Journeys of Jeopardy: A Review of Research on Trafficking in Women and Children in Europe

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Journeys of Jeopardy: A Review of Research on Trafficking in Women and Children in Europe

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FOREWORD

International migration is estimated to involve some 175 million migrants worldwide. Affecting all regions, it is set to become an increasingly pressing policy issue for many governments, and to remain so for some time to come. Most countries are now part of a global migration system where the migration policies of one state are likely to have an impact on other states.

Given this context, there is a growing demand for research and analysis of migratory trends and policy responses. The IOM Migration Research Series (MRS) was launched in 2000 to provide quick access to findings of research on a broad range of migration issues.

The aim of the MRS papers is to contribute to a better understanding of current migratory flows, the impact of migration policies and the implications of different approaches to migration management, and to present the findings of such research in a form easily accessible to policy makers.

The present paper by Professor Elizabeth Kelly provides an assessment of our current state of knowledge about the trafficking of women and children in Europe. Whilst interest in trafficking in human beings generally has never been greater, our knowledge base remains weak. Information on the scale of trafficking, on how it works, and the most effective means to counter it, is still very limited. Despite the growing literature on trafficking, relatively few studies are based on extensive research, and information on the actual numbers of people trafficked remains very sketchy.

Policy makers and analysts are asking what can and should be done to both improve and expand information on trafficking. In her report, Professor Kelly reviews and assesses current research on the trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation in Europe and identifies a number of priorities to advance our current knowledge base.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although public awareness of, and concern over, the trafficking of women and children (and irregular migration in general) has never been greater among governments, international agencies and NGOs, the knowledge base is still relatively weak. After almost a decade of attention, research on trafficking for sexual exploitation has not moved much beyond mapping the problem, and reviews of legal frameworks and policy responses. Despite repeated calls in international documents, including from the European Union and Council of Europe, the vast majority of states are still unable to provide reliable data as to the number of cases, or the characteristics of the victims and perpetrators (IOM, 2001). A project conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and funded under the European Union's STOP programme, concluded in 1998 that no European country could provide reliable figures regarding the scale of trafficking in women or children either from, into or through its territory. To date, this situation has not changed. One element contributing to this limited knowledge is that the development of research methods on people trafficking remains in its infancy (Salt and Hogarth, 2000), with the result that it is still necessary to rely on overviews and commentaries, data from service providers, rather than on well designed sociological studies. Thus not only are there gaps in our knowledge, but also considerable methodological limitations.

This lack of a strong research base is even more problematic, as policy responses are developing rapidly. The increasing emphasis on what has become known as "evidence-based" public policy (Davies et al., 2000) makes the need for studies that are thoughtful, rigorous and strategic even greater. Much existing research has been strategic, but the extent to which it has been thoughtful, not to mention rigorous, is open to question. The need for information is pressing, especially because governments and international bodies have demanded it. In such a context the tendency to conduct what social researchers call "quick and dirty" studies has dominated. While such projects can produce findings speedily to feed into policy debates, the quality and reliability of the data are often uncertain.

To date, the emphasis in research on trafficking for sexual exploitation has been on:

- Estimating the scale of the problem;
- Mapping routes and relationships between countries of origin, transit and destination;

- Documenting methods of recruitment;
- Exploring the control mechanism used and the human rights abuses involved;
- Critical reviews of current legal and policy frameworks and recommendations for new action.

A large part of the data collected has been limited to official statistics and responses to short questionnaires/interviews by women who are either included in return programmes or who have been deported. There are exceptions to this general rule, with some studies using innovative sources of data and/or undertaking more in-depth work. The danger is that where the information gathered is partial or even inaccurate, intervention will not be effective. We have now reached a point where it is possible and necessary for researchers and organizations involved in counter-trafficking work to generate more reliable data and to conduct better research.

2. THE REVIEW: AIMS AND SOURCES

The aims of this review are not to merely summarize what we know today, but also to organize the material into key themes; critically assess the knowledge base and identify gaps and future challenges.

Trafficking in women and children is not limited to exploitation within the sex industry; it encompasses other forms of bonded labour, domestic service and even perhaps cases of involuntary organ transplants. However, research on these aspects of trafficking is even less well developed (but, c.f., Wijers and Lap-Chew, 1997). This review, therefore, will focus on trafficking into and through the European sex industries.

Undertaking the review required an investigation into current research that addresses trafficking of women and children from, into and through European countries, since there is no up-to-date research database on this topic. As will become apparent, most of the studies have been conducted in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly in the Balkans and the Baltic states. These have become major sending and transit areas.

The literature search undertaken involved detailed Internet searches and the follow-up of all references. The Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) database was also used, but no research on trafficking in women is logged. In addition the 180 members of the European Violence Against Women Research Network were contacted and asked to provide references and/or summaries of recent studies. Finally, the extensive holdings of the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit on the topic were consulted. Undoubtedly, some research will have been missed, and there was no time to have research reports from Austria, Switzerland and Greece translated into English.

The material is organized into twelve sections: the challenges of research on trafficking; definitions and language use; current baseline data; the causes of trafficking; flows, routes and recruitment; the realities and consequences of sexual exploitation; traffickers and exploiters; prevention and awareness raising; assessment of national and international trafficking strategies; gaps in available knowledge and a conclusion.

3. THE PARTICULAR CHALLENGES INVOLVED IN STUDYING TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN

All research topics present particular challenges, but trafficking is more demanding than most. Conducting quality research is difficult, potentially dangerous and sometimes expensive. The specific dilemmas involved in research on trafficking are outlined below.

Access to traffickers

The fact that trafficking is not only illegal, but also often connected to organized crime, violence and corruption, means that access to information and informants is often limited, and even impossible in some cases. The limited research available to date on traffickers, in particular those who organize and make substantial profits, testifies to both their relative invisibility and the fact that they have good reasons to remain so. The secrecy and danger involved also means that some researchers and a number of journalists have used covert methods as the only way to obtain certain information (see, for example, Global Survival Network, 1997).

However, most information on traffickers continues to come from victims, who will only have knowledge of parts of the operation. Women and children who are trafficked are seldom able to provide a detailed account of precisely where they were and who was involved, either because they are not told anything, or what they are told is false. Where researchers have made direct contact with traffickers, they have tended to be small-scale operators, whose knowledge extends only to the stages prior to, and following, their own involvement. Piecing together this jigsaw and deciding which pieces of information are accurate is a problem for both law enforcers and researchers. Therefore, what people "know" is a significant barrier to a more detailed understanding of how trafficking is organized at the local, regional and international levels.

The limited work on traffickers shows the importance of research rooted in local contexts, where relationships can be built up over time, and ethnographic methods used,[1] in order that more pieces of the jigsaw can be uncovered and local rumours and anecdotes checked across several sources. Yet, such work has rarely been undertaken; presumably partly because of the potential dangers involved.

Vulnerable victims

A number of factors combine to limit access to victims, and that has consequences for what and how much those it is possible to contact are willing to tell. The control strategies used by traffickers and exploiters, including threats to family members, mean that many women and children are unwilling to participate in research while they are in destination countries. The fear of reprisals is also likely to continue to have effects even when they return to their country of origin. Where access to victims is possible in destination countries – possibly through a shelter or advocacy group or even while they are still involved in the sex industry – a further set of difficulties emerges. In most situations the women and children will originate from a range of countries, and many will not speak the local language well. This means relying on interpreters which creates two problems for researchers: first, that the negotiation of trust now involves two strangers and, second, the danger of losing the richness and nuances of the experience in the translation process. Where women are still within the sex industry, their fear of both the traffickers and the local law enforcement and immigration officials is likely to affect what they will say, including whether they identify themselves as victims of trafficking.

There are substantial ethical questions for researchers to negotiate here, and all should subscribe to, and take account of, a set of ethical guidelines in their work. In whatever context research interviews with trafficked women or children take place, researchers need to bear in mind the fear and understandable reticence, combined with the stigma that attaches to involvement in prostitution, alongside the traumatic experience many of the women have been subjected to. In addition, the cultures many of the women grew up in discourage open discussions of sex and sexuality, and this injunction is even stronger when talking with strangers. Therefore, interviewing victims of trafficking is extremely complex and requires alertness to what is and what is not said/discussed. There is some indication that spending time building relationships and trust means that there is a greater possibility of women revealing details of their experiences, as well as the meaning and the consequences it has had for them. In one study (Caouette and Saito, 1999) where the researchers had spent weeks in Thai villages, it was only towards the end of their stay and in informal contexts, that some women revealed the extent of their victimization and the fact that they presented a "front" to their community, since nobody wanted to either know or understand the damage that they had sustained.

These issues mean that researchers should be careful about the claims they make, especially if they are based on single interviews. It is likely that much

remains undisclosed, especially with respect to the extent of abuse, violence and sexual exploitation. It is possible to explore this in research by asking questions such as: “Is it difficult to talk about your experiences?” and ”Are there things that you don’t feel able/comfortable talking about?”. Showing awareness in this way might prompt further disclosures, but even where this is not the case it will provide indications of whether there are matters women choose not to reveal.

Unconducive contexts

Many research projects rely on getting access to traffickers and trafficked women in contexts that are not necessarily conducive to disclosure. For example, interviewing someone while in custody or detained at the border, is likely to affect what and how much that person is willing to say. Involvement in a return programme is a safer context than that of deportation. But none of these contexts is ideal from a research point of view, since individuals are constrained and influenced by the situation, affecting their decision as to what they are willing to divulge. Currently, however, there appear to be very few routes out of this dilemma; most studies that include trafficked women have contacted them in the context of detection in a destination country, law enforcement intervention, involvement with a support agency or within some form of return programme to their country of origin.

The importance of context also applies to interviews with state officials and other professionals where issues of collusion and corruption may be involved, and/or where institutional loyalties may prevent honest responses. Individuals may not feel secure enough to discuss everything they know, especially if those involved are known to carry out threats of reprisals and/or to have high-level connections. There may also be risks attached to exposing one’s organization to detailed public scrutiny, especially in contexts where the principles of democratic accountability are of fairly recent origin and/or where the organization is already on the defensive due to previous criticism. The risks involved for people of good conscience can sometimes be too great to justify providing researchers with more than basic information and conjecture. Here again it is important to pay attention to what is not being said and to the kinds of hints that may be given.

The salience of context represent significant challenges to researchers and points to the need to discover new ways of accessing participants, alongside

paying detailed attention to creating conditions that encourage disclosure and honesty. For example, some people might reveal more in an anonymous questionnaire than during a face-to-face interview.

Personal safety of researchers

The involvement of organized crime and the willingness of even small-scale traffickers to use violence in defence of their lucrative business, creates risks of a kind that are relatively rare in social research. These potential dangers often act as a deterrent to pursuing particular questions or information sources. Although there is no official evidence of researchers being threatened during projects investigating trafficking, women involved in a study of rape of Chinese women in Indonesia during the riots in the mid-1990s did have their lives threatened.[2]

A connected issue, albeit one which applies mainly to the quality and validity of data, is the question of involvement in trafficking by key informants. There are no obvious routes for ensuring that this is not the case, especially where researchers are working in unfamiliar locations and regions. Caouette and Saito (1999) describe a local woman who offered her house as the location for a focus group. It was only after accepting her offer and conducting the discussion that the researchers discovered this individual had been a "mama" (pimp) and broker in Japan (Ibid, p.20).

Extending what is possible

These factors have had a limiting effect on what it has been possible to achieve in trafficking research, affecting access to certain groups, what they may be willing to discuss or reveal and how to assess the validity of data. None of them is insurmountable, but trafficking – like other sensitive issues – demands creativity by researchers and a preparedness to acknowledge the limits of the data it has been possible to collect. Future developments in methodology will depend in part on researchers thinking seriously about these issues, experimenting with methods and approaches explicitly designed to counteract barriers to disclosure and discovery.

4. THE VEXED QUESTION OF DEFINITIONS AND LANGUAGE

Many policy documents and research reviews note that the lack of consensus on how to define trafficking continues to be a barrier to progress – both in addressing and studying the issue (see, for the most recent discussion, UNICEF et al., 2002).

One central concern has been to clearly differentiate between human smuggling and trafficking. However, although it is possible to do so in literature and in law, in reality the categories often overlap (IOM Bishkek, 2000; UNICEF et al., 2002). Persons placing themselves in the hands of smugglers surrender a degree of control over their fate, and for some this may result in their being trafficked into sexual exploitation. Indeed many women believe that the agreement they are entering into is to be smuggled in order to take up a legitimate employment offer. Applying the categories of "forced" and "free" prostitution to trafficking runs the risk of denying assistance to women who in fact choose to migrate to work in the sex industry, but who, nonetheless, are deceived and sexually exploited in a destination country (IOM Bishkek, 2000). Within the field of migration and trafficking more generally, there is also no consensus on how to refer to those who migrate in ways that contravene national laws and are facilitated by others for profit. Various terms are used, some of the most common are: alien smuggling, trafficking of aliens, illegal immigrant smuggling, human trafficking, trade in human beings (Salt and Hogarth, 2000: 11). Many researchers and advocates within the migration field prefer the more neutral terms of illegal migrants or undocumented workers. At the same time, these terms disguise the kinds of exploitation that much organized smuggling and trafficking involves. As many of the reflective pieces in the special issue of *International Migration* on trafficking (IOM 2000, 38(3)) make clear, the boundaries between help, facilitation, smuggling, trafficking and exploitation are not as clear as many conceptualizations imply.

The "sexual exploitation" element of trafficking can also be a narrower or wider concept. Much commentary limits it to prostitution; but it ought to extend to pornography and other sex industry activities, such as live sex shows, peep shows, stripping and lap dancing. While much of the western sex industry has expanded into these other areas, little current work explores the extent to which trafficked women and girls are exploited within these aspects of the sex market.

Debating definitions of trafficking for sexual exploitation has consumed countless hours during international policy discussions, and was not conducive

to reaching endorsement of mutually agreed actions. Divergent definitions will remain a stumbling block, despite the fairly broad definition within the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, adopted by the UN General Assembly, and subsequently widely signed in Palermo in late 2000 (see Box below). Even signatories to the protocol are likely to have different definitions in their national laws, and it is these that are used in the construction of official data. It is even less likely that research participants, trafficked women and children in particular, will be aware of an agreed international definition and they are, therefore, likely to define trafficking in a variety of ways that diverge both from the Palermo definition and various national laws.[3] While this is a problem in practice, research and policy need not rely on "self-definitions", especially since the tendency for women to minimize their situation and not define themselves as victims is certainly not limited to trafficking. Extensive literature documents this process in respect of rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment (see, for example, Kelly, 1987; Koss and Harvey, 1991). The question of which definition is being used and by whom, will however continue to be a matter that research has to address.

Definition of trafficking in human beings from the UN Optional Protocol, 2000

For the purpose of this protocol:

(a) "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, or 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 purposes of sexual exploitation.

Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution or others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

(b) The consent of the victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in paragraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used.

The Palermo definition provides an overarching concept that includes both the explicit use of force and coercion and the recognition that other forms of deception and human rights abuses (debt bondage, deprivation of liberty and

control over one's labour and earnings) can be, and often are, involved in trafficking for sexual exploitation. Such a consensus will not, however, resolve the debate about "forced" and "free" prostitution in the near future (see also, Jeffreys, 1997; Kelly and Regan, 2000a; Lim, 1998; O'Connell Davidson, 2000). At one level, this may seem to be no more than an abstract debate, but the anomalies such positions create in practice range from over-inclusive definitions that encompass all foreign women involved in prostitution to the extremely restrictive, which exclude anyone where there is no evidence of "force" at the recruitment stage (see also, UNICEF et al., 2002: 3). Internal trafficking, which is included in the Optional Protocol definition, has also been largely ignored, but there are mounting indications that it has strong links with cross-border trade in women (Hughes, 2000; UNICEF et al., 2002).

The Palermo definition does not obviate the need to document the variety of ways in which trafficking in women takes place – its inclusiveness is welcome at the policy level, but in research it may be useful to explore variations as well as similarities. For example, Derks (1997) distinguishes between voluntary, bonded and involuntary prostitution, and between abusive recruitment and abusive working and living conditions (p.35).

Exploring disagreements on definitions is not just an academic sophistry about the difficulties and even impossibility of comparing available data. Definitions of trafficking affect access to support, protection and redress, as well as the kinds of activities that will be characterized as criminal acts – areas which are of major concerns in both the Optional Protocol and policy documents from the European Commission and Council of Europe. For example, it appears that only a small minority of women detected in bar raids identify themselves as having been trafficked and/or request support (see, for example, UNICEF, 2002: 5), and that little attempt is made by law enforcement officials to probe deeper into the matter. Moreover, where only "forced" prostitution is considered illegal under national laws, it is usually very difficult to establish this in court (Hughes, 2000).

A note on the use of language

Whatever the concept applied, consistency and care in its use is of the utmost importance. The relevant literature reveals many examples of inconsistent use of language and concepts, which fail to appropriately reflect the research data. For example, most research projects based on data from trafficked women find that the majority were either forcibly or deceptively recruited in the coun-

try of origin, as well as being given little, if any, of the money paid for their sexual services. It is, therefore, entirely inappropriate to refer to them as "commercial sex workers". Further confusion appears when sentences such as, e.g., "Ninety percent of foreign migrant sex workers in the Balkan countries are victims of trafficking" (UNICEF et al., 2002) are used, since they confuse migration, trafficking and sexual exploitation. The term "migrant sex worker" has been used to refer to women who choose to migrate, possibly with the help of smugglers, and who are neither controlled nor held in situations of debt bondage (see Kempadoo and Doezema, 1998). It is inaccurate and misleading, therefore, to use the same term for women who are victims of trafficking. The fact that some who choose to migrate to work in a foreign sex industry, subsequently find themselves in situations of sexual exploitation, needs to be addressed too, and they should also be referred to as trafficked or sexually exploited women/workers.

The question of what language to use when referring to women and children who have been trafficked is not unproblematic. Much effort has gone into establishing an understanding of them as "victims" – both in terms of the violent crimes such as rape and assault they have endured, and the range of human rights violations that sexual exploitation involves. But, within the field of violence against women, the term victim has been widely criticized (see, for example, Kelly 1987), since it implies passivity and denies agency. Many NGOs and researchers prefer the term "survivor". This concept is also limited, since not all women do survive – too many are killed by their abusers/exploiters. It may be too soon to introduce the term survivor into work on trafficking, where many are still unwilling to accord the status of victim to those who are sexually exploited (UNICEF et al., 2002) – although some NGOs are making this transition.

A slightly less complex issue is how to refer to the perpetrators of such crimes. Clearly those who recruit, deceive and transport women can be termed "traffickers", but is this the appropriate term for those who buy women in destination countries, or who control and profit from prostituting them? In this paper, where the latter have not been directly involved in the transport of the woman, they are referred to as "exploiters", and the terms "customers" or "clients" are used for those who purchase sex. Collectively these groups constitute the demand side of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

There are additional problems of language that are seldom addressed. The most serious aspect is that in many languages the term "trafficking" is unknown and most translations of it refer to a form of trade, with no sense conveyed of human rights abuses, or of victimization. In a number of countries there are

local words for traffickers that position them as providers of a desired service. Such terms, when translated directly into English, appear as "protector" and "tutor". While it is part of a research undertaking to document such local language use, and even to seek to explore and explain it, such terms should not be used without comment in research reports, since the "protectors" are, in fact, often the same individuals who rape and prostitute women and girls.

The complexities of definition and language continue to make both the research and the providing of services less than straightforward. There are no simple answers to the fact that the realities of lived experiences always challenge the categories and concepts that are supposed to describe and contain it. What can be done, however, is for researchers and commentators to be more attentive to how they, and others, use language, and to the choices that are made in respect of concepts and for the terminology used to be clearly outlined and explained in published texts.

5. CURRENT BASELINE DATA

Given the lack of any agreement on how to estimate the global or regional scale of trafficking, all figures remain within the realm of "guesstimates". The latest and most frequently cited data come from the US Department of State (2002) which suggest that 700,000 women and children are trafficked each a year across the globe. Figures for trafficking within and into Europe are even more scarce. IOM suggested that some 300,000 women a year may be affected (IOM, 1998), while a more recent European Commission publication puts the figure at 120,000 (European Commission, 2001). Such figures are seldom accompanied by detailed explanations of how they were arrived at, nor is it clear whether they refer only to individuals or include instances of re-trafficking.

In the late 1990s a number of commentaries suggested that trafficking in women had exceeded the profits derived from drugs and arms smuggling. More recently the consensus position appears to be that it represents the third largest source of profit to organized crime, after drugs and arms (Congressional Research Service, 2002: 1). However, here again questions arise as to what such calculations actually include, since at the sex industry end many continue to make tax-free profits, since women and children are traded among exploiters.

In terms of the global trafficking system, Asia is still considered the most common source region, with considerable intra-regional flows. There is also evidence that trafficking within Europe is expanding significantly, with the majority of women and children originating from the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia (Congressional Research Service, 2002: 2). Within these broader patterns, there is also evidence of countries with even greater problems; for example, the Ukrainian Ministry of Interior estimates that 400,000 women have been trafficked out of the country in the past decade (Hughes, 2000). The most recent overview of the south-eastern European (SEE) region (UNICEF et al., 2002) concludes that 90 per cent of non-nationals in the Balkans sex industries have been trafficked.

Other estimates refer to foreign women within sex industries, offering little indication as to the proportions of those who have been trafficked. In the mid-1990s there were an estimated 15,000 Eastern European women active in the German sex industry (Global Survival Network, 1997) and the number of foreign women in the Danish sex industry is reported to have increased ten-fold since 1989 (Kvinnoforum, 2002).

The scale of the divergence between official and NGO estimates is revealed in the Greek figures: the Ministry for Public Order estimates that there are 3,000 to 5,000 trafficked women and children in the country, which stands in stark contrast to the 60,000 reported by the Research Centre for Women's Affairs.[4]

While the flow of trafficking tended to be from poorer to richer countries, especially those with more developed sex industries, later sections of this study will demonstrate that these patterns have become more complex and that one outcome of trafficking is the emergence or growth of sex industries in countries of both origin and transit.

Official statistics

Despite repeated calls from international bodies, including the EU, most countries have still not established any systems for the monitoring of trafficking, and data on detected cases remain hidden in prostitution and immigration offence files. One advantage related to specific trafficking offences is that they facilitate the systematic tracking of detection and prosecutions.

However, it is always necessary to interpret official statistics and to understand the context in which they were created. A problem that applies across the field of illegal migration generally, is the difficulty of assessing how far the yearly variations in official figures reflect changes in detection or in the scale of the problem (Salt and Hogarth, 2000). One clear example here is presented in the IOM overview of the Balkans region (IOM, 2001). Germany is one of the few countries to maintain a centralized documentation system of detected victims. The figures taken alone suggest a 47 per cent drop between 1995 and 1999 (Ibid, p.4), but background information revealed a decline in the number of police investigations over the same time period.

Moreover, depending on the source of data, different patterns emerge. This is clearly illustrated by three diagrams in IOM's study of the Balkans (2001: 12-13), where data from European NGOs, official sources and IOM's own programmes are compared. Not only are the baseline figures different, but the relative flows from countries of origin vary across each set of data.

That being said, however, there are a number of indicators that could be monitored, which would both point to areas for policy development and allow their impact to be traced. Examples here include visa applications and work

permits. In one year for Georgia 39,000 visas were issued of which 31,200 (80%) were for women (Lokshina and Bortel, 2001). In several SEE countries, where levels of unemployment for women are running at more than 50 per cent and work permits are only supposed to be provided where there are no nationals with the required skills or expertise, large numbers are issued for "entertainers" and "dancers" (UNICEF et al., 2002). Other tracking systems could look for significant changes in applications for marriage licences in respect of foreign nationals, and, in particular, trace men who are serial sponsors (Global Survival Network, 1997). Sharp increases in asylum applications from unaccompanied minors, who subsequently disappear, are also an acknowledged indicator of organized trafficking.

There is a clear need for baseline data to be collected in the same format across Europe. This could initially cover a small number of fields and be expanded once collection and reporting have been embedded at national and regional levels. At a minimum, these would comprise the number of detected trafficking cases; the numbers of victims and perpetrators involved, their ages, sex and nationalities; the outcomes for victims (numbers of deportations, voluntary returns, temporary residence permits, and those provided with shelter and other forms of assistance); the outcomes of investigations (arrests, charges, prosecutions, convictions and sentences).

A note on children

Several studies funded by the European Union's STOP programme have documented trafficking in children for sexual exploitation. One of the most recent (Wolthius and Blaak, 2001) focused on trafficking to Belgium, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK. In each case evidence was found of trafficking in minors, with the majority of cases involving girls aged 15 to 18. In many cases these young women had been raped and exploited prior to arriving in destination countries. However, the even more clandestine operations of trafficking in minors make strong data difficult to find.

The current knowledge base points to a significant problem in relation to certain countries and regions, for example West Africa (Somerset, 2001; Kelly and Regan, 2000a, 2000b), Albania (Renton, 2001) and Moldova (UNICEF et al., 2002). There is very little evidence that a separate "market" exists for children, or of any significant trafficking of boys for sexual exploitation (UNICEF et al., 2002).[5] Rather the pattern indicates that young women are integrated into

mainstream sex markets (see O'Connell-Davidson, 2000, for a similar finding with respect to sex tourism), and current estimates suggest that 10-30 per cent of trafficked females are minors.

Several additional mechanisms are used in the trafficking of girls and young women, especially the (ab)use of asylum channels for unaccompanied minors (Kelly and Regan, 2000b; Somerset, 2001). A particular group of children considered the most vulnerable in SEE – institutionalized children – echoes findings in Western Europe on early routes into local prostitution (Kelly and Regan, 2000b). With these caveats in mind, in the following sections children will not be addressed specifically, unless research evidence indicates that there are different patterns involved, or specific support needs and policy responses are indicated.

6. THE CAUSES OF TRAFFICKING

In order to gain a better understanding of trafficking, it needs to be investigated from a variety of vantage points. Thus, it has been variously presented as involving a:

- Moral issue;
- Criminal issue;
- Migration issue;
- Human rights issue;
- Public order issue;
- Labour issue;
- Gender issue.

Each of these contributes an element to a better and comprehensive understanding of the issues involved. At the same time, the specificity of trafficking for sexual exploitation requires that it be analysed within the context of the globalization of the sex industry and the impact economic globalization, economic transition and regional conflicts have had on women's lives. Today, the sex industry is organized transnationally, with considerable expansion, diversification and flexibility at the national and local level. Sex markets have few borders and limits in the twenty-first century (Cordero and Facio, 2001).

In traditional migration studies women have been considered "dependent" or "secondary" migrants, accompanying or following their male family members. This perspective needs to be revised, since "primary" migration by women is definitely on the increase, as are the areas of economic activity in which women account for the majority of migrant workers, for example domestic service.

The one area in trafficking research where there is substantial agreement concerns the causes of trafficking. Most studies and commentaries include some combination of the following factors:

- Globalization of transport, markets and labour;
- Poverty;
- Women's socio-economic inequality;
- Economic transition;
- Economic and social dislocation as a result of conflict.

Some also include demand, since the factors referred to above mainly relate to supply. It remains an open question whether there is any developed sex industry which is not implicated in increasing demand for trafficked women.

Less sophisticated analyses tend to highlight the issue of poverty, which is seen to propel women into accepting spurious offers of employment. Even at the supply level, this is an oversimplification. The feminization of poverty in, and migration from, south-eastern Europe is the outcome not just of poverty, but of increasing gender inequality and sex discrimination in the countries undergoing transition and/or post-conflict reconstruction. Recent history suggests that women's economic and social position is undermined in unregulated and illicit markets, as power and control in the legitimate and illegitimate sectors is increasingly concentrated in male hands. There is also some evidence that traffickers target countries, regions and social groups, where a patriarchal tradition is strongest (UNICEF, 2002).[6] Moreover, in a situation where daily survival remains precarious, yet images of the West are projected on every street corner, it is not just naiveté that drives many women and girls to seek a better life elsewhere. The lure of the West, however, is not limited to economics, but, especially for some young women, includes the promise of personal freedom. Data on the backgrounds of women and girls involved in trafficking confirms that gender inequality underpins and sustains trafficking. Many of them are eager to escape from families or living conditions characterized by domestic violence and sexual abuse. Such interconnections emphasize the responsibility of both governments and donor countries to place gender equality high on their European and international agendas.

Given broad general agreement on the causes of trafficking, more intricate questions still remain unanswered and deserving of attention such as, how and why particular countries and regions within them, become centres for trafficking. There are many countries in the throes of poverty and economic transitions, yet not all become epicentres for trafficking. For that to happen, at least one necessary condition has to be fulfilled, namely that the organizers – both traffickers and exploiters – actually target a particular area. What motivates such targeting remains vague, although there may be correlates with indexes of gender inequality. The high numbers of young women trafficked from Moldova, for example, may be closely related to the fact that, according to World Bank estimates, 55 per cent of the population lives below the national poverty line. In BiH, 62 per cent of women in the Republika Serbska and 71 per cent in the Serbian Federation were unemployed in 1998, and women in employment earned between 20 per cent and 50 per cent less than men (Radovanovic and Kartusch, 2001).

Another element which has to be considered in the attempt to understand the risks some women are willing to take are the working conditions women have to endure. There is increasing evidence that here, too, they are sexualized. Where employment is at a premium, male employers can expect/demand sexual services from women already at the selection stage and subsequently to keep their jobs. Sexual harassment, referred to as "sexual terror" in Russia, is so endemic that some job adverts are explicit about what is expected (Global Survival Network, 1997; Hughes, 2002).

Furthermore, this situation of "crisis of economic security" (ILO, 2002) is closely correlated with the decrease of legal migration options for women. In fact, possibilities to migrate for employment tend to disproportionately favour men. It is extremely ironic that the employment opportunities which serve as the basis for the deceptive recruitment offers actually exist. What women lack are the knowledge and legal routes to access them; it is in this context that many turn to alternative and spurious means to pursue their quest for better prospects – with the bitter results that are the subject of this review.

The layers of connections between trafficking and gender inequality point to the need for more dialogue and cross-fertilization between research on trafficking, on the one hand, and gender/feminist studies on the other. Of particular interest here is the uneven progress within Europe (and also globally) where trafficking flows are from regions where women's political and socio-economic position has declined and patriarchal traditions remain entrenched, to those with a higher degree of formal gender equality.

7. THE ORGANIZATION OF TRAFFICKING: FLOWS, ROUTES AND RECRUITMENT

The increase in trafficking in Europe over the last decade includes many European countries becoming major sources for trafficked women and girls and centres of trafficking networks. This is not to ignore the importance of trafficking from Asia, Africa and South America, but it stresses that the issue of both supply and demand is now firmly located within Europe. In principle, such a situation should have contributed to the strengthening of law enforcement mechanisms, yet, as later sections will demonstrate, this has not happened.

Trafficking flows within and to Europe show patterns of continuity and change, as sex markets expand in some areas and routes adapt to reinforced controls and law enforcement activities and political circumstances. Some flows reflect nothing more than the geographical proximity of source and destination countries: Scandinavian countries are the focus for traffic from the Baltic countries (Moustgaard, 2002);[7] Greece and Italy from the Balkans (IOM, 2001). Other flows are more far-reaching. For example, Russian women are known to have been trafficked into over 40 countries (Hughes, 2002), and it is estimated that over two-thirds (70%) of trafficked women from former Soviet countries end up in Western Europe, primarily in Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK. The remaining third are taken to the Middle East, the Far East and North America (Hughes, 2000). Women from Central Asian republics are usually trafficked to the Middle East (the United Arab Emirates seem the most common destination), Russia and Turkey (IOM Tajikistan, 2001; IOM Yerevan, 2001).

Western Europe is also a destination for women and girls from Africa (primarily from Ghana, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria and Sierra Leone), Latin America (Brazil, Colombia and the Dominican Republic) and South-East Asia (primarily from the Philippines and Thailand). Spain appears to be on the way to becoming a new target country (Sipaviciene, 2002), although trafficking from Spanish-speaking South American countries has already been previously documented. Cyprus and Turkey are emerging as further European destination and transit countries (Hughes, 2002).

Available data nevertheless needs to be treated with some caution as some findings may reflect instances of detection rather than the actual proportion of trafficked women from various countries of origin. For example, in both Belgium and Italy the largest number of detected women were from Nigeria (IOM,

2001). While this may reflect actual flows of trafficked women, it is also possible that West African women are simply the most easily identifiable by law enforcement authorities and/or that they are specifically targeted by the police.

Mapping trafficking routes

The mapping of routes has been most carefully documented with respect to south-eastern Europe (IOM, 2001; UNICEF et al., 2002). IOM's survey (2001: 30) showed that NGOs had more information than officials and that the mapping of flows looked different depending on the data source used (three are compared – official responses, knowledge derived from NGOs and from trafficked women involved in return programmes). Within the region women are usually taken across borders in groups, using a combination of legal and illegal channels. More documentation is becoming available of the extent to which women are being "sold on" as they are transferred across various countries and regions, including the existence of "markets", especially near the borders between BiH, Croatia and the FRY (Radovanovic and Kartusch, 2001).

Preferred routes vary depending on visa requirements, the length and porosity of borders, the links among various trafficking networks and the effectiveness of local law enforcement efforts. For example, a recent Croatian study found that following enhanced law enforcement procedures, the previous entry route through Hungary shifted to BiH. This change was also associated with a widening of the geographical range of the Croatian sex market from the capital into tourist areas and military bases (Stulhofer and Raboteg-Saric, 2002).

The documented growth of the sex industry in south-eastern Europe (UNICEF et al., 2002) also raises serious questions about the distinctions between origin, transit and destination countries. The transitions from being a source and/or transit country to a country of destination for trafficking, point to policy issues of critical importance that cannot currently be answered through existing research. Does a country's involvement in trafficking at any level act as a catalyst in the development or extension of local sex industries? If this is the case, and several of the studies consulted for this review suggest it is, then it becomes an urgent issue to identify the mechanisms involved and how they might be interrupted. At least two possible mechanisms can be identified in the details of recent research. One is the deliberate use of transit locations for the purpose of "breaking in" the women, both in regard to their sexual exploitation and their own powerlessness. The other involves smaller operators and middlemen who

choose to further sexually exploit women and girls *en route*, thus increasing their financial gain from the trafficking process. Another possibility may be the existence of sex industry entrepreneurs whose role it is to develop new locations and markets.

The situation in post-conflict contexts also deserves further analysis. There has been a particular focus on Kosovo and BiH, where the presence of the international community and peace-keeping forces has not only failed to prevent trafficking but, according to some, has actually exacerbated the process (Radovanovic and Kartusch, 2001). In both locations ample legal bases existed for addressing trafficking, but the problem has nevertheless continued to expand (op. cit.). It is now widely accepted that significant sex industries have emerged in both Kosovo and BiH (IOM, 2001; UNICEF et al., 2002). In many discussions this is referred to as a consequence of the international presence, and especially that of peace-keeping forces. But why should this be so? Why is it not the case that the presence of large numbers of soldiers and human rights observers and advisors acts as a form of prevention instead? Why is it accepted as "common sense" that the presence of large numbers of men, separated from their female companions, results in an increase in local prostitution? This is not the whole story, however, since the highest estimate of demand by internationals accounts for 50 per cent of the sex trade, and many observers would put it closer to 30 per cent. What then, are the factors that explain the emergence of, or increase in local demand? Is it simply a response to available supply, or does trafficking play a significant role in the actual creation and further expansion of sex markets?

Routes into trafficking for women and girls

One of the recurring debates in the literature is the extent to which women either are or are not aware of the fact that they are bound for the sex industry. Those who maintain that many, even the majority, of the women are aware of this (see, for example, the collection edited by Kempadoo and Doezema, 1998) argue that the involvement of traffickers (and, if this were to reflect reality, the accurate term would be smugglers) is the result of the limited possibilities available for legal migration, especially into Western Europe. This argument tends to underplay sexual exploitation and limits its scope to the conditions of work and bonded labour in destination countries. This argument is often used to support the opinion that a combination of legalizing prostitution and expanding legal migration channels would resolve the trafficking problem.

However, all of the recently published research studies and overviews involving European countries tell a different story. The vast majority of women interviewed in IOM return projects in four countries (IOM Kosovo, 2001; IOM Tajikistan, 2001; IOM Yerevan, 2001; IOM Bishkek, 2000), and research by an Albanian NGO (Koci, 2000), reported that they were deceived about the work they would be expected to perform, or that they were recruited in other illegal, coercive or deceptive ways. These specific findings are supported by the most recent estimate (UNICEF et al., 2002) that 90 per cent of non-national women active in the sex industries of south-eastern Europe were victims of trafficking.

Research that seeks to explore risk and vulnerability factors further supports this conclusion; with a number of studies finding considerable interest among young women to migrate for employment, but with hardly any viewing work in the sex industry as an acceptable option. For example, an IOM study in the Ukraine based on a sample of 1,189 young women found that while 40 per cent expressed a strong interest in working abroad, none considered that prostitution was an acceptable form of employment. In a similar study undertaken by an NGO in St Petersburg; high proportions of women reported a desire to move abroad and to find a husband, but none wanted to work in the sex industry and only 2 per cent would have been willing to accept any job offer (Hughes, 2002: 37).

While not disputing that some women may choose to migrate to work in Western European sex industries, the construction of concepts such as "sex migrants" and "foreign migrant sex workers" appears to have little basis in existing research. Moreover, while the desire for a better life and dreams of making it in the West are entirely understandable, few people know how to migrate illegally without assistance, and it is an open question as to how women from one side of Europe are able to find their way into prostitution at the other, with no third-party facilitation, not to mention recruitment in between. A number of researchers also point out that decisions to migrate into other sex industries are made under conditions where there are few, if any, alternatives: it has been termed a "forced/coerced willingness" (CVME, 2001: 17). Whether women are voluntarily migrating does not negate the fact that, for some, their human rights are violated in destination countries through the manner in which they are prostituted and controlled, as the next section will demonstrate.

Recruitment methods

There are at least six common patterns of recruitment:

- Complete coercion through abduction or kidnapping;
- Being sold either by family members or a "boyfriend" or trafficker;
- Deception through offers of employment with no sex industry connotations;
- Deception through offers of marriage;
- Deception through offers of employment in entertainment, dancing etc.;
- Deception regarding the conditions in which women will undertake prostitution.

Women who are recruited through deceptive methods are led to believe that they can travel to a western country and earn large amounts of money in a short space of time, or establish a different life through marriage. Women believe that such offers represent the only possibility for them and their families to escape from poverty and despair (Koenig, 1997; IOM, 1999).

How women are recruited will depend on the trafficker and the nature of their organization and the women's social status. Large-scale organizations can present a semi-legal front, possibly even using newspaper advertising, whereas smaller-scale groups will use more informal methods (De Ruyer and Van Impe, 2001).

The most common route seems to be deceptive job offers, ranging from domestic work and child care to work as dancers, made in person or through advertisements and employment agencies (UNICEF et al., 2002), although marriage agencies, model agencies and travel agencies are also implicated (De Ruyer and Van Impe, 2001). There is widespread consensus that forced recruitment through practices such as kidnapping is "rare" (see, for example, UNICEF et al., 2002: 7). However, research suggests that about 10 per cent of detected women were kidnapped and that there are even higher rates in some countries and areas: for example an IOM/ICMC study of 125 women detected in Albania, originating mainly from Moldova and the Ukraine, put the rate at 18 per cent, and Daniel Renton (2001) estimates that 35 per cent of minors trafficked from Albania were kidnapped. The scale of forcible recruitment also depends on how "force" is defined – does it apply only to the initial contact with traffickers, or does it also encompass being sold (against one's will and/or without prior knowledge) to others at subsequent points? If the latter is included, then the numbers for whom "force" is involved would increase significantly. In a sample

of 200 women interviewed by IOM Kosovo (2001) many reported that they had been re-sold between three and six times; IOM Albania also report "re-sales", with the price and, in consequence, the women's debt, increasing each time.

Other recruitment methods documented in the literature include spurious offers of marriage by eligible young men. This method is especially prevalent in Albania and deception through international marriage agencies is most documented in Russia (Hughes, 2001) and also Norway and Denmark (Moustgaard, 2002). Recent Swiss research (Le Breton and Fiechter, 2001) shows that trafficked women were mainly recruited through false offers of marriage and recruitment for domestic work. More recent discoveries in Denmark have documented sex industry exploiters in destination countries directly recruiting via the Internet, using both deceptive job offers and open invitations to work in the sex industry (Moustgaard, 2002). It is unclear how women responding to such offers would make the journeys involved.

Some commentaries suggest that it is particular groups of women and girls who are targeted, and that prevention efforts should focus on these "vulnerable groups". However, there are different findings regarding the social background of women targeted for recruitment, with some studies referring mainly to women from urban areas, while others emphasize a rural background and low levels of education. Some evidence also points to the recruitment among ethnic minorities, especially Roma girls (UNICEF et al., 2002). Data from 200 women detected in Kosovo showed that they came from a range of backgrounds and circumstances (IOM Kosovo, 2001). The sample included women who were either well or poorly educated, married or single, with or without children. Of the 148 who had never worked abroad, 74 per cent had previously been employment and only 4 per cent had been involved in the entertainment/sex industry. Of the 61 women who had previously worked abroad almost two-thirds had worked in the sex industry. This figure highlights the potential scale of re-trafficking. There are also indications that Russian gangs trawl marriage agency data bases to target women for recruitment (Congressional Research Service, 2002: 4) and street children (Hughes, 2002). Recent publications have also noted the extent of cross-border trafficking of women who are already involved in local sex industries, especially those which are pimp-controlled and based on internal trafficking, for example, Bulgaria, Moldova and Romania (UNICEF et al., 2002: 8). In the last two years the importance of internal trafficking and its links to transnational trafficking, has been identified as a critical area for further investigation:

> We cannot and must not divorce the two. Trafficking into the sex industry feeds into existing or developing sex markets (Lokshina and Bortel, 2001: 73).

One research team argued that the easiest way to obtain women is to "buy" them on the open market (Radovanovic and Kartusch, 2001) and there is growing documentation available of markets emerging for this purpose, the most infamous being "Arizona" on the border between BIH, Croatia and the FRY.[8] There are at least three more in BiH alone (Ibid, p.12). Direct sales have also been documented, where girls and young women are delivered into the hands of traffickers by their parents or guardians.

While these various processes have been identified, including the frequent involvement of friends and acquaintances in making initial contacts, there are surprisingly few details about the process itself, the numbers of individuals involved or the range of fees recruiters receive.

The local organization of trafficking

The level of trafficking in any particular location will depend upon the scale of the sex industry concerned and the applicable legal framework. Lazos (CVME, 2001) explores the development in Greece, noting that though the scale was still small in the 1980s and most women came from Poland and the Philippines, this period involved testing (and developing) both market demand and the reaction from the state and the public. The discovery of a conducive context laid the foundation for growth in the 1990s, to the point where current estimates indicate that throughout the 1990s there were ten times more foreign women and children involved in the Greek sex industry than local women, most of whom had been trafficked. He concludes that trafficking had profound effects on the sex industry in Greece as it spread from Athens into other large cities and to villages; where it created new and expanded existing sex markets by boosting demand.

Border areas show particular concentrations of brothels/bars and so-called "safe houses", where trafficked women are held until they are taken across the borders (Radovanovic and Kartusch, 2001). Border regions between EU countries and the rest of Europe have also become sites for widespread highway prostitution, and a proportion of these women and girls will have been trafficked.

There is growing evidence of women being moved around brothels and bars within transit and destination countries (see, for example, UNICEF et al., 2002). The explanation for this tends to be that it occurs in response to demand and the desire for new faces. However, it could equally well be a control strategy, as it keeps women disoriented. It could also simply be related to the way traffickers and exploiters sell women onwards, especially when they have fulfilled the requirements of their initial "contract" – to service a fixed number of customers for "free" in order to pay off their transportation debts.

Globally, the sex industries are remarkably flexible, shifting their locations as well as their form and contents in response to technological change, market testing and the relative strength or weakness of law enforcement and monitoring. This makes effective intervention more complex, since poorly conceptualized actions may have the effect of merely diverting an activity and even of making it less susceptible to any form of scrutiny. This in turn may mean that the possibilities of escape or the detection of entrapped women also diminish. One clear example of this process has been the increase in bar raids in Kosovo, which resulted in diverting the activity to private flats instead (Corrin, 2000).

A new concept of "mobile prostitution" has been coined to describe the organized movement of groups of women across borders for short periods of time – from week-ends to a couple of weeks. This has been most evident between Russia, Finland and Norway (Hughes 2002; Kramvig and Stien, 2002). The extent to which this is either voluntary or involves trafficking has not been carefully documented.

8. SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The conditions in which trafficked women are sexually exploited differ, as does the severity of the violation of their human rights. In extreme cases women may lose their lives – at the hands of traffickers who dump those they are transporting into the sea when police are active in the area, or dispose of them in other ways when they are sick or uncooperative, or while they are actually involved in the sex industry.[9] The extent of the mistreatment of women often also depends on the manner of their recruitment, the itinerary followed, the indignities and abuse suffered *en route*, the kind of control exercised and the conditions to which they are subjected in the sex industry. Some women and girls report stories of unrelieved victimization, including being held in slave-like conditions, which results in extensive physical and psychological damage. Others report periods when they were well treated by their recruiters, who either seduced and/or protected them during their journey through Europe. For some others, mistreatment remained limited to a period of bonded labour in a destination country. Most accounts by trafficked women are situated somewhere between the extremes. It is important for researchers and those offering assistance to trafficked women to bear in mind that many women choose not to reveal their most distressing and degrading experiences until they feel safe and that they can trust the person they are talking with, as already indicated earlier in this paper. A similar process has been documented in a number of countries with respect to survivors of domestic violence and sexual abuse in childhood (see, for example, Kelly, 1987) and highlights the importance of creating time, space and conditions conducive to disclosure, and of never presuming that one has heard the whole story.

Previous sections have indicated the extent to which women and girls are abused and prostituted while in transit. At the point of destination the woman is transferred from the trafficker to the brothel owner/pimp with whom the traffickers are dealing. False papers will be taken back at this point, and the woman's passport will invariably be handed over to the person to whom she is now indebted, who has "paid" for her. It is at this point that the women who have been recruited under false pretences, and who had so far been spared physical and mental abuse by the traffickers, finally realize the full extent and the significance of their deception. It comes as a tremendous shock to see that the promised job does not exist and that they owe thousands of euros, which they will be required to reimburse within three months. Their virtual confinement, the loss of personal papers and the lack of any money for three months is a terrible blow. There are women who understand that they will be required to

work for nothing during the first three months to pay off the debt, but then expect that they will subsequently be able to save much of the money they earn. For them, the deception comes later – when various additional fraudulent tactics ensure that they receive only minimal payment. Research evidence suggests that this group is fairly small, since the majority of women maintain that they were recruited under false pretences. If a woman protests against her treatment her family and friends will be threatened, and if this is not sufficient to produce compliance, then physical and sexual violence will be used.

There are status hierarchies within all sex industries, depending on the wealth of the men who buy, the appearance and health of women and girls, their countries of origin and levels of education – all these determine the contexts in which they will be made to work (O'Connell Davidson, 2000). There is a small top-end to the market and, while some trafficked women are located there, this is not so for the vast majority, who, instead, end up in small seedy bars and brothels and street/roadside locations. Frequently their accommodation consists of small and poorly furnished rooms, which up to ten women and girls have to share. The recent UNICEF report notes: "The living and working conditions in the Kosovo sex industry are abhorrent, exploitative and akin to slavery" (UNICEF et al., 2002: 96). At a minimum it is estimated that over 1,000 women and girls are involved at any one time in 85 recognized brothels. Less than a fifth (13.5%) receive regular pay, the majority of them are forced to have unprotected sex and only 10 per cent having any access to regular health care. While the majority of customers are local men, this needs to be understood within the context of a location where, before the conflict and subsequent international presence, the prostitution scene was extremely small (Ibid).

The reality for most trafficked women is that they "earn" considerable amounts of money, since they are expected to work longer hours and service more clients than local prostitutes, but that they are lucky if they receive any of it. In the system that operates in the UK (Kelly and Regan, 2000a) it is virtually impossible to earn enough to pay off the huge and mounting debt. In this context, most women are operating from call flats or brothels. Once they have paid off the original debt they are told that there are still charges, such as rental, payment for the maid, laundry – in fact, any number of expenses which they already owe and will continue to owe. Finally, they will also have to pay exorbitant amounts to cover their transport home once their visa expires.

A further method of exploitation has been uncovered in Croatia: once a woman has paid off her debt, the exploiters notify the police which results in her arrest

and removal (Stulhofer and Raboteg-Saric, 2002). This practice has also been reported in Israel (Hughes, 2000). Some women also suspect that their exploiters arranged with border guards for them to be searched when returning home. Whatever savings they had were confiscated, under the pretext that it was illegal to carry foreign currency into the country. In their opinion the money was then split between the customs officers and the exploiter (Stulhofer and Raboteg-Saric, 2002).

Forms of control

The forms of control employed depend on how the women were recruited, the extent to which they resist exploitation and the brutality of the network through which they were trafficked. Women and girls who were forcibly recruited have their spirits broken during transportation through rape and other humiliations. Such methods, including the prostitution during transit, may also be used against those who have been deceptively recruited. Of the 200 women assisted by IOM Kosovo between 2000 and 2001, more than half (55% for each) reported having been beaten and sexually abused (IOM Kosovo, 2001). Of the women surveyed by IOM Tajikistan (2001), 89 per cent reported having been sexually abused by pimps, 27 per cent that they were beaten and 95 per cent that they were forced to accept unsafe sex.

The two most effective methods of control used once the women have arrived in a destination country are threats, especially against family members left behind, and the recognition – reinforced by traffickers and exploiters – that their lack of legal status renders any appeals to outside intervention or assistance futile since this would result in being sent home. This uncertainty and vulnerability is further reinforced through the confiscation of the women's passports and personal papers. Many trafficked women also report having been isolated from others and subjected to surveillance and even being locked up in their rooms. What discussions of control methods seldom include are the psychological impacts of sexual exploitation: the shame and humiliation are a powerful silencing tool in themselves. But even more than this, the mechanisms women deploy to cope and survive to get through each hour or day, also increasingly constrain their space for action.

Examples of additional control strategies, related to specific cultural contexts, have also been documented. Girls from West Africa, for example, are often required to go through ritual processes prior to departure, which lead them

to believe that they may have to forfeit their lives if they do not comply with what they have been instructed to do (Kelly and Regan, 2000b).

Routes out of trafficking: escape and detection

Despite the extent of control they are subjected to, some women do manage to escape, and find their way to the police and/or support agencies. It may be presumed that others also escape but do not come to the attention of any official agency. The despair that some women feel can be seen in the fact that some risk (and sustain) physical injury through jumping out of windows (they are locked in rooms), rather than continue their existence. Others "escape" through establishing relationships with customers. However, these exit strategies appear to be less frequent than are detection by law enforcement authorities, or being returned/abandoned by their exploiters.[10]

The recent review of counter-trafficking in south-eastern Europe raises a number of complex issues with respect to responses to non-national women detected during bar raids, or other law enforcement activities (UNICEF et al., 2002). In order to be acknowledged as having been trafficked (i.e., someone whose human rights have been violated and who is entitled to protection and assistance) it is necessary that (a) the woman perceives herself as having been a victim of trafficking and (b) that the law enforcement authorities concur. Many women may not define themselves as having been trafficked either because their exploiters have instructed them not to, or because they do not see themselves as having been trafficked or they simply do not understand the significance of what they are being asked (interpreters are not always available to communicate the nuances of meaning). It also appears that law enforcement officers are operating with narrow definitions of trafficking (forcible recruitment) and/or using poorly constructed and limited questionnaires during the interviews.

The tendency by the police to focus on whether women are "voluntarily" involved rather than whether they are being sexually exploited has been documented in south-eastern and Western Europe (Moustgaard, 2002; UNICEF et al., 2002). Women's accounts include comments on police and KFOR troops coming to brothels and asking questions, but in the presence of owners and pimps (IOM Kosovo, 2001). In the Balkans there is no appropriate mechanism to identify women who still possess their documents as "trafficked" (UNICEF et al, 2002). As a result, only a minority of women detected are defined as

trafficked and referred for assistance. These findings suggest that there exists an urgent need to develop proper interview protocols that cover all aspects of the definition of trafficking in the Optional Protocol, and for training programmes for law enforcement authorities and aid agencies.

The consequences for women of being detected, but not designated as victims of trafficking, are very serious and range from being arrested and put into custody for some weeks to several months, to immediate deportation. One study from BiH (Radovanovic and Kartusch, 2001: 13) reports that most detected women are arrested, held in prison for periods of up to 60 days, then deported in such a way that results in their being re-trafficked. We are, thus, confronted with the bitter irony of women being prosecuted for prostitution and/or illegal migration offences, against a background where they have not been paid, were threatened and deprived of freedom of movement and, in the majority of cases, sexually and physically assaulted and abused.

Equally alarming is the fact that, even when women identify themselves as having been trafficked and report this to the police, the treatment they receive is not much better. In several countries this seems to make them ineligible for shelter, as the local shelters do not have 24-hour security (see, for example, UNICEF et al., 2002: 99)! In many instances, access to support services in south-eastern Europe appears to involve multiple interviews and passing a number of "entry" requirements. These would not be acceptable standards in most direct services addressing violence against women in Western Europe. These determination practices are becoming a source of tension between NGOs and international organizations (Ibid), and emphasize the need to develop standards of good practice for organizations that work directly with trafficked women.

Return and reintegration

The increase in the rate of detection of trafficked women and the fact that the majority express a desire to return to their countries of origin (IOM Kosovo, 2001; Kelly and Regan, 2000a) exposed the lack of appropriate programmes with which to facilitate their return in a safe and humane manner (as against deportation) and to provide re-integration assistance on arrival. The importance of such programmes is reinforced by accounts from women returned to the Kyrgyz Republic (IOM Bishkek, 2000), where 75 per cent reported extortion and exploitation by customs and law enforcement officers on their return. However, to date the evaluation of such programmes remains virtually non-existent

and practically nothing is known about either their effectiveness or their longer-term outcomes. An additional cause for concern is the need for special provisions regarding minors.

What is currently known about programmes being conducted in the region is addressed by UNICEF (2002) but the results are not very satisfactory in terms of the limited scale and content of current provision. The lack of evaluation data means that these judgements have to rely on very basic information and, in one instance, misleading statistics. The analysis proceeds from a calculation that 35 per cent of women detected in the countries under review are referred for assistance, including voluntary return programmes. It is claimed that of this group only one in five get any form of long-term support: i.e., 20 per cent receive both assisted return and re-integration. For some undisclosed reason, however, the percentage is calculated only as a proportion of all women detected, which produces a figure of 7 per cent.

Whatever the figures, it is quite obvious that only a small minority of women receive any assistance that might enable them to both deal with the legacies of their traumatic experience and to build some form of sustainable economic and social life for themselves in their home country. According to some estimates up to 5 per cent of women returned are again re-trafficked (UNICEF et al., 2002: 28), although one NGO in Romania claims a reintegration rate of 84 per cent. The lack of any effective re-integration programmes with which to address issues of housing, education, health,[11] employment, substance abuse, and trauma plays an important part in re-trafficking. Addressing such concerns should, therefore, be understood as a form of secondary prevention.

In assessing reintegration programmes, the nature of education and training on offer should also be investigated. The limited documentation available points to a tendency to offer only stereotypical gender-based skills, which do nothing to either equip women to compete in modernizing labour markets (Radovanovic and Kartusch, 2001) or to challenge the male monopoly in certain areas of the economy. The specific intervention needed is also still a subject of considerable debate, with some NGOs suggesting that all trafficked women need two to three years of intense individual therapy (UNICEF et al., 2002: 145), whereas others take a more open position on individual women's needs.

Beyond victim or survivor

Descriptions and images of women who have been trafficked tend to pos-ition them as either passive victims, or "migrant sex workers" who are exercising agency in seeking a way to earn a living.

> (…) victims of trafficking remain one-dimensional figures whose terrifying stories are condensed and simplified (Hughes, 2002: 33).

The ability of women to survive and overcome brutality, to re-build their sense of self and reconnect to others has been at the core of much feminist research on gender-based violence (see, for example, Herman, 1992; Kelly, 1987), and has underpinned the practices of women's support services based on feminist principles. To date, however, this perspective has not been that evident in the work on trafficking (for an exception, see Erez, 2001). Recent Swiss research, however, (Le Breton and Fiechter, 2001) has explored processes of both accommodation and resistance in relation to women's experiences of sexual exploitation and noted that trafficked women – like all human beings – exercise agency, but in conditions where their space for action is severely constrained. The researchers argue further that women's marginal legal status is a form of social exclusion that denies them redress. The other side of this complex reality is the fact that some women suffer the ultimate victimization of being killed: in 2000 the Italian Ministry of the Interior recorded 168 murders of foreign women involved in prostitution, most of whom came from either Nigeria or Albania.

Some NGOs that support trafficked women are also beginning to develop more complex frameworks to understand the impact of sexual exploitation from a perspective that emphasizes the importance of recognizing women's coping and survival strategies. A Bulgarian NGO argues that:

> For someone to survive in these circumstances, she needs to be able to mobilise all of her physical and emotional power. Women who manage to escape from the traffickers by themselves usually demonstrate more of this power (Kozhuharova, 2001).

As a result, women who arrive at support agencies are in this "mobilized" frame of mind – they are full of energy and want to take action. However:

> The safer the women feel, the more the reality overwhelms them and their enthusiasm quickly turns to hopelessness. Survivors of trafficking

> are alone because they have survived things they cannot share with others, they don't have any money or documents, they have a broken past and an uncertain future. They feel very confused. They fall into a deep emotional crisis (Ibid, p.145).

This analysis points not only to the importance of understanding trauma, but also to the presence of new dangers and challenges, even when women are in a safe context. The realization that no one wants them, even blames them and that they do not fit into the criteria for most mainstream social programmes, represents a new crisis that has to be managed. Building a positive sense of identity in the aftermath of sexual exploitation and within in national contexts where fatalism, rather than hopefulness is the prevailing social mindset, is a profound challenge. The one study (Caouette and Saito, 1999) based on extensive contacts with a group of women who did manage to return home, in this case to Thailand, found that women had a double and conflictual identity. In their community they were expected to be proud, whereas within their own minds and hearts and occasionally with each other, feelings of shame, disappointment and betrayal predominated. What women found most difficult to bear was the combination of the failure of their families to invest the money they had sent home in ways that could offer a sustainable future, and that no one understood, or wanted to understand, the damage inflicted by their subjection to sexual exploitation. This sensitive study reveals that safety is not only a matter of physical security, but also concerns identity and a sense of belonging – both of which have been damaged or destroyed by their sexual exploitation and abuse (Herman, 1992).

In order to be able to develop appropriate policies and practice in this field increased attention has to be paid internationally to the expertise and practical knowledge of NGOs and their experience of working with the traumatic legacy of repeated sexual violation. One key resource here should be those organizations which have successfully assisted women not only to leave prostitution, but also to reconstruct a different sense of self (Hedin and Mansson, 1998; Hotaling, 2001).

9. A FOCUS ON THE TRAFFICKERS AND EXPLOITERS

There is remarkably little in either the research or more general literature on traffickers (see also UNICEF et al., 2002: 5): what we do know is that certain actors may or may not be part of organized criminal networks and that the majority of traffickers and exploiters are male – although women are increasingly resorted to at the initial stage of recruitment (see, for example, Hughes, 2002). Regarding Latin America, Cordero and Facio (2001) point out ways in which formerly trafficked women become recruiters and even organizers themselves, but are seldom found at the higher levels of organized crime. They also note that women are deliberately used as recruiters as they are more likely to be trusted.

At the initial recruitment stage there are similarities with routes into local prostitution as those who initially approach (or on occasion sell) women and girls actually include family members or young men who encourage young women to believe they are their boyfriends (Barnardos, 1998; Kelly et al., 1995). What distinguishes trafficking is the large number of "professionals" who use their businesses as fronts for deceptive recruitment.

Reports compiled by law enforcement agencies tend to stress the extent to which organized crime groups are involved in both human smuggling and trafficking for sexual exploitation. While this is undoubtedly the case, there is a general lack of data indicating scale of such involvement. Nor are the links at various stages of the process elaborated. It is unclear, therefore, whether the recruiters and organizers at the early stages of the transit process are independent contractors who are paid set fees for each transaction, or if they are the lower links in the chain of organized networks. It is also often argued that trafficking networks carry different combinations of drugs, arms and people. Yet, published evidence is weak. Such shortcomings notwithstanding, the scale of organized crime and its involvement in the trafficking of human beings, is of acute concern to many European countries (IOM, 1999).

There are some indications that trafficking networks are taking over some areas of the sex industries in Western Europe (Congressional Research Service, 2001: 6; Hughes, 2002). The Russian mafia are now thought to be in control of much of the sex industry in Israel (Hughes, 2000). Moustgaard (2002) maintains that 60 per cent of the sex industry in Western Europe is now controlled by mafia-like networks. She also argues that medium-sized networks specialize in trading women from particular countries into brothels they own and run in other countries, while the smaller groups are made up of innumerable individuals

who organize movements across borders, maintain contact with others and buy and sell women between them. What remains unclear are the connections of smaller scale operators in countries of origin to the larger networks. For example, do successful and enterprising individuals expand their operations and move into organized crime, or are they absorbed into existing networks or alternatively perceived as a threat to the established groups as they seek to expand their activities and potential profits? Donna Hughes' (2002) study on the Russian Federation contains the most detailed information on traffickers, almost all of whom are thought to belong to organized criminal groups, referred to as *mafiya*. They range from small to large networks, with the recruiters and pimps at the base of the pyramid. Once a small group establishes itself in Russia, they will either be taken over or linked to larger groups through the payment of protection money. In 2000, the Russian Interior Ministry estimated there were 200 organized crime groups operating in 58 countries, many of which had links with similar networks. In Europe, particularly strong links exist with Hungarian, Czech and Polish groups.

While this information is a useful beginning, it should not be assumed that the Russian model applies to other countries. The dearth of detailed description and analyses of the organization of trafficking means that there is little knowledge on the potential levers that might disrupt and prevent growth at the bottom of the pyramid.

A Croatian study (Stulhofer and Raboteg-Saric, 2002) includes a useful typology of the layers of those involved in trafficking. The primary group are *Organizers,* who belong to organized criminal networks. They employ *Middlemen*, who work in particular localities and are responsible for recruitment, transportation and the sale of women – this group will contract out elements of these tasks to other individuals. *Managers* are sex-business operators, including pimps, and the owners of bars, night-clubs, hotels and brothels. Although some of these businesses may be legitimate, at some level there is knowledge of, and complicity with, the sex industry. *Aides* are individuals with positions in government, administration and law enforcement, who provide information and/or legal documents for money and may intervene in a number of other ways (such as dropping prosecutions, or "losing" evidence) to protect the interests of the other operational layers. At the lower levels, aides also include taxi drivers, waiters and others in the service sector who provide information and encouragement to clients.

A particular example of the role played by aides, is the role of the police in a number of European countries to issue work permits for foreign women as

"dancers" and "waitresses". Some researchers note that officers are aware that these permits are cover-ups for trafficking (Radovanovic and Kartusch, 2001). The role of pimps also deserves more attention. Some of the trafficking literature appears to suggest that there are several patterns operating concurrently, but the available data are still too vague to do more than raise questions. Are there various levels involved here too, with some exploiting a single, or a small number of women and others operating on a much larger scale? Are the small-time operators both pimps and traffickers, or is there a division of labour between recruitment and transportation? What are the various ways in which pimps link up with bar, night-club and hotel owners?

The typology outlined above provides a useful framework for future research. What is needed now are studies that apply these concepts to local contexts, in order to investigate the numbers of actors involved at the various levels, and the scale of financial benefit that each layer receives.

The scale of profits involved

Despite strong claims about the scale of profits to be gained from trafficking, very few studies have examined this issue in a systematic manner, or explained the different stages of monetary transactions involved. One estimate puts the profits made by sex business exploiters at 5 to 20 times the payment made for a woman (Hughes, 2000). A study undertaken in Greece estimates that pimps earn 8 to 10 times more from a trafficked woman than from exploiting a Greek national (Lazos, 2001: 10). In the UK, the usual arrangement for prostitution in private flats is that the woman hands over half her earnings to the owner/organizer. With trafficked women the owner/exploiter not only keeps nearly all of the woman's earnings, but is also able to increase the profit margin by requiring woman to accept more customers and engage in sexual acts that customers pay more for (Kelly and Regan, 2000a). One study from the Kyrgyz Republic (IOM Bishkek, 2000) made a serious attempt to calculate the amount of money and profits involved and concludes that women receive no more than 3-5 per cent of what they earn.

A further important point to be borne in mind is that such huge profits are seldom invested in the countries of origin, but are transferred out of the country and laundered into western economies (Hughes, 2000).

Operating with impunity – the failure of law enforcement

One of the key elements in a successful counter-trafficking strategy is the capacity and the willingness to enforce the law at each and every level – transportation, false documentation, sexual exploitation and corruption, and where applicable crimes such as rape, physical assault and deprivation of freedom. The limited information available on law enforcement suggests that, to date, efforts have not been effective. Actions which have been taken tend to target the lower and middle-level operators, often in the most obvious settings, such as the main transport routes, well-known bars and brothels and women involved in street prostitution.

A study in Albania, discovered that local people were aware of who the traffickers were, but their reputation for brutality together with the obvious disinclination of the police and the judicial system to enforce the law acted as a deterrent and discouraged official reporting (Renton, 2001). Such conditions nurture a sense of fatalism and powerlessness, which in turn means that the perpetrators of such crimes can act with impunity.

TABLE 1

PROSECUTIONS OF TRAFFICKING OFFENCES IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

Place	Number of traffickers arrested/charged	Cases pending	Cases prosecuted	Convictions
Albania	150	X	10	03
Bosnia and Herzegovina	unclear	04	(see note 1 below)	11
Bulgaria	x	x	14	x
Kosovo	62	15	unclear	unclear
Macedonia	147 (2)	47	80	unclear
Moldova	48	33	15	0
Montenegro	02	x	x	x
Romania	x	x	148	x
Serbia	50	1	0	0

Notes: All data from UNICEF (2002), relates to cases up to Sept 2001, unless otherwise indicated.

X = data not provided.

1. 174 trafficked women have given evidence before an investigative judge.
2. Between 1995-2001.

The abject failure to effectively prosecute traffickers is evident in the eight country reports within the extensive overview of south-eastern Europe (UNICEF et al., 2002). The number of cases where arrests have actually been made is small, but that of subsequent convictions is practically nil – often no more than 5 per cent of detected cases. In several countries the number of foreign women charged with prostitution offences are considerably higher than that of traffickers prosecuted. An attempt was made for this paper to compile this information into a table in order to compare the rates of arrests, prosecutions and convictions (see Table 1 below). However, the inconsistency of the data provided makes it hazardous to draw any firm conclusions, other than that convictions are extremely rare.

The report documents an operation conducted in BiH in 2001 during which 39 bars were raided and 177 foreign women detected, of whom only 13 were referred to IOM for support. Thirty-four foreign women (and eight Bosnians) were charged with prostitution offences and either fined or sentenced to 15 days in prison, followed by deportation. The charges against most of the bar owners were dropped, with only four being sentenced to between 20 and 40 days in prison.

UNICEF (Ibid) further document that sentences in proven cases often resulted in an immediate release and/or the closure of premises for a matter of a few days or weeks. Overall, there was a failure to confiscate property, the widely agreed strategy that would make trafficking and sexual exploitation less profitable. One much cited barrier to successful prosecution is the lack of protection for witnesses; across SEE the main witnesses (trafficked women) were seldom brought back for the legal hearing or their case. As a result, any evidence against the defendant is limited to the women's original statement, which is considered legally "weak". Quite why this should be so when often such depositions would have been made before a judge, is not explained. Nor is it made clear whether the absence of the key witness is because of lax law enforcement procedures, insufficient resources to cover the costs, or because the lack of witness protection makes women unwilling to face further risks. However, the conclusion that "prosecution is the weakest part of the whole anti-trafficking system in SEE" (Ibid) is surely correct and undoubtedly also applies in regard to much of Europe.

Unfortunately, to date, most attention in research and policy has been paid to laws and legal procedure and the barriers they present to effective law enforcement. However, in most countries there are laws that are pertinent and could be used for the prosecution of trafficking offences. Therefore, the most significant

barriers to prosecution appear to be the lack of resources and the low priority allocated to this area; the attitude of law enforcement officials, who frequently view women as responsible for their own fate and undeserving of either protection or redress and the failure to develop and share creative strategies aimed at ensuring proper investigation, the gathering of essential evidence (Kelly and Regan, 2000a).

The invisible issue of demand

If in Europe little serious research has been conducted on traffickers demand at the client level has received even less attention. Although some innovative work on prostitution use is being done, especially the work by Julia O' Connell Davidson and Jackie Taylor Sanchez (2001) on sex tourists and by several Scandinavian social scientists (Keeler and Jyrkinen, 1999; Mansson, 2001) on local demand, there is little that specifically addresses trafficking.

The issues to be investigated are whether and to what extent clients actually seek out women who do not speak their language, are vulnerable, exotic or all of these and whether, therefore, demand governs supply. Or, alternatively, whether the whole business is driven by traffickers and exploiters using whichever women are most profitable to them, and customers buy sex with whomever is "there"? Or is the truth somewhere in between? Are clients actually concerned or aware that the women may have been trafficked and, if so, does this influence their attitude and behaviour? The answers to such questions and the knowledge of the factors involved in driving or moderating prostitute use would play an important role in any concerted effort in destination countries to raise the general awareness and target prevention efforts at demand.

10. PREVENTION AND AWARENESS RAISING

Increasing efforts have been devoted to the raising of awareness and the prevention of trafficking, focused primarily on countries of origin, and young people. The major part of such work has been undertaken by IOM or La Strada, with both having conducted basic research prior to running campaigns. Most of these studies point to a high level of general awareness, and even of local cases (see, for example Stulhofer and Raboteg-Saric, 2002 for Croatia; Renton, 2001 for Albania). According to the IOM study on Lithuania (2001), 10 per cent of young Lithuanians had come across the issue of trafficking and almost 9 per cent were aware of direct attempts to recruit women. The primary sources of knowledge are the news media, highlighting their significance in counter trafficking efforts, and through friends and neighbours. However, much media reporting tends to be salacious, and uses language and imagery which constructs trafficked women in negative and unsympathetic ways.

Such studies could usefully extend their focus and investigate the extent to which the local population is actually implicated in trafficking, and the extent to which they conceal knowledge from law enforcement officials, as well as the impediments to extending counter-trafficking measures into communities.

Rather less attention has been paid to assessing the impacts of campaigns, or of their content and reach; for example, the distinction between a general raising of awareness, specifically addressing groups of women "at risk", or those few campaigns which have targeted potential clients. However, calls for evaluation (see, for example, UNICEF et al., 2002) underestimate both the expense and complexity of such research. Nor do they consider the general literature on educational and awareness raising which confirms that one-shot campaigns have a limited impact. Though there is some evidence that short-term benefits, such as encouraging people who are thinking of working abroad to contact helplines offering relevant advice (CVME, 2001; UNICEF et al., 2002) accrue, this effect is rapidly lost once the campaign ends.

Juliette Engel (2001) notes that too often European projects to raise awareness rely on the mass media instead of using more locally based public education methods, which are more commonly used in other regions, especially Asia. She also stresses the need for capacity building in this area with respect to both leadership and skills. Daniel Renton's study in Albania (2001) warns against unintended consequences which can result from careless implementation; in this instance parents in rural areas fearing abduction of their daughters, subsequently refused to send their adolescent girls to school.

Studies which have sought to identify "at risk" groups have used a variety of research methods, and many present limited sophistication in analysing the data – concluding little more than that groups at risk comprise young women who have fewer job options. However, a large study including almost 3,000 women and girls in the Ukraine (Kedova, 2001) identified a set of more helpful risk factors through discovering what made women more likely to accept an offer of employment abroad,[12] and that these factors were more commonly found in smaller towns. The study also confirmed a close correlation between living with domestic violence and the risk factors for young women. They conclude that public information efforts need to be targeted at young people in general, address the risk factors directly, and strong efforts made to ensure that messages and materials reach in smaller towns.

The linkage to domestic violence is not specifically addressed in the conclusions and much research and commentary skates over the many connections between trafficking and other forms of gender-based violence. However, some important questions are raised in respect of prevention, especially whether longer-term integrated campaigns on all forms of violence against women and children might be both more cost-effective and successful. At least one commentator (Erez, 2001) argues that the links between various forms of violence and the common thread of victim blame means that integrated campaigns constitute the best use of scarce resources, at the same time as strong and coherent messages are to be developed.

A further promising strategy to be employed in countries of origin is the recent practice in the Philippines of including the subject of international migration and development in the mainstream school curriculum (Maceda, 2001). As part of a comprehensive approach to combat the extent to which Philippine migrant workers are exploited, over 43,000 teachers have been trained to foster such awareness in their pupils. Information seminars held for intending migrant workers or those leaving the country to marry a foreigner have high attendance rates. A database through which serial marriage sponsors can be traced has also been introduced.

However, the most important aspect to be addressed through preventive measures remains the linkage between women's social and economic inequality and their vulnerability to trafficking. Indeed, the majority of trafficked women say that the most effective preventive strategy would be the creation of employment opportunities at home. Thus, the call by UNICEF et al. (2002) for an evaluation of the impact of economic reform and development as part and parcel of an effective counter-trafficking strategy is undoubtedly critical.

11. ASSESSING COUNTER-TRAFFICKING STRATEGIES

Research fulfils a number of roles, one of which is to offer an independent and critical assessment of current policy and practice. Given the increase in counter-trafficking activities, the requirements in European Commission communications and directives, the development of national law reforms and plans of action and regional work, such as that undertaken by the Stability Pact, the OSCE and the SECI Centre, the time is right for researchers to examine what differences, if any, can be documented.

One concern is that the widespread sense of urgency to curb trafficking will result in narrow and *ad hoc* measures that offer little more than short-term disruption (De Ruyer and Van Impe, 2001). This short section summarizes the limited assessments that have been made regarding national actions and the issues and questions that need to be further addressed at the regional/international levels.

National counter-trafficking efforts

Few studies have systematically examined trafficking for sexual exploitation from the perspective of practitioners, in order to explore both best practice alongside the barriers to effective counter-trafficking (for an exception, see Kelly and Regan, 2000a). A Croatian study (Stulhofer and Raboteg-Saric, 2002) included interviews with law enforcement officials and distinguished two groups: one that ignored and/or minimized the issue and those who recognized it as criminal offence. For the latter group three major obstacles to action were noted: corruption, inadequate resources and training, and the lack of clear policy directives. This study together with anecdotal evidence throughout the region suggests that corruption is very wide-spread at lower levels and reaches up to high-ranking officials: a case in point is Greece, where in 1999 a former head of the police and 15 others were charged with corruption (Hughes, 2002: 45).[13]

There is considerable agreement among a number of commentators on the barriers to effective counter-trafficking (see for example, Dan, 2001; Kartusch et al., 2000; Lazaridis, 2001; Niesner and Jones-Pauly, 2001; Radovanovic and Kartusch, 2001). These include:

- Inadequate legal bases, where loopholes are routinely exploited by traffickers;
- Ineffective law enforcement, especially regarding traffickers and exploiters;

- Lack of concern about the fates of the women and girls involved, owing to the combined effect of their being illegal migrants as well as involved in prostitution;
- Lack of specialization, both as regards law enforcement and the NGO sector;
- Lack of interest and even complicity within authorities.

Legal reform has generally been limited to ensuring that the offence of trafficking exists; but insufficient attention has been paid to the multitude of ways in which traffickers and exploiters manage to evade prosecution. Examples of such gaps include the lack of means of holding third-party organizers accountable, the unregulated operations of marriage agencies and the abuse of laws which allow for large-scale "import of artists for entertainment centres", as is the case in Greece (CVME, 2001) and Bosnia (UNICEF et al., 2002).

One recommended strategy to address the inconsistency of official responses to trafficked women is to explicitly include the term "victims of trafficking" in the relevant legislation. Mattar (2002) believes that this is a means to establish the principle that women and girls are not to be criminalized, and that they have a fundamental right to protection and redress. The need for a legal statement establishing these principles is demonstrated by the fact that in many countries women are arrested on either prostitution and/or immigration charges, and treated accordingly. For example, of 1,500 trafficked women detected by the German police in 1997, 95 per cent were deported (Hughes, 2000). Of even greater concern is the fact that in some countries police investigate the "moral" standing of victims, and use any negative assessment (not difficult in situations where women have been involved in prostitution) as justification for discontinuing investigations (CVME, 2001: 105).

The various interpretations of "trafficked women" across agencies and countries is starkly evident in the UNICEF report, as are the various obstacles that women have to overcome in order to access support and shelter. The question can be asked whether these multiple processes actually uphold human rights principles, and they certainly cannot be commended as "good practice". They stand in sharp contrast to attempts in policy and practice regarding other forms of violence against women and children, where multiple interviews over a short time period have been the subject of severe criticism and where concerted efforts have been made to extend access to services and support.

Even where new laws have been passed, their implementation has not proceeded constructively. It is unclear whether this is owing to poor drafting, inadequate powers to ensure proper law enforcement or internal resistance at the

level of police and prosecutors. For example, the new law in the Republika Serbska made it a crime to traffic "persons for the purpose of prostitution" in 2001. However, "it has to be proven that money has been given for the services of a woman, which is very difficult" (UNICEF et al., 2002: 67). In contrast, a similar law in the UK has been the most effective way to mount prosecutions (Kelly and Regan, 2000a).

More detailed analysis is needed regarding the implementation of similar laws in various jurisdictions: are the differences explained by procedural discrepancies, evidential requirements, official determination, or the lack of it, to actually apply the law properly? There is also a lesson to be learned about the dangers of legal reform where no efforts are taken to explore its "enforceability" within local contexts. What is needed is not "declarative" law, but legislation that works. Effective means of prosecution not only serve as a deterrent, but also perform a preventive function in so far as they limit the potential gains while increasing the risk. Sanctions, therefore, should focus more on a "proceeds orientated approach" through serious monetary penalties alongside custodial sentences (De Ruyer and Van Impe, 2001).

The stories of official corruption in countries of origin are legion. They range from border guards who take money from several parties and who hand women who are being deported directly back to the traffickers (UNICEF et al., 2002) to more insidious perversions of the laws, such as deliberately making procedural mistakes to invalidate evidence (Radovanovic and Kartusch, 2001). Far less attention has been paid to the fact that often officials do not have the material resources to enable them to perform their jobs properly. For example, many border stations lack computers/faxes or even working telephones.

There is a clear need for national plans of action which address local realities, and are based on an assessment of current practice and capabilities and establish priorities for incremental change. For example, training and awareness-raising programmes are urgent, but their impact will be reduced in contexts where officials lack the basic tools to be effective, and where courts and law enforcement agencies are chronically under-funded (Global Survival Network, 1997). Anti-corruption measures also need to be put in place, but their effectiveness will be minimal in contexts where police officers and border guards are not paid a living wage.

The emergence of innovative responses at the NGO level also deserves to be looked at in more detail. There are a number of models for shelters, with some integrating support for women fleeing from domestic violence and trafficking,

others linking support for women detected and women returning, and still others providing services to more delimited groups. Some have high-level security facilities, others only minimal ones. There are also examples of integrated helplines and others specializing in trafficking. With such a diversity and virtually no external evaluation, it is impossible to suggest what would constitutes "good practice", on grounds other than personal preference.

Regional and international policy measures

At the European level a number of communications and decisions have been made through various European Union mechanisms, and the Council of Europe has also directly addressed trafficking. Significant capacity building at the levels of governance, law enforcement and the NGO sector has been undertaken in south-eastern Europe through the OSCE, the Stability Pact Trafficking in Human Beings Task Force (SPTTF) and the Southern European Cooperative Initiative (SECI Centre). There is also increasing activity by various UN agencies, international organizations, especially IOM, and international NGOs, particularly La Strada and ICMC. Regional activity in the Baltic region has resulted in cooperation at both government and NGO levels.[14]

There is undoubtedly the need to take stock of the "emerging anti-trafficking system" (UNICEF et al., 2002), although doing so will require negotiating an area characterized by considerable conflict and inconsistencies. Particularly demanding will be unpicking which of these are disputes about matters of principle and which are primarily about turf and spheres of influence. Neither the barriers to implementation, nor successful interventions, have been properly evaluated, raising the possibility that donor input is not being used to the best effect. This is not a simple matter for research, since in each national and regional context there are similarities and differences to be addressed, and a multitude of key players to consider. While the yearly monitoring effort begun by the US State Department is a welcome first step, more sophistication needs to be introduced into the model according to which countries are rated. Currently, the allocation is made on the basis of a set of minimum standards to be satisfied regarding: legal codes and law enforcement; protection of and support for victims; and prevention efforts. Countries which have achieved Tier 1 are deemed to have complied with the standards, Tier 2 countries are regarded as having made "significant efforts" to comply, and those accorded Tier 3 status are deemed not to have made sufficient efforts. There has been much controversy over allocations, not only because of the threat of sanctions to countries under Tier 3 status, but the apparent inconsistency in the allocations themselves.

For example, some Western European destination countries still lack legislation and support services and thus would seem to fall short of the minimum standards required for classification in Tier 1. At the same time, some countries of transit and of origin which feel that they have put serious effort into addressing the problem, question the justification of a Tier 3 allocation. At the very least, there needs to be some measure that addresses actions and interventions in relation to the disparities in the resources and capacity each nation has at its disposal.

One unresolved policy issue within Europe is whether the legalization of prostitution[15] has a role to play in counter-trafficking efforts. Here is not the place to rehearse the arguments, other than to say that from a research point of view there is no evidence that legalization has a beneficial impact on the scale of trafficking. What little evidence there is actually points in the opposite direction: more trafficked women are being detected in Western European countries where aspects of prostitution are legal. The impacts of legalization in the state of Victoria, Australia, witnessed the growth of both the legal and illegal sectors, together with minimal counter-trafficking law enforcement (Sullivan and Jeffreys, 2001). Furthermore, as Chris Corrin (2000) points out, legalization only protects nationals, and can in fact make the position of trafficked women more marginal. From an evidential point of view, therefore, the case that legalization will benefit trafficked women still needs to be made.

An ILO study (2002) makes the further point that even where aspects of prostitution are legal, the sex industry continues to be exempt from routine inspection and regulatory control. This absence of monitoring, which might best be undertaken by health and safety officials rather than law enforcement officers (Kelly and Regan, 2000a), creates a context in which exploitative working conditions can become a norm, rather than the exception. They also argue that international discussion on creating "gender-sensitive migration policies" is urgently needed (Ibid, p.9)

In some countries it has been left to NGOs to raise and maintain interest in trafficking, and arguably too much has been expected of an emerging sector. One local activist comments:

> Relying on struggling women's NGOs to lead the battle against multi-billion dollar criminal trafficking is completely unrealistic and dangerous. NGOs are intimidated by the very real threat of [organized crime] violence – particularly in villages (cited in Hughes, 2002: 58)

While the concerns raised over the absence of common standards for the provision of services in either the statutory or voluntary sectors are valid, there is a danger of imposing unrealistic and even irrelevant standards in countries where the main issue is the lack of service facilities and of appropriate action. There is a continuing need to restate human rights principles, the need for attention to the rights and needs of trafficked women, while not being prescriptive about how these might be met. Innovation and diversity has been the lifeblood of violence against women movements globally, and trafficking for sexual exploitation is no exception. Perhaps as important would be the creation of more opportunities for NGOs within Europe to meet and share their insight, experience, skills and expertise with each other. This sharing of ideas and practice across borders is likely to enrich not only mutual understanding, but also the ability of NGOs to build a strong voice in advocating for, and with, trafficked women.

12. GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE – NEW RESEARCH AGENDAS

While much has been learnt over the past decade, many unanswered questions remain, alongside new challenges to understanding. Future research needs to move beyond simply establishing that there is a problem, to more nuanced studies of the organization of trafficking, its impacts on individuals, gender relations and communities, and to begin a critical assessment of counter-trafficking initiatives. The research agenda below outlines areas that deserve detailed attention in the near future:

- Expose and explain the links between trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation connected to migration, such as those occurring in domestic service and through marriage agencies, and the extent to which trafficked women and children are involved in sectors of the sex industry other than prostitution.

- Patterns of in-country trafficking and how these are or are not linked to international movements, both in terms of organization, exploiters and dynamics.

- The extent to which women and children are literally sold between traffickers and by traffickers to exploiters, the impact of this on those subjected to it, and some estimates of the scale of the financial transactions involved.

- The scale of murders of trafficked women and children in both destination countries and countries of origin, and who is responsible for their death – traffickers, exploiters, customers or others (such as family members). Within this topic attention should be given to the impact of such crimes on others who are similarly entrapped, and to whether and if so, how often, the threats used to control women and children, against other members of their families are actually carried out.[16] There are important connections to be made here with the literature on the homicide rates for women involved in prostitution more generally, and on how frequently threats are used as a control tactic in domestic violence.

- How much re-trafficking occurs, especially where countries are involved in large-scale removals and deportations of women and children – such as between Italy and Greece and Albania, and within the Balkan region itself (UNICEF et al., 2002). If the outcome of such policies is merely the re-cycling of women and children, they are expensive and yield minimal gain.

They neither benefit the states involved, nor the women and children who are removed. Such data would be a powerful tool in arguing for more strategic interventions, including investment in advocacy and support projects in countries of both destination and origin.

- Uncovering the membership and structure of trafficking networks – both those that are highly organized and those that are not. We currently know very little about how these organizations work, including whether anything can be discovered about their highest echelons. Many studies and commentaries argue that, at the local level, networks are seldom well organized, although little data is offered to support these assertions. If this were the case, discovering how young men become recruiters at the lowest levels would constitute new knowledge that could inform prevention and awareness-raising efforts. For example, are recruiters also deceived about the nature of the work and conditions in which trafficked women's human rights are eventually abused? Are people in the initial links in the chain subject to threats and control? Also worthy of investigation is which potential sanctions would be most likely to act as deterrents to those who gain least from the process. The extent to which women are involved as recruiters, especially those who have themselves been trafficked, deserves more in-depth study – how many are involved? To what extent is this a "trade-off" for no longer being sexually exploited themselves? How far are they still subjected to control by others?

  As part of the studies of the organization of trafficking the question of whether there is a "trafficking career" could be explored – do individuals begin at the lowest levels, and then develop a network and style of recruitment that allows them to move up to a more profitable and sophisticated network? More careful and rigorous assessment of the scale of financial benefits at each stage of the process is also needed.

- The organization of trafficking between countries deserves more detailed attention. Is it highly organized, disorganized or a combination thereof? How are the various links in the chain connected? How are they disguised/hidden? In particular, to what extent are state officials (border guards, immigration officers, police, embassy staff) and employees of companies (such as travel agencies, airport staff, airlines) involved? Each of these represents potential pressure points and targets in counter-trafficking, but we lack detailed knowledge that could inform well-targeted training and anti-corruption programmes.

- Evaluation of shelter and advocacy projects in countries of both destination and origin. There are a number of questions that need to be addressed here. Can shelters serve the needs of both women detected and those who are involved in return programmes to their country of origin, or are separate provisions necessary? How are shelters organized, what services do they offer, and to what extent are they actually used? How do they manage the diversity of age, experience, countries of origin in respect of the women needing shelter? What proportion of referrals are they able to accommodate, and what services, if any, do they provide to those for whom there is no space? Are they effective in promoting women's safety? Are they run on the principles of self-determination and the promotion of human rights? Are there differences between groups run by religious institutions, the state and women's NGO's? What do women living in shelters say about them, are they responding to their needs? How do project workers assess their contribution, what are the problems and barriers they face? Do workers think women have unmet needs which current projects are still unable to address?[17] What similarities and differences are there between shelters for trafficked women and those dealing with domestic violence? Does joint provision work, whereby women seeking safety from various forms of gender-based violence are sheltered together?

- The success, or otherwise, of return and reintegration programmes also needs to be assessed. These projects are growing rapidly, especially within IOM, and detailed evaluation is sorely needed. This could include an overview, such as how many programmes are there, what are their components and how many women and children do they serve, and what are the outcomes? Alongside, or following this, more in-depth evaluation of several projects would reveal good practice and the barriers to effectiveness. Such studies must include interviews with staff and users. Some of the questions to be explored here include: Is it established that trafficked women and children really do wish to return, or have they been told to say this by traffickers? What are the needs of trafficked women and how are these addressed by available projects? How is the danger of re-trafficking addressed? What measures are used to promote reintegration, are they effective? What are the local economic, social and cultural barriers to reintegration? Are the education and training opportunities provided relevant and marketable? This last point is critical in a number of ways. For example, is skills training confined to traditional gender expectations in the labour market (such as crafts, sewing, etc.) or does it open access to new possibilities for women (entry into areas of traditional male employment, such as manual trades)? Does it take

account of the fact that a proportion of women who are sexually exploited are in fact highly qualified? In relation to the latter group there is a possibility of thinking more creatively – such as exploring the possibility of language classes, which might then enable legal migration to countries experiencing labour shortages in various fields.

Return programmes would also benefit from more detailed knowledge of exactly how women manage their own return, without either being deported or receiving support from organizations like IOM. How many women are able to manage this? What are their experiences? Are they able to reintegrate and, if so, how?

- Evaluating the effectiveness of prevention and the raising of awareness includes exploration of whether and, if so, how such programmes work and how "success" can be measured. Such studies are necessary in order to highlight the most fruitful avenues for further investment. Many IOM programmes have used research to inform their campaigns, but less has been done with respect to assessing their impacts. Measuring the outcomes of awareness raising and prevention efforts is, however, an extremely complex undertaking, especially when there is no obvious single outcome criterion to assess and where projects are on a relatively small scale and not sustained over time.[18]

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of legal reform and policy change is well overdue. We know from work on other forms of violence against women and children that changes at the statute and policy levels are only the beginning. Consistent and coordinated implementation remains the most intractable issue across a range of institutions, and the failure to invest in and replicate proven innovative projects means that the kinds of intervention and support available depend on the region within a country where someone lives. Trafficking is unlikely to be different. It is essential, therefore, to monitor implementation, identify locations where good practice emerges, as well as the barriers to this being mainstreamed at local, national, regional and international levels.

  One element of this strand would include monitoring of state compliance with international agreements and arrangements, ranging from the Palermo Agreement to regional activities such as the OSCE and the Stability Pact. Within this area, the effectiveness of initiatives on trafficking by organizations such as Europol should be assessed – what information is being

collated, and how is it being used, has it made any difference to counter-trafficking initiatives?

These are just some of the most obvious gaps in our knowledge, selected because the need here for further research is most pressing, in order to ensure that counter-trafficking draws on an accurate local and international knowledge base. In the absence of such knowledge, policy and practice may, inadvertently, serve to deepen, rather than loosen the factors that make trafficking both so profitable and difficult to address. The issue of re-trafficking is a case in point, since mass removals may not act as a deterrent but merely result in the recruitment and exploitation of even more women and children.

13. LINKING LOCAL AND GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE

While much has been learnt during the last decade, and there is incontrovertible evidence of the existence of a significant trafficking problem affecting much of Europe, there are considerable gaps in our knowledge, which in turn means that policy is being developed in the absence of strong data. At almost every level, from the compilation of official statistics, to the detailed understanding of the organization of trafficking, its impacts on victims, and an evaluation of counter-trafficking initiatives, there is a need for thoughtful and rigorous data collection and analysis. It is not the intention of this piece to argue that actions cannot be taken in the absence of research, but rather that careful research enables action to better informed and connected to the local contexts.

Since trafficking is now global in its reach, it has become even more essential that professionals in the governmental and NGO sectors understand the contexts and motivations within which women and girls are located when they are recruited. Both the factors that make women and children vulnerable, and their possibilities for reintegration in the country of origin, vary. Lack of understanding of the local and individual contexts result in generalized, rather than specific interventions, which are less likely to be effective. For example, women who come from honour cultures are likely to encounter higher levels of stigma and shame, and reintegration within their family and local community will be more difficult. A more concrete example of the vital importance of detailed knowledge about local recruitment and control strategies involves girls arriving from West Africa in the UK and the Netherlands claiming asylum, and then disappearing from children's homes where they had been placed. A number of them were subsequently discovered being sexually exploited in Italy (Kelly and Regan, 2000b). It was only when the social workers, in both countries and independently from one another, discovered and understood how rituals had been used in Africa to frighten and control the girls, that they were able to work effectively with them. Research that enables widespread understanding of these local differences can make a significant difference to interventions intended to protect women and children, and they may also help in undoing some of the damage.

This is just one example of how local knowledge needs to have a global reach, in order to share vital information and perspectives which can make counter-trafficking work more effective.

NOTES

1. See O'Connell Davidson and Sanchez Taylor, 2001, for an example of these methods being used with respect to sex tourism.
2. Contribution at Oxfam International Seminar on Violence Against Women, Sarajevo, November 1998.
3. UNICEF et al. (2002: 3) raise this point with respect to women who are debt bonded, but who do not define themselves as trafficked.
4. Data from email communication, 30 July 2002.
5. There is evidence of less formalized ways by which men who are seeking children to abuse, locate them in other countries. These may or may not involve forms of trafficking, but are undertaken for personal access, rather than profit through sexual exploitation (Kelly and Regan, 2000b).
6. One example involving manipulating cultural beliefs and practices involves polygamy in Tajikistan. Here traffickers pay a mullah US$10 to register a marriage, and thus have control over a young woman's destiny (IOM Tajikistan, 2001).
7. Although significant numbers of women from Lithuania have been detected in Germany, Netherlands and the UK.
8. The UNICEF report (2002) notes that all but two of the bars within the market have been closed.
9. The death rate for women in prostitution has been noted in previous research, and is a combination of fatal assaults by pimps or customers, and a high rate of drug overdoses. This does not include the numbers who die as a consequence of contracting HIV, or other serious diseases, which can also amount to death sentence where access treatment is limited by local economic conditions.
10. The only clear data on this found for the review is from IOM Kosovo (2001), 60 per cent of the 200 women were rescued during police raids, the other third managed to escape.
11. There is currently minimal data on women's HIV status, or their health generally. Many assistance programmes offer free health status tests, but the majority of women refuse them.
12. These were: willingness to work abroad illegally; seeing going abroad without a visa as normal; disregard for personal safety; positive attitude to working in the entertainment industry; belief in the legitimacy of marriage agencies.
13. Another example came from a recent training course in the Balkans conducted by the author and colleagues. A recently elected mayor decided to prioritize the local trafficking problem in his village. There was much resistance, but he persisted, and had found some allies locally. He regretfully abandoned the work when he recognized a car belonging to a government minister outside one of the local brothels.
14. Regional NGO networking is unusual in the field according to the review of south-eastern Europe (UNICEF et al., 2002), yet there are two successful examples in the Baltic of links across origin, transit and destination countries. This raises the question of why it has not happened in an adjacent region. Two obvious differences between the two regions may play a part; firstly, the predominance of international agencies in

the Balkans; secondly, the strength of Scandinavian women's movements, and their critical position with respect to prostitution.

15. Usually it is only aspects of prostitution which are legal, often that involving the sale of sex by the prostitute to the client within certain prescribed contexts, such as registered brothels. Other aspects, such as pimping and procuring tend to remain criminal offences. Sweden remains the only country to make the purchase of sex the offence, criminalizing the buyer rather than seller; Denmark, Finland and Norway are currently considering passing similar laws.
16. For example, Renton (2001) contains an example of a case in Albania where threats were made to a family attempting to find a daughter trafficked from Albania to Italy; another daughter was brutally murdered when the family did not drop their search.
17. For example, recent discussions between the author and NGOs in the Balkans revealed a skill gap in dealing with women who are extremely traumatized.
18. Examples of programmes which have been sustained and where there is a clear outcome measure are those on HIV/AIDS and drink driving in many western countries. In both cases the campaigns continued over many years, and the measure of success could be assessed relatively easily: in the former by the decrease of identified cases of HIV infection, and in the latter by the fall in road accidents due to the driver being affected by alcohol. Such clear measures are not immediately obvious in the case of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

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In this report, Professor Elizabeth Kelly assesses the current state of knowledge on the trafficking of women and children in Europe. She concludes that despite the growing interest and concern, information on the scale of trafficking, the methods used, and the most effective means to counter it, remains limited. To advance our current knowledge, Professor Kelly identifies a number of priorities for further research, including on the structure of and the methods used by criminal groups, on state compliance with relevant international law, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of counter-trafficking initiatives.

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