



QUB Human Rights Centre - PG Symposium

Emerging Issues in Human Trafficking Research

6th May 2020

Call for Contributions

2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* by the UN General Assembly, and the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the *Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT)*.

In the 20 years since the adoption of the Trafficking Protocol, which was the first international instrument to provide a legal definition of human trafficking, various regional and national anti-trafficking instruments have emerged. Today, human trafficking remains firmly on the legal and policy agenda. Yet, critics have pointed out uncertainties in the elements of the trafficking definition and problems with their interplay. The Protocol's primary focus on prosecution rather than protecting trafficked persons has also faced criticism. In addition, there are questions to be answered about the role of the Trafficking Protocol and ECAT in addressing trafficking in the context of emerging issues, such as fast developing technologies, increasing refugee flows, and climate change.

Against this background, the Human Rights Centre will host a symposium on emerging issues in human trafficking research on **Wednesday 6th May 2020**.

We invite contributions broadly addressing the following questions: 20 years after the first international legal definition of human trafficking, what effects has this concept produced? What can current research contribute to understanding or critiquing the human trafficking construction? How is it understood, applied and interpreted by legal practitioners, policy makers and survivors? How does trafficking intersect with other legal regimes and does the trafficking regime offer protection to all who need it? Where do responsibilities lie? What ideas and problems emerge from the concept of human trafficking? Is the concept still useful? And what place does human trafficking have among the emerging issues of the 21st century?

The event is aimed at PhD and early career researchers, as a place for networking and discussion on the future of human trafficking research. The focus will be the legal framework around human trafficking, but we welcome perspectives on this topic from other disciplines, such as politics,

criminology, anthropology, sociology, psychology and economics. We invite abstracts for individual papers which will be grouped into thematic panels to discuss emerging issues in human trafficking research. Each paper will be followed by feedback and a discussion with participants.

The symposium will conclude with a keynote address from Professor Siobhán Mullally
(Established Professor of Human Rights Law and Director of the Irish Centre for Human Rights at NUI Galway).

The aforementioned questions may be answered in the context of, but not limited to, the following issues:

- The definitions, interpretations and implementations of trafficking instruments.
- The relationships between migration, smuggling, trafficking, and asylum.
- State responsibility and positive obligations in the context of human trafficking.
- “Victim” identification and support.
- Knowledge production on human trafficking.
- Class, gender, race, and nationalism.
- Vulnerability, agency and survivor experiences.
- Emerging issues, such as developing technologies and climate change.

Contributors are encouraged to give at least partial consideration to the future of the field, including potential trends and phenomena, either in trafficking or trafficking research. We invite interested researchers to send abstracts in word document format (250 words max) to hrcsymposium2020@gmail.com by **Wednesday 18th March 2020**. Please include your name, position and institution. Accepted applicants will be informed by **Wednesday 25th March 2020**. If you would like to attend, but not present a paper, please send a short email (250 words max) explaining your area of research and your interest in participating in the discussions. Please note that there are a limited number of additional participant places. If you have any queries about the symposium, please contact the organisers at hrcsymposium2020@gmail.com and follow QUB Human Rights Centre on @QUBHRC for updates about the event.



This symposium is being co-organised by PhD candidates from QUB, Queen Mary, University of London, and University of Salford.

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