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Human vs. Feminist Security Approaches to Human Trafficking in the Mediterranean

<https://www.e-ir.info/2021/05/05/human-vs-feminist-security-approaches-to-human-trafficking-in-the-mediterranean/>

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Human trafficking (HT) in the Mediterranean is increasingly recognized as a security threat by policy makers and scholars. This is attributed to the proliferation of the migration crisis in the Mediterranean which exacerbates the phenomenon of HT and makes it one of the most pressing contemporary human rights violations.[1] Human trafficking is a complex phenomenon and current policies aimed to combat and prevent the issue are largely ineffective due to the lack of consistent data on the number of reported trafficked persons and the secretive nature of the crime.[2] Contemporary policies primarily take a traditional security approach that focus on border and national security.[3] More recently, a human security (HS) approach to these policies has been incorporated, which prioritizes the importance of shifting the focus of security to human rights; however, HS is conflated with traditional state-centric approaches and lacks a comprehensive understanding of human rights. Instead, a feminist security (FS) approach is required as it confronts the inadequacies of HS and is necessary to fully protect the rights of all HT survivors.

One of the challenges of addressing HT is that there is no universal definition, as it varies between the United Nations (UN), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and states, although most definitions describe it as a form of modern-day slavery. Despite the lack of a parsimonious definition, the UN defines HT, under the Palermo Protocol, as “the recruitment and transportation... of persons by the means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion... [to gain] control of another person... for the purpose of exploitation.”[4] Exploitation can vary in form, such as: “prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”[5] This is not to be confused with human smuggling, which is defined by the UN as the procurement of illegal entry into a state in which the person is not a citizen of.[6] Importantly, smuggling does not involve the exploitation of persons once they enter the receiving state, but various UN protocols, EU policies, and state laws fail to adequately differentiate smuggling and HT. Often times, migrants are originally smuggled but are exploited while in transit or once in the receiving state, so it is important for the EU and the UN to have compatible definitions to eliminate confusion.[7] The lack of a cohesive understanding of the difference between smuggling and trafficking results in inconsistent assistance programs and judicial processes.

Smuggling and HT are both forms of irregular migration, but not all cases of irregular migration are criminalized, and the UN devotes its resources to combating organizations and criminals involved in HT and smuggling.[8] In addition to combating organizations committing these crimes, it is important that the UN also focuses on the non-criminal reasons why individuals turn to dangerous methods in order to migrate. Combating and preventing HT is a complex issue to confront considering the secretive nature of the crime and the unwillingness of survivors to report due to institutional barriers or fear. Above all, HT should be considered a human rights violation and a humanitarian crisis due to the failure to confront the reasons why migrants are leaving their country of origin (war, persecution, instability), the perilous methods of transportation, and their subsequent exploitation in the destination country.[9]

Traditional approaches understand irregular migration as a threat to national security, domestic peace, and overall stability. The traditional approach is exemplified in the European Union’s (EU) increased militarization of the Mediterranean and increased border controls as an attempt to combat the migration crisis.[10] However, these efforts paradoxically leads to a greater reliance by migrants on criminal organizations to get to the receiving state, makes the business more profitable, and makes it more dangerous because the organizations have to find new

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inventive ways to smuggle and traffic migrants.[11] One policy implemented by the UN, Resolution 2240, was an effort to decrease irregular migration through increased policing of the Mediterranean, which clearly represents a border-centric approach.[12] The Resolution allows for states “to use all measures commensurate to the specific circumstances in confronting migrant smugglers or human traffickers,” which allows states to seize ships suspected of illegal activity.[13] This policy does not identify the measures that states are allowed to take which contributes to an over-militarization of the Mediterranean resulting in vessels engaged in trafficking to be diverted to more dangerous avenues in the Mediterranean. The ultimate purpose of Resolution 2240 is to protect national and border security and fails to mention the protections individuals on the seized vessels receive, which pushes human rights issue to the periphery.

From a State-Centric Approach to Critical Security Approaches

Creating policies to combat HT requires a shift in ideological understanding of what is being securitized from ‘borders’ to ‘humans,’ which HS attempts to emphasize.[14] HS is a non-traditional approach, as it goes beyond state security and sovereignty and emphasizes that threats do not exclusively originate from other states. Instead, HS tackles other factors not considered in traditional approaches including: the economy, environment, health, food, personal security, and human dignity.[15] Fundamentally, HS is concerned with freedom from want and freedom from fear and puts individuals at the center of security.[16] It argues that human rights are universal and apply to all persons regardless of culture, identity, or status and requires transnational cooperation and a sense of shared sovereignty.[17] HS broadens and deepens what can be considered a threat and what can be securitized because it identifies individuals as the referent object of security and emphasizes the importance of protecting HT survivors. Despite the shift in the understanding of security, this approach is not substantial enough to protect the rights of all HT survivors.

Although HS falls outside of traditional approaches, its incorporation in international law often reflects state-centric security and subsumes human rights protections. Additionally, HS is not substantial enough to fully shift referent object to individuals because it neglects the intersectional nature of HT and the power structures involved in the phenomenon. HS does not acknowledge the ‘who’ and ‘how’ related to HT policies which are formulated by actors that do not understand the experience of HT, yet the policies are forced onto those that do understand HT.[18] As a result, the HS approach continues to enforce gender hierarchies such that women and children are considered to have little inherent agency. The misconception of vulnerability of women and children under HS upholds the inequality of agency based on gender and age. Consequently, a narrative emerged that the patriarchy must protect these demographics.[19] This narrative upholds gender hierarchies and power structures, leaves out male survivors of HT, and assumes women are inherently vulnerable and lack agency. These assumptions are detrimental to policy formation and in practice renders them ineffective at protecting survivors and providing them with adequate resources by silencing certain groups and experiences. Overall, HS does not consider the importance of intersectionality and is gender, age, and race blind which results in ineffective policies.

A FS approach addresses the inadequacies of HS by not only broadening what the referent object is but also by recognizing the importance how actors construct HT survivors within policies. Analytically, it addresses the influence the gender hierarchy has in the construction of HT survivors and perpetrators within policies.[20] The current iteration of HT depicts men as the perpetrators and women as the victims, a frame that reflects gender stereotypes and diminishes the experiences and complex actualities of the phenomenon.[21] Frequently, women and children are given minimal agency and are considered complicit agents in HT, meaning that they are willing participants in trafficking and their consequent exploitation. The current framework primarily attends to white female survivors, but consideration of race, age, and gender is paramount to creating inclusive policies. The FS approach should be integral in HT policy creation because it considers how survivors are framed by actors and brings in the importance of intersectionality.

Future policies regarding HT requires a FS approach as it broadens and deepens the ‘who’ and ‘what’ of security and emphasizes the importance of the structures in place that inform policies, often neglecting the lived experience of survivors. This discussion focuses on HT in the Mediterranean due to the proliferation of the phenomenon in the region. First, I discuss the HS approach to HT and argue that it is inadequate and fails to encompass protections for

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all survivors, likely due to its conflation with traditional approaches. I use the term survivor instead of victim in this article to refer to persons that have been trafficked as it gives agency back to individuals and is a trauma-informed approach. I present several policies that the EU and UN have passed regarding HT and analyze the HS approach to these policies. Second, I explain how FS differs in its approach to HT compared to HS and highlight the important contributions FS can make to future policies. Here, I discuss what is lacking in current policies and how FS can confront their inadequacies. Third, I discuss Italy as a case study due to its position in the Mediterranean which has caused the state to be one of the most effected by the migration crisis. Many states within the EU view Italy's policies as highly progressive in protecting the rights of HT survivors. I present several policies passed by the Italian government and argue that these policies are not effective and do not protect the individual rights of survivors because these policies largely prioritize the security of the state and its borders, exemplified by the 2018 Salvini Decree.

Human Security Approach

Human security (HS) as an approach is fairly recent, and the first articulation of HS occurred as recently as 1994 in the Human Development Report (HDR).[22] Since 1994, HS has generated significant support and productive policies.[23] While, the origins of HS can be traced back as early as the Geneva Conventions in 1864, it more substantially emerged during the creation of international organizations after the Cold War.[24] The HS approach shifts the referent object of security to individuals, broadening the possibilities of where threats reside and who can be securitized, thereby challenging the traditional framework that emphasizes the importance of the state.[25] HS encompasses a vast array of security problems that are not considered under traditional approaches, such as the economy, environment, health, and human dignity among others.

Human security makes an important contribution by reshaping how policy makers think about security by introducing the importance and universality of human rights. At its foundation, individuals are central to the HS approach and it argues that human rights are universal. Furthermore, it states that human rights apply to all persons regardless of culture, identity, or status and requires transnational cooperation and a sense of shared sovereignty.[26] The General Assembly of the UN upheld these ideals in 2000 under Resolution 55/2 which emphasized that these principles are timeless and violations must be combated with a sense of shared responsibility.[27] In 2003 the UN, under the Commission on Human Security, stated HS to mean "protecting fundamental freedoms...protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations." [28] This statement appears to highlight that states have a fundamental obligation to aid all individuals who face serious threats. Recently, the UN has begun to recognize the importance of human rights within its policies, marking a change from the historic border-centric approach. The UN has implemented a plethora of policies to prevent HT that centralize the importance of human rights. The UN Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Trafficking in Human Beings (E/2002/68/Add. 1) states that "the human rights of trafficked persons shall be at the center of all efforts to prevent and combat trafficking and to protect, assist and provide redress to victims." [29] This illustrates the UN's prioritization of human rights over the stability, sovereignty, and security of member states.

By shifting the referent object to individuals, HT becomes a security threat that states are required to confront as it is a humanitarian violation due to the exploitation of survivors. Furthermore, the Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings, implemented in 2005, called for a revision of the current policies.[30] Importantly, the Convention stated that "a multi-disciplinary approach incorporating prevention, protection of human rights of victims and prosecution of traffickers, while at the same time seeking to harmonize relevant national laws and ensure that these laws are applied uniformly and effectively." [31] This is a notable shift in the framing of security from past policies as it redirects attention to individuals who have been trafficked and attempts to protect their rights. For example, the Convention prioritizes the fact that trafficked persons are not criminals and therefore should not be treated as such. This means that they cannot be criminalized and deported if they are illegally in the receiving state.[32] Many migrants fall into the hands of criminal organizations and are trafficked due to a lack of legal routes that leaves migrants to be dangerously transported and exploited in receiving states.[33] It is reasonable to correlate the effect of increased restrictions on migrants to the increase number of migrants seeking asylum.[34] Additionally, HS confronts the need for EU states to rethink its policies and attempts to create a universal requirement and transnational effort to combat the phenomenon effectively.

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The Gaps in the Human Security Approach

Despite broadening and deepening the understanding of security, HS is often implemented in policies through a traditional security approach that protects the security of states rather than individuals. One of the most important pieces of UN legislation regarding HT is the 2000 *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children*, also called the Palermo Protocol. The Palermo Protocol offers a definition of HT that is generally internationally agreed upon, which is stated earlier in this article. The Palermo Protocol attempts to address the phenomenon of trafficking through a HS approach, but ultimately fails to do so entirely. HS is conflated with traditional approaches and is exemplified in this Protocol because it was passed to supplement the Organized Crime Convention (OCC). The OCC is an international criminal law treaty, resulting in an interpretation and implementation of the Palermo Protocol as a national security issue instead of its intent to address human rights issues.[35] The Palermo Protocol, in addition to taking a traditional approach, neglects male survivors of HT, no matter the form of exploitation.

A complete analysis of the efficacy of a HS approach to HT is lacking. Although the use of HS as a basis for policy creation has been implemented, it is important to evaluate the shortcomings of such an approach. As mentioned above, the HS approach in practice tends to lean toward the traditional framing of security and often serves national and border security interests because it does not “fundamentally challenge and thus transform traditional structures of security.”[36] However, the shift of the focus of security to individuals is an important step in broadening the understanding of security in the international system by questioning the importance of the state. By analyzing security at an individual level, what constitutes as a threat to security is reimagined, but this level of analysis is neither deep nor inclusive enough. HS fails to recognize the intersectionality of HT and does not consider the role age, race, and gender plays in the phenomenon itself and the policies aimed to combat it. This component is important to take into account because without this element HT policies will continue to uphold power and gender hierarchies.[37]

The influence of the HS approach to HT policies upholds power and gender structures by perpetuating the social construction of gender and the characteristics assigned to gender. Current policies delegate little agency to women who are viewed as a vulnerable population, and males are thought to be the perpetrators not survivors. This neglects the fact that “women, like men, make choices and take risks within the international labor market,” and that women, who are often survivors of HT themselves, are the primary recruiters of future HT survivors. [38] The framework that places women as ‘victims’ and designates them as the demographic most vulnerable to trafficking. This neglects the fact that women have the agency to contribute to trafficking. Furthermore, the perpetuation of the gender hierarchy dissuades male survivors to come forward and report their trafficker because they face higher qualification of what it means to be a survivor. Males are perceived to have the most agency, which generates skepticism among authorities that men can also be survivors of HT. The term ‘survivor’ can also contribute to the lack of male reports because of the belief that it undermines their agency. For these reasons, males do not come forward and report their trafficker because of the fear that authorities will not take them seriously or that their “manliness” will be called into question. As indicated above, the Palermo Protocol, in addition to taking a traditional approach, neglects male survivors of HT, no matter the form of exploitation. Although data shows that women are sexually exploited more than men due the social construction of the role gender in HT, the data does not reflect the reality of all survivors.[39] Most societies hold the view that women are more inherently vulnerable to this type of exploitation compared to men. This gender structure results in misleading data that neglects male survivors and survivors of other identities that fall outside of the traditional gender binary.[40] Data regarding HT is already limited as well as programs to aid survivors and policies enshrined in the gender hierarchy are harmful and ill-informed.

This iteration of HT affects the amount of agency a survivor receives which suppresses their voices and ability to make their own decisions.[41] In addition, it continues to prioritize the importance of aiding white survivors despite the fact that HT does not discriminate based on race. Many critics of HS point out that the approach and its scholars are from the United States and fail to acknowledge the privileged status that is informing how individuals are constructed within the theory thus focusing primarily on white survivors.[42] The construction of individuals in HS is then imposed on marginalized populations and further diminishes their agency.[43] This is especially true in the Mediterranean region, where a majority of HT survivors originate from the MENA region.[44] In order to fully protect the rights of survivors and prevent HT, acknowledging the power and gender structures ingrained in society and the

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importance of intersectionality is critical to effectively combat HT and fully protect all survivors. The gaps within the HS literature and its practical application are addressed by a FS approach.

Feminist Security Approach

The origins of feminist security (FS) as a field of international relations arose out of women's movements in the late 1980's.[45] As an approach, FS is complex and the exact articulation of it is highly debated among scholars marked by the existence of various feminist theories because a universally agreed upon 'feminism' does not exist—and should not exist.[46] The experiences of individuals vary across time and space, and to assume a single FS approach exists undermines the various identities it aims to securitize.[47] The FS approach fundamentally questions what is considered 'security,' who defines it, and to whom it is applied. Reimagining security this way draws attention to who is being left out of the discussion and challenges the current security framework.[48] Similar to HS, FS shifts the referent object of security to individuals, but confronts the limitations of HS by highlighting the importance of considering intersectionality, gender and power structures, and how insecurity is actually experienced.[49] At the core of FS is its consideration of gender, which is not based on biological sex but rather on the social construction of characteristics assigned to males and females.[50] Inclusivity and an expanded understanding is important, because solely focusing on women can "isolate women from the broader sociocultural context in which behavioral norms are embedded." [51] Gender is not universally experienced and is bound by culture, religion, sexuality, and class which ultimately constitutes identity and identifies threats.[52] By introducing intersectionality, FS considers the impact of age, race, gender, nationality, and class of HT survivors in the construction and implementation of policies.[53] Therefore, gender is not the only level of analysis in FS, which is integral in providing a critical lens to current policies that tend uphold gender hierarchies and fail to adequately protect survivors and address the causes of HT.

The pervasive assumption that gender is dichotomous (male and female) and the social constructions of each results in unequal assignment of power where males dominate, and women are stripped of agency. Feminist security underlines the importance this assumption has in informing policies and security. According to Laura Sjoberg, "states' foreign policy choices are guided by their identities, which are based on association with characteristics attached to masculinity, manliness, and heterosexism." [54] By highlighting the influence of gender on policy creation, FS criticizes the lack of gender as a level of analysis in the HS approach. FS critiques the use of 'human' as a gender-neutral term in HS because it ultimately neglects the current masculine framework of security that informs HT policy creation.[55]

The gender hierarchy is a pervasive power structure that dangerously influences the formation of HT policies. The structure of the international system is gendered and tends to uphold common stereotypes. Typically, the gender stereotype is that women are inherently more vulnerable, have little agency, and must be saved whereas men are the actors who prey upon those vulnerabilities. This gender hierarchy creates a false reality that assumes that men cannot be survivors of HT and undermines their experience, resulting in a lack of protections. Notably, one policy that has used a FS approach is Directive 2011/36/EU, which addresses the significance of considering gender in HT. This Directive acknowledges the variance in experiences between men, women, and transgender people, especially in relation to their level of vulnerability by recognizing that gender plays a role in prevention, assistance, and support given to various identities.[56]

The problematic assumption that women are inherently vulnerable 'victims' and that men are those that exploit them is not a complete understanding of HT. The phenomenon of HT is complex and difficult to understand under this framework, as women have agency and actively participate in the recruitment of individuals and men are not invulnerable to exploitation. Introducing FS allows people to widen their understanding of the issue to include narratives that more completely encompasses the actualities of HT experiences and the identities of survivors. The various nuances that constitute one's identity, such as age and race, affects a survivor's experiences and the protections and aid they receive. Therefore, this approach fundamentally problematizes the Palermo Protocol, which only focuses on women and children affected by HT and falsely removes the possibility that men and older individuals can be vulnerable to trafficking. The phenomenon does not only prey on younger females and the characteristics of the crime lends itself to exploiting any potential individual for monetary gain.

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There are many different approaches to FS, and this only represents one of them. It is important to note that this articulation does not reflect all FS approaches, as the European conceptualization is Westernized. This approach differs from how those in the MENA region understand and experience feminism. By acknowledging this difference, the threats that constitute their insecurity and leads to HT is highlighted, so policies makers can more effectively confront them.

Case Study: Italy's Human Trafficking Policies

Within the EU, Italy is considered to have the most progressive HT policies and offers the most protections for survivors. The migration crisis significantly impacts Italy in particular given its central location in the Mediterranean and its position as a transit zone to other EU states. Similarly, the various pull factors such as its increasingly vibrant economy as well as push factors, such as instability in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region make it an attractive destination.[57] According to the US Department of State, 119,310 irregular migrants arrived in Italy in 2017, and a large portion of these migrants were smuggled and trafficked while in transit, or coerced into exploitation once in Italy.[58] Although statistics regarding trafficking is lacking, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that 19,000 to 26,000 people are trafficked in Italy every year.[59] Given the data, Italy has identified the increasing importance of combating and preventing HT by implementing several human security-based policies.

Of the number of trafficked individuals, 15,731 were unaccompanied children and young boys in particular are exceptionally vulnerable to forced exploitation in the labor industry upon arrival.[60] Despite the lack of data, trafficking in children (minors) accounts for 15% of all trafficked individuals in Italy, which has likely increased due to the migration crisis.[61] The Italian economy is largely agrarian given its geography which makes the underground market for exploiting individuals for labor highly profitable due to the low-cost. Labor exploitation is prevalent in Southern Italy because of the region's rural make-up and stagnant economy.[62] In addition, Italy's increased restrictions on granting legal entry to migrants looking for work forces migrants to seek alternative methods of entry that leads to their exploitation.[63] According to one report, there is a growing number of children that live "in complete invisibility" in Southern Italy. These children are both exploited for labor and used as a tool to blackmail mothers into exploitation.[64] Although there has been a concerted effort to protect and aid trafficked children, it is evident that these children are falling through the gaps. However, it is not only children that Italy has failed to protect, but young boys are often neglected in policies. Most policies primarily confront sexual exploitation of young girls and fail to recognize the number of boys that are exploited for labor. Boys are often seen as less vulnerable to HT than girls due to the gender hierarchy in place and thus they are not viewed as survivors, resulting in policies that neglect young male survivors of HT.

Children are associated with a high level of vulnerability because they are dependent on an adult and if they arrive unaccompanied, they are at risk of being taken advantage of or disappear into the system. The Special Rapporteur found that children who arrive in Italy without an adult are placed into homes for protection. Despite Italy's attempt to prevent children from being exploited, those placed into these homes tend to disappear into the hands of criminal organization for the purpose of exploitation.[65] To combat the exploitation of unaccompanied children requires Italy to confront why they are unaccompanied in the first place. Families will send their children to Italy to escape forced military enlistment, poverty, political tension, or humanitarian threats in the hopes they will have a better life.[66] Addressing the causes of insecurity children face through a FS approach will be more effective at decreasing the number of trafficked children. Furthermore, if a child does arrive in Italy with an adult the question of whether that adult is actually their parent or their exploiter arises. Implementing policies that uses a FS approach which accounts for age and gender, authorities can better identify trafficked individuals and create more effective assistance programs.

Italy has passed several progressive policies to combat the prevalence of HT that take a HS approach. Many of these policies utilize a victim-centered approach that prioritizes protection and recovery. However, these policies are not uniformly and equally applied to all survivors and the effectiveness of these policies is dismal. This is likely attributed to the fact that the practical application of HS still relies on the preconceived traditional security paradigm. The reliance on traditional security approaches is attributed to the assumption that human rights are universal, but they can still be undermined by the power structures in place.[67] Law 199/2016 under Article 18 of the Consolidated

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Act on Immigration (Legislative-Decree No. 2086/98) set forth provisions for survivors by granting long-term assistance programs. Participation in the programs are not contingent on cooperation with Italian authorities but is restricted only to those who experienced “violence or severe exploitation” and is not adequately implemented.[68] The stringent eligibility requirements makes it increasingly difficult for survivors to get the assistance necessary and for the Italian government to track the prevalence of HT.

The 2014 UN Special Rapporteur noted that despite Italy’s progressive policies they are hindered by the negative political and public perception of migrants. This effectively redirects the focus of security back to national security.[69] The report states that this regression has “led to the criminalization of undocumented migrants and which, where not carefully designated, have failed to distinguish trafficking from other forms of migration,” exemplifying the shortcomings in Italy’s attempt at securitizing human rights.[70] To securitize individual human rights, the Italian government must present the migration crisis and HT as a humanitarian issue which the public must accept. However, the Italian government has made no effort to frame the migration crisis and HT in such a way to mobilize public support for progressive protection policies that take a HS approach.

The Italian government has been recognized by the EU and the U.S. for its progressive policies and programs in the fight against HT, but these policies in practice primarily serve to combat illegal migrants from entering the country. In 2015 during the height of the migration crisis, Italy developed a plan to combat migration after the deaths of over 800 migrants who were in route to Italy. After this event, the Italian government sought the EU’s support and immediate implementation of ‘EUNAVFOR Med,’ also known as Operation Sophia.[71]. Operation Sophia is intended to “disrupt the business model of the human smugglers and traffickers, who endanger the lives of migrants by shipping them across the sea,” by deploying naval ships in the Mediterranean. The purpose of Italy’s naval presence in the Mediterranean is to rescue migrants and catch traffickers. However, this operation is ultimately a strategy to deal with the migration crisis and to protect its borders by militarizing the Mediterranean, not save lives.[72] Many members of the EU recognized this, and “believed it blurred the distinction between external and internal politics and suspected it was a smoke screen for Italy to fight the migrants rather than the traffickers,” according to interviews with national officials.[73] Despite misgivings regarding Operation Sophia, the EU gave its support to Italy to show that they actively value the lives of migrants.[74]

Moreover, in 2013 before Operation Sophia Italy attempted a similar operation, Mare Nostrum, after the deaths of 366 migrants.[75] Mare Nostrum was passed to prevent migrant deaths at sea and employed a navy search and rescue team to do so. However, critics within the EU point out that the core purpose of Mare Nostrum only serves a vested Italian interest in protecting its borders and the population from Islamic radicalism but is disguised as a humanitarian effort.[76] Both of these operations represent Italy’s prioritization of border security over human security, despite the narrative that they were intended to do the opposite. Furthermore, Italian Law No. 129/2011 created victim assistance programs that are similar to other programs used throughout the EU.[77] However, this law did not take either a HS approach or a FS approach, so instead survivors are relegated to detention centers and do not receive human rights protections. This further emphasizes Italy’s primary focus on the security of the state by detaining migrants.

One recent development regarding the rights and protections of irregular migrants, including HT survivors, emerged in 2018. Matteo Salvini, Italy’s leader of the far-right political group *La Lega* whose platform is rooted in racism and anti-immigration, successfully passed a sweeping law that strips the rights of migrants in October 2018.[78] The new Law-Decree on immigration, also called Decreto Salvini (Salvini Decree), made it so that Italy would no longer accept migrants and grant residence permits for humanitarian reasons.[79] As a result, current migrants in the country legally will lose their permits of stay and it is estimated that over 100,000 individuals will lose their humanitarian protection status.[80] Increasing national security measures will continue to push migrants through illegal and dangerous channels and continues to exacerbate the HT phenomenon.[81] Therefore, the introduction of FS is all the more paramount to prevent migrants losing their permits of stay from falling into the hands of traffickers due to the lack of legal channels.

The migration crisis in the Mediterranean has likely contributed to an increase in HT, yet current policies are ineffective at combating the issue and protecting the rights of survivors, especially in Italy. Traditional approaches to

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HT policy are ineffective and predicated on the racist perception that all migrants are criminals and are willing participants in HT. Introducing HS to policy formation results in more informed and beneficial policies that redirect the focus of security to human rights. Despite this more human rights-centered approach, it lacks the complete understanding of the HT phenomenon and fails to protect all survivors because it still carries a traditional security undertone. To rectify the current inadequacies of HT policies requires the introduction of FS as it encompasses all survivors and allows for the understanding of security and policy to be broadened and deepened. To do this, Italy must reframe their understanding of HT and recognize the power and gender structures in place that allows for people to fall through the cracks. Considering the experiences of survivors will help form effective trauma-informed policies and programs that cater to those who have lived through trafficking.

Conclusion

The extent of human trafficking globally is largely unknown due to the difficulties in data collection, but it is certain that the phenomenon is pervasive in the Mediterranean given the proliferation of the migration crisis. Combating HT is imperative and is a humanitarian crisis that must be faced with a sense of shared responsibility. Identifying why migrants pursue dangerous channels of migration in the first place and creating the necessary conditions to lessen the problem is paramount for the protection of human lives and dignity. The increased implementation of HS in EU and UN policies in recent years is an important first step in redirecting the focus of security to individuals instead of the state. Without this shift in the framing of security, HT would be considered a threat to national security due to the illegal movement and entry of migrants. Although HS does not completely create effective and parsimonious policies that protect all survivors, the framework continues to evolve, and approaches adapt to circumstances.

The HS approach holds inconsistencies which are confronted by FS due to the introduction of intersectionality and gender. Without consideration of the role of intersectionality and gender in HT, individuals are left out of the discussion and ineffective policies are imposed on survivors involuntarily. These policies are ineffective because they are generated by political and academic elites who do not have a broad understanding of HT experiences. The gender and power structures that are socially constructed and socially constituted results in masculine policy production that incorrectly assumes vulnerability, agency, and power to the detriment of survivors.

Future policies must consider intersectionality in order to increase protections and rights of survivors of human trafficking and to expand preventative measures that go beyond border and national security. By acknowledging the preexisting power and gender structures that influence HT policies, more substantial and applicable narratives emerge by generating a greater understanding of HT.

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Notes

[1]After the Arab Uprisings in 2011, the Mediterranean region saw a dramatic increase in irregular migration. Since 2011 refugees, primarily from the Middle East North Africa (MENA), have journeyed across the Mediterranean to reach European countries. The various push factors in the MENA region, such as instability from internal conflict or declining economies coupled with pull factors in Europe, such as safety and employment opportunities, has caused a massive influx of migrants to enter the European Union. The proliferation of irregular migration in the region was characterized as a crisis in 2015 due to the dangerous nature of crossing the Mediterranean resulting in thousands of preventable deaths, with over 3,500 in 2015 (Human Rights Watch).

[2]"Italy: 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report," U.S. Department of State, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271211.htm>.

[3]Traditional security approaches focus on the security of the state and its borders with a particular emphasis on the importance of the military, with threats originating from other states.

[4]Matilde Ventrella McCreight, "Smuggling of Migrants, Trafficking in Human Beings and Irregular Migration on a Comparative Perspective," *European Law Journal* 12, no. 1 (2006): 109; Cherif Bassiouni, et al., "Addressing International Human Trafficking in Women and Children for Commercial Sexual Exploitation in the 2nd Century," *Cairn* 3, no. 81 (2010): 452.

[5]Letizia Palumbo and Alessandra Sciarba. "The vulnerability to exploitation of women migrant workers in

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[6]McCreight, "Smuggling of Migrants," 109.

[7]McCreight, "Smuggling of Migrants," 110; Jennifer K. Lobasz, "Beyond Border Security: Feminist Approaches to Human Trafficking," *Security Studies* 18, no. 2 (2009): 329.

[8]McCreight, "Smuggling of Migrants," 110.

[9]Lobasz, "Beyond Border Security," 321.

[10]David Lutterbeck, "Policing Migration in the Mediterranean," *Mediterranean Politics* 11, no. 1 (2006): 59.

[11]Antione Pecoud, and Paul de Guchteneire, "International migration, border controls and human rights: Assessing the relevance of a right to mobility," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 21, no. 1 (2006): 72.

[12]Francesca Mussi, "Countering Migrant Smuggling in the Mediterranean Sea under the Mandate of the UN Security Council: What Protection for the Fundamental Rights of Migrants?," *International Journal of Human Rights* 22, no. 4 (2018): 495.

[13]Mussi, "Countering Migrant Smuggling," 495.

[14]Securitization originates from the Copenhagen School (CS) and refers to the process of how things become a referent object of security, such as the environment, individuals, the economy, etc. The CS states that securitization occurs when a political elite speaks about a security issue, the audience accepts it as a fact, is perceived as an immediate/existential threat, and thus a policy is required to confront the issue (Thierry Balzacq, 60).

[15]Randolph B Persaud, "Human Security." In *Contemporary Security Studies*, ed. Alan Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016): 140.

[16]Persaud, "Human Security," 142.

[17]Persaud, "Human Security," 142; Alex Kreidenweis and Natalie F. Hudson, "More Than a Crime: Human Trafficking as Human (In)Security," *International Studies Perspectives* 16, no. 1 (2015): 70.

[18]Kreidenweis and Hudson, "More Than a Crime," 82.

[19]Kreidenweis and Hudson, "More Than a Crime," 82.

[20]Lobasz, "Beyond Border Security," 323.

[21]Lobasz, "Beyond Border Security," 339.

[22]Persaud, "Human Security," 141.

[23]Persaud, "Human Security," 141.

[24]Persaud, "Human Security," 144-145.

[25]Kreidenweis and Hudson, "More Than a Crime," 83.

[26]Persaud, "Human Security," 142; Kreidenweis and Hudson, "More Than a Crime," 70.

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[27]Persaud, "Human Security," 144.

[28]Kreidenweis and Hudson, "More Than a Crime," 70.

[29]Stefano Caneppele and Marina Mancuso, "Are Protection Policies for Human Trafficking Victims Effective? An Analysis of the Italian Case," *European Journal on Criminal Policy & Research* 19, no. 3 (2012): 261.

[30]Caneppele and Mancuso, "Are Protection Policies," 260.

[31]Caneppele and Mancuso, "Are Protection Policies," 260.

[32]Caneppele and Mancuso, "Are Protection Policies," 260.

[33]Shani Friedman, "Challenges to the Counter-Migrants Smuggling Regime in the Mediterranean Sea" *Hebrew University of Jerusalem International Law Forum* working Series 02-18, (2018): 1.

[34]Niklas, Nováky, "The Road to Sophia: Explaining the EU's Naval Operation in the Mediterranean," *European View* 17, no. 2 (2018): 4.

[35]Palumbo and Sciurba, "The vulnerability to exploitation," 36.

[36]Kreidenweis and Hudson, "More Than a Crime," 83.

[37]Kreidenweis and Hudson, "More Than a Crime," 83.

[38]Lobasz, "Beyond Border Security," 339; Francesca Esposito, Carla R. Quinto, Francesca De Masi, Oria Gargano, and Pedro Alexandre Costa. "Voices of Nigerian Women Survivors of Trafficking Held in Italian Centres for Identification and Expulsion," *International Migration* 54, no. 4 (2016): 141.

[39]"Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, on her mission to Italy." *United Nations General Assembly* (2014): 3.

[40]The traditional gender binary assumes that only two genders exist: males and females. The gender binary is a result of social constructions that assigns traits and characteristics to individuals based on their biological gender assigned as male or female. However, the gender binary is being deconstructed to include individuals that do not identify as either male and/or female. New identities such as transgender, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, among other are becoming widely accepted socially, but not politically. Dismantling the gender binary in politics is paramount to trafficking policies to promote inclusivity and equality of protections regardless of an individual's gender (Dvorsky & Hughes, 2-5).

[41]Kreidenweis and Hudson, "More Than a Crime," 82.

[42]Fiona Robinson, "J. Ann Tickner Book Prize Essay: When Worlds Collide," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 17, no. 2 (2016): 306.

[43]Robinson, "J. Ann Tickner," 307.

[44]"Report of the Special Rapporteur," 4.

[45]Soumita Basu, "Emancipatory Potential in Feminist Security Studies." *International Studies Perspectives* 14, no. 4 (2013): 455.

[46]Heidi Hudson, "'Doing' Security As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of

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Human Security." *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 2 (2005): 158; Lobasz, "Beyond Border Security," 334.

[47]Hudson, "'Doing' Security," 168; Laura Sjoberg. "Introduction." In *Gender and International Security: Feminist Perspectives*, edited by Laura Sjoberg, 1-11. 1st ed. New York: Routledge (2010): 3.

[48]Laura J. Shepherd, "The State of Feminist Security Studies: Continuing the Conversation." *International Studies Perspectives* 14, no. 4 (2013): 437.

[49]Robinson, "J. Ann Tickner," 307.

[50]Laura Sjoberg. "Introduction," 3.

[51]Jennifer K. Lobasz, "An Introduction to Feminist Security Studies." *International Studies Review* 16, no. 1 (2014): 145.

[52]Laura Sjoberg, "Introduction," 4; Annick T.R. Wibben, "Feminist Politics in Feminist Security Studies." *Politics & Gender* 7, no. 4 (2011): 593.

[53]Palumbo, "The Vulnerability to Exploitation," 16.

[54]Laura Sjoberg, "Introduction," 5.

[55]Heidi Hudson, "'Doing' Security As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security." *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 2 (2005): 157.

[56]Palumbo and Scirba, "The vulnerability to exploitation," 45.

[57]Gabriele Abbondanza, "Italy's Migration Policies Combating Irregular Immigration: From the Early Days to the Present Times," *International Spectator* 52, 4 (2017): 77-78.

[58]U.S. Department of State, "Italy."

[59]Esposito et al., "Voices of Nigerian," 135.

[60]U.S. Department of State, "Italy."

[61]"Report of the Special Rapporteur," 5.

[62]Palumbo and Scirba, "The vulnerability to exploitation," 24.

[63]Palumbo and Scirba, "The vulnerability to exploitation," 22.

[64]Palumbo and Scirba, "The vulnerability to exploitation," 25.

[65]"Report of the Special Rapporteur," 5.

[66]"Young, Invisible, Enslaved: Children Victims of trafficking and Labour Exploitation in Italy." *Save the Children Italy* (2017): 5.

[67]Heidi Hudson, "'Doing' Security," 163.

[68]Alessandra Corrado. "Is Italian agriculture a 'pull factor' for irregular migration- and, if so, why?" *European Policy Institute* (2018): 20.

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[69]“Report of the Special Rapporteur,” 9.

[70]“Report of the Special Rapporteur,” 9.

[71]Nováky, “The Road to Sophia 197-198.

[72]Nováky, “The Road to Sophia,” 198.

[73]Nováky, “The Road to Sophia,” 201.

[74]Nováky, “The Road to Sophia,” 206.

[75]Nováky, “The Road to Sophia,” 200.

[76]Nováky, “The Road to Sophia,” 200.

[77]Lobasz, “Beyond Border Security,” 332; Esposito et al., “Voices of Nigerian,” 137.

[78]Corrado, “Is Italian migration,” 19.

[79]Alessandra Algostino, “Il decreto “sicurezza e immigrazione” (decreto legge n. 113 del 2018): estinzione del diritto di asilo, repression del dissenso e diseguaglianza.” *Costituzionalismo 2*, (2018): 176.

[80]Lorenzo Tondo and Angela Giuffrida, “Vulnerable migrants made homeless after Italy passes ‘Salvini decree’.” *The Guardian*. Decemeber 7, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/07/vulnerable-migrants-made-homeless-after-italy-passes-salvini-decree> (Accessed March 16, 2019).

[81]Corrado, “Is Italian migration,” 19; Harowitz, Jason. “Italy’s crackdown on migrants meets a grass-roots resistance.” *The New York Times*, February 1, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/01/world/europe/italy-mayors-migrants-salvini-security-decree.html> (Accessed March 16, 2019).