. 13-14).

Data on outsourcing prostitution?



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## 5. Not Seeing is Believing?

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ILO: more than 12 million people are working in conditions  
of forced labour globally, including the UK (TUC 2007, p.  
10).

The invisibility of 12 million slaves:

- Trafficking for forced labour only was not universally  
criminalised until recently
- Trafficking for forced labour: conflated with trafficking  
for sexual exploitation

However, not just about visibility: **'otherness' of others and  
their lack of power (allows) + the growing demand for  
services and goods (motivates) + globalisation and neo-  
liberal capitalism (normalises)**

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## Vignette 8: 'Swedish Example'???

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2008 Trafficking in Persons Report (US Department of State 2008):

'Boys and young men from the United Kingdom were trafficked to Sweden for the purpose of forced labour; these victims were forced to work on construction sites, lay asphalt, do yard work, and perform other odd jobs'.



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## 6. The impact of globalisation and the legitimacy of 'Othering'

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**Globalization:** process of impoverishment and disenfranchisement of many hundreds of millions of people by international corporations seeking a cheap and docile labour force and a high return on their investments (Eisenstein 2009, p. 18).

**Global processes:** new forms of power and control  $\Rightarrow$  draw on the divisions of gender, racial and geographical inequality  $\Rightarrow$  create new forms of risks and insecurity  $\Rightarrow$  'Others'.

**Trafficked people:** 'them' rather than 'us'  $\Rightarrow$  non-British, non-citizens, non-white (even if they are)

**The increase in the number of trafficked people and recent economic trends:**

- Capital and productive capacities can be moved between countries and continents
- 'Feminisation' of the labour force: low-paid low-skilled jobs making a female labour force more profitable
- Dismantling of the traditional welfare systems

Some jobs/sectors cannot be outsourced to low wage countries: 'Low wage labour is taken in' (Duvell, 2006: 32)

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## 6. The impact of globalisation and the legitimacy of 'Othering'

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**Outsourcing:** requires massive mobilisation and movement of people to service the outsourced industry

**The massive flows of people:**

'desire to travel, see the world, make money and accept whatever jobs are available along the way' (Laura Agustin 2007, p. 2)

vs.

devastating impact of structural adjustment on small business owners, workers, small farmers, and peasants (Eisenstein 2009, p. 144)

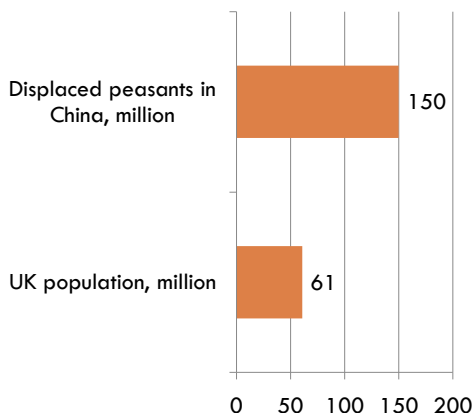
**Internal movement of people:** servicing low-waged outsourced industries - 'outsourcing': helps consumption at a low cost

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## Vignette 8: Internal Movements of People

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China:  
massive migration of peasants from agricultural land - uprooted by developers and drawn into factory work: live in shantytowns under conditions of extreme exploitation (Kwong 2006) (Eisenstein 2009, p. 36).



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## Vignette 9: Between a rock and a hard place

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The Guardian, Randeep Ramesh, 13 February 2007

**Between a rock and a hard place - how UK patios  
rely on child labour. Huge sandstone quarries  
are fuelling landscaping boom on the cheap**



### Paying the price

**82:** The daily wage in pence earned by Naresh, 12,  
for breaking up slabs

**100:** The number of "gitti" Naresh breaks up in a day,  
about one square metre

**£35:** The amount 100 gitti will fetch in a British garden  
centre

**2000:** The amount, in rupees, one worker paid to get  
a job (£23)

**2000:** The amount, in rupees, many workers earn in a  
month

**400:** Thousands of tonnes of rock mined in Rajasthan in  
a year

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## 7. Trafficking for sexual exploitation

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Prostitution: range of standpoints and perspectives.

**Recent decades:** commodification of a narrow range of sexuality: "raunch  
culture" (Levy, Female Chauvinist Pigs 2005)

Sexual freedom' = liberation and equality? Enables the normalisation of sex  
trade: prostitution ⇒ globalised, industrialised and integrated into the  
international political economy

### Global changes in economy: body as a marketable product

**Before:** prostitution '...the very core of the female's condition which reduced  
woman to c....' (Millett 1975, p. 56)

**Now:** prostitution - a function of profit-making turning women into, in Jeffrey's  
words, 'industrial vaginas' (2009, p.7) - '...the centre of a business organized on  
an industrial scale'.

**Trafficking for sexual exploitation:** just one indicator of how subordination of  
'Others'

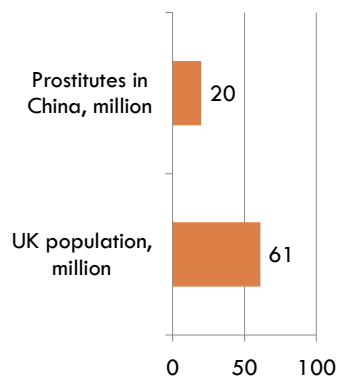
**The diversity of contexts:** fragments the collective image of the 'Other' into a  
variety of vulnerabilities: on the account of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality,  
social class, family status, religious beliefs.

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## Vignette 10: China and prostitution

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China: anywhere between 10 and 20 million of prostituted women, with the industry of prostitution estimated to account for 8 per cent of the Chinese economy (Zhou 2006 cited in Jeffreys 2009, p. 5).



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## 8. Consuming

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**Consumerism:** '...describes a society in which people formulate their goals in life partly through acquiring goods that they clearly do not need for subsistence or for traditional display' (Stearns 2001: iv).

**Pasi Falk:** modern consumer is (re)defined as an economic factor

**The economic system:** economic system dependent not just on the three factors of production – capital, labour and land (nature) but on the four: **consumerism takes a primary position** (Falk 1994: 107).

**Consumer choices:** making them political to enable consumers to weigh social value

Consumption  $\Rightarrow$  a question of values; values  $\Rightarrow$  issue of knowledge and awareness.

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## Knowing

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**The larger project:** explore how THB is understood and perceived by the general public in the countries of origin, transit and destination

**Pilot research:** the knowledge of trafficking by social sciences students at GCU

**Method:** online anonymous questionnaire, rate of 26%

**Outcomes:** not representative but provide an insight

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## How familiar are you with the following types of trafficking?

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	Very	Somewhat & only heard	Not at all
THB for sexual exploitation	<b>42%</b>	52%	6%
THB for labour exploitation	31%	<b>60%</b>	9%
THB for organ harvesting	12%	<b>48%</b>	40%
THB for domestic servitude	17%	<b>45%</b>	38%

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## Can it happen here (in Scotland)?

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	Very & somewhat likely	A little & not likely	Do not know
THB for sexual exploitation	<b>69%</b>	26%	5%
THB for labour exploitation	20%	<b>75%</b>	5%
THB for organ harvesting	8%	<b>65%</b>	27%
THB for domestic servitude	13%	<b>67%</b>	20%

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## Who is/can be/become a trafficked person?

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	Very & somewhat likely	A little & not likely	Do not know
Legal immigrants from non-visa countries	12%	<b>86%</b>	2%
Legal immigrants from visa countries	<b>53%</b>	44%	3%
Illegal immigrants entered voluntarily (smuggling)	<b>89%</b>	10%	1%
Forced entry	<b>96%</b>	3%	1%
Internally trafficked	7%	<b>89%</b>	4%
Anyone	33%	<b>58%</b>	9%

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## Links between consumerism and low-paid labour

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Majority agreed:

- UK is a highly consumerist society;
- There is a link between desire for cheaper goods and services and demand for low-paid labour
- As a society we are collectively responsible for generating demand for low-paid labour

However: only 28% agreed that they could be individually and personally responsible for generating such demand.

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## Who is responsible?

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Governments in countries of origin (72%) and in countries of destination (45%): not doing enough to stop the trafficking:

Criminal networks and organized crime: 70%

Factors of demand: 24%

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**Do you think that you need to know more about what trafficking is and what to do in case you suspect someone is a victim?**

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**93% agreed**

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## **In Conclusion**

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**Trafficking in Human Beings:**

- Part of the larger system of exploitation of bodies and labour of others for the benefit of capitalist economies driven by consumption
- Reflects the working of the power relations of the neo-liberal capitalist dominance
- Reflects deep philosophical and practical contradictions between sustainability, respect for human rights and capitalism's mode of production
- Is a symptom of the larger system of globalised exploitation of gendered and radicalised labour.
- Cannot be eliminated on a symptomatic level
- A long lasting solution: tighter state regulation of labour practices and critical consciousness among members of the general public attuned to local socio-economic and political contexts

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## Thank you and Questions

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Thank you!!!

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