Introduction

From a Global Phenomenon to European Centred

The trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation knows no global boundaries and exists in all corners of our globe. The United Nations estimates that four million people are trafficked throughout the world each year either because of choice, or coercion due to violence or the threat of violence, abuse of authority, or deception (Caldwell et al. 1997; Wijers and Lap-Chew 1997) whereas the US State Department estimates that at least 700,000 persons, especially women and children, are trafficked each year across international borders. Regionally, trafficking within Africa has grown considerably over the years as has the trafficking of African women to Libya, Lebanon, the United States of America, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands, with estimates that 3582 women from Ghana alone were trafficked between 1998 to 2000 (IOM, 2001a). South-East Asia is also victim to trafficking, within the region as well as to outside destinations. In 2000, in a six-month period alone, the Chinese police rescued 123,000 women who had been trafficked into China. The International Human Rights Monitoring Group in 2003 reports that there are approximately 800,000 sex workers in India which speaks to the high demand for a sex industry as well as the presumption that many may have been trafficked from other countries or regions for this purpose. Although there is less data on trafficking concerning Latin America, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimates that ten women per day are trafficked out of Columbia with approximately 500,000 women and children currently outside the country due to being trafficked for sexual exploitation (IOM, 2001a).

Considering Europe, different organisations offer varying estimates of the numbers of women trafficked for sexual exploitation annually – from between 100,000 and 200,000 (Bassiouni, 2001) to 500,000 (IOM, 1996 as cited in Kelly and Regan, 2000) and while non-governmental organisations suggest that the numbers may be even higher. Unfortunately some agencies lack the resources, intention or agreement of a definition of trafficking and/or sound statistic collection methods, or rely solely on ‘official’ statistics recorded as a result of women being brought to the attention of the authorities through arrest, prosecution, deportation, victim assistance or witness protection. Non-governmental organisations’ statistics are a direct result of their efforts to protect and care for trafficked women survivors, which includes those who independently seek help in addition to those brought to their attention by official sources; and academics tend to use statistics gathered from both such organisations in which to base their research. Consequently, figures are variant and one-sided, and so one must exert caution when proclaiming such figures to be encompassing the entire phenomenon of trafficking for sexual exploitation but rather be cognizant that potentially an amplification and/or a ‘dark figure’ of this crime exists.

Bearing in mind these limitations, since the early 1990s the wave of women trafficked from CEE countries to Western countries has grown to a level where it now constitutes one-fourth of
the world trade (O’Neill, 2002 as cited in La Strada, 2002) or a global sex trade worth an estimated US$10 billion (Mainville, 2003). According to the Swedish NGO Kvinna Till Kvinna, an estimated 500,000 women from over the world are trafficked each year into Western Europe alone, wherein a large proportion of these women come from the former Soviet block countries, and IOM report that between 700,000 to 2 million women and children are trafficked across international borders annually (IOM, 2001a); that in 1997, an estimated 175,000 women and girls were trafficked from CEE countries and CIS into Western Europe, and furthermore 120,000 women and children are trafficked annually into the European Union, mostly through the Balkans (OSCE, 2002). Regardless that the figures may be exaggerated or not all encompassing, there is ample evidence to suggest that a substantial amount of women are being trafficked within Europe and sexually exploited.

**The European Phenomenon**

Although experienced world-wide, the trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Europe has experienced a boom of productivity and exploitation since the collapse of the communist system in the former Soviet block and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. As a result of the shift in the political climate and economy (from socialist to capitalist), exorbitant amounts of unemployment and poverty have skyrocketed as well as has a lack in the rule of law, and inappropriate judicial systems which have allowed black market economies and corruption to flourish. Smuggling of goods, arms and people, corrupt state employees, organised crime groups and acceptance of illegal ways to earn money, have unfortunately become to new norm (OSCE, 2002).

**Eastern Europe More Affected**

The European Commission estimates that up to 120,000 women and children are being trafficked into Western Europe each year (European Union, 2001), the United States Government (1998) proclaims that circa 175,000 women are trafficked from CEE and CIS countries to Western Europe annually, and 120,000 women coming from the former Eastern block countries are trafficked to Western Europe annually (Richard, 2001b as cited in IOM, 2001).

According to the United Nations and International Labour Organisation conference in 2001, up to 6,000 women and children from Eastern Europe are brought to Britain, France, Switzerland and the Netherlands each year by organised crime groups (Choudhury, 2002). They come from cultures where girls are not considered as desirable as boys; are not afforded equal opportunity for education or work; and where the selling of a young virgin girl can bring the family money for food and shelter (Johnson, 2002). Such causal factors appear more prominent in certain regions that in others.

**Certain Countries More Affected**

**Countries of Origin**

In addition to such causal factors, women promised lucrative employment opportunities in Western European countries, find themselves sold into slavery-like conditions and held as virtual prisoners in cafés or brothels. Ninety percent of foreign migrant sex workers in the Balkan countries are victims of trafficking (OSCE, 2002) and at least 50,000 women are taken out of Russia each year and become slaves abroad (Caldwell et al., 1997). For instance, in Israel, which is the main market for Russian slaves, 46% of prostitutes originate from Moldova; 25% from Ukraine; and 13% from Russia and Central Asian Republics (Novostei, 2002). An estimated 20 to 30 women and girls return to Moldova each month from being trafficked abroad and most of them are coming back from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo and/or Albania, additionally, that the largest groups of women
trafficked to Western Europe through and from the Balkans are Moldovan, Albanian, Romanian and Ukrainian (IOM, 2001).

Nearby countries in South Central Europe, along with Turkey, seem to have the highest numbers of illegal Moldovan immigrants. UNICEF reported that in the years 2000 and 2001, Turkey had by far the highest number of deportations of Moldovans, with 6610 in addition to Germany (654), Greece (317) and Italy (232) following as next highest (UNICEF, 2000) suggesting that not all were consenting migrants. The IARS Project in 2000 found that of its 125 referrals, 71 cases or 46.7% were from Moldova (IOM, 2000). An IOM study in the Balkans for the years 1999 to 2000 (IOM, 2001) reporting on a combined study from agencies that assist trafficked women in the region, offered that from a total of 5887 cases, 7% originated from Moldova and those assisted specifically by IOM, from a total of 697 cases, the majority (46%) were from Moldova.

Transit and Destination Countries

Trafficking of women into BiH for forced prostitution surged in the late 1990s. The Balkans and neighbouring regions appear to have become a predominant region of transit and destination for trafficked women in the wake of the humanitarian crisis and wars. With the presence of international forces and their families, international currency and copious spending, a demand for a sex industry has increased.

In the study by Caldwell et al., (1997), 60 to 80 percent of women trafficked into Germany and one-fifth of the dancer visas issued by Switzerland during that year were for Russian women. Scanlan’s study (2002) found that, firstly, where the Moldovan family members abroad were female, the destination countries were primarily Turkey, Greece and Italy, and male members of the family were primarily in Russia. Other destination countries for trafficked women included Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Romania, Ukraine and United Kingdom; in effect a cornucopia of trafficking destinations exists with La Strada Moldova concurring in 2001 that there were 10,000 Moldovan women in various European countries’ (Revenco, 2002).

Secondly, even when family were working in Russia or Ukraine, potential migrants would overwhelmingly wish to go West rather than East. This view, that better paid or more suitable work is available in Western Europe, was also confirmed by interviews Scanlan did with trafficked victims in addition to that discovered in this research.

Strathclyde Police and the immigration authorities in Glasgow Scotland in 2003 carried out a number of raids on saunas in the area, which resulted in several women being detained for questioning, or for entering the country illegally. They came from countries including Moldova, Romania, Kosovo, Yugoslavia, Thailand and Poland (Henderson, 2003). Also, TAMPEP® (in 1997) detailed the proportion of immigrant women among prostitutes in several European countries (in descending order): 90 percent in Italy, 85 percent in Austria, 68 percent in the Netherlands, 62 percent in northern Germany, 50 percent in Spain, 45 percent in Belgium, 32 percent in southern Germany and 25 percent in Norway and Sweden (Inter Press Service, April 2003) leading one to suspect that not all travelled willingly but were instead trafficked. Reports such as these attest to the fact that many women are exploited into all parts of Europe.

Considering origin, transit and destination countries alerts us to the reality that there is a paucity of data accumulated directly from women who have been trafficked based on their experiences and the influencing (or causal) factors weighing their decision to leave their countries and consequently become victimised and trafficked (Kelly and Regan, 2000; Hughes, 1999: IOM, 2001b) into others. Certain causes in the dynamic of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation are evident and range from economic to cultural to interpersonal depending upon the country in focus and the individual women involved, yet regardless if the causes are vast or tapered, what is common among them is their existence within the dynamic of trafficking and the authority they have in sustaining trafficking of women for sexual exploitation.
**Definitions and Perspectives**

*Perspectives of Trafficking*

Trafficking does not occur in a vacuum (Robinson, 2002). It is a crime as a result of various and combined social situations and circumstances, legal systems, people and their needs. Trafficking is not one event but a series of constitutive acts and circumstances implicating a wide range of actors. When seeking a solution, extracting one aspect of the equation would be futile (for example restricting migration) since the combined forces would continue to act (people’s need, social situations, poverty, violence, demand, and criminal intent) even with the elimination of one of its links.

Trafficking has been defined and considered from varying perspectives. Some consider it a violation of a woman’s human rights or another form of violence against women, as she is a modern day slave experiencing intimidation and force, debt-bondage, limited freedom and independence, passport confiscation, violence, objectification and second class citizenship. Addressing the issue as a violation of human rights means acknowledging that trafficking is a violation of the basic human rights to which all persons are entitled - the right to life; to equality, dignity and security; not to be held in slavery; not subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and more (OHCHR-UNOGiii). A human rights approach also demands that we acknowledge the responsibility of governments to protect and promote the rights of all persons within their jurisdictions.

Others consider trafficking an issue of migration in that a woman has illegally penetrated its borders without a proper permit or visa or stayed beyond her visa timeframe; in effect, she has victimised the state. This perspective is adopted by several governments which consider the state to be the victim in this dynamic rather than the woman who was trafficked and exploited. It uses jargon such as illegal entries, false or expired visas, abuse of state resources, illegal workers, and implements criminal justice efforts to close borders, reduce immigration and work permits, and arrest and prosecute the women found.

For others it is an issue of prostitution. One cannot separate the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation without having consideration for prostitution for it is for the purpose of prostitution that these women are coerced, obtained, bought and sold, or willingly engaged and then exploited. However, different prostitution laws, enforcement and regulation practices among them make it all the more difficult to come to cross border agreement on definitions of trafficking, implementation of conventions or protocols, and/or counter trafficking efforts when each country adopts a different ideology concerning prostitution. Some states apply a prohibitionist approach (prostitution is prohibited and clients are punished); others practice legalisation or regulation (prostitution and the exploitation of the prostitution of persons of full age is not punishable) and others apply an abolitionist approach (prostitution is not an offence but its exploitation is) thereby complicating research, discourse and legal efforts.

Still others consider trafficking to be a problem of organised crime. This approach stems mainly from governments or international bodies seeking a solution to the financial and legal victimisation of its institutions and states. It considers trafficking of women as one of the many types of criminal activities carried out by organised criminal networks in addition to drug trafficking, weapons trafficking, violence or gambling that costs the state money through illegal activity, prosecution demands and fraud. Although correct in its categorisation (for organised networks do operate women trafficking networks in many regions), to consider the trafficking of women solely as another aspect of organised crime activity does not give it the attention it deserves; for it becomes a one-sided analysis rather than an all encompassing evaluation of the components involved in trafficking, namely, identifying the various victims, causes, prevention, prosecution and protection aspects. Instead, a holistic or multi-disciplinary approach is most effective, for it includes proactive (causes) and reactive (law) issues in addition to encompassing all of the relevant victims in the trafficking chain.
Varying Definitions

But despite such a motivation, of all the international and national agencies, governmental and non-governmental organisations, regional and local police forces, involved with the various components of trafficking, no common unified definition or agreed upon perspective of trafficking for sexual exploitation is shared (Coomaraswamy, 2000). Several of these agencies use the United Nation’s Convention and subsequent Protocol yet within the global effort towards the issue, a unified ideology is lacking. Furthermore, the historical characterisations of trafficking in such conventions are outdated, ill-defined and non-responsive to the current realities (Coomaraswamy, 2000) and to the nature and extent of the abuses inherent in and incidental to trafficking (Stewart, 1998).

One woman’s story of being trafficked is strikingly similar to the many thousands of other women who have been trafficked from one country to another and forced into prostitution. Sometimes these women willingly go with the traffickers to seek new jobs and new lives, sometimes they are coerced or kidnapped, and sometimes they go with the knowledge that they will work in the sex industry, albeit not under what conditions (debt-bondage, earning no income, no freedom). Regardless of which scenario pertains to any of the women trafficked each year, trafficking for sexual exploitation involves certain key elements that define it as such:

1. the use of coercion or deceit to obtain and transport women;
2. deceit of intended destination and/or employment purpose and circumstances;
3. confiscation of her papers or identity documents; physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse or the threat of such and;
4. legal or illegal crossing of borders with recruiters or traffickers in tow.

Differs from smuggling because in the case of smuggling, the person goes willingly or voluntarily, sometimes even knowing the dangers ahead and secondly, that the relationship of exploitation ends once the victim arrives at the destination country.

For various reasons - political, ideological, justice - each agency has their valid reasons for choosing a definition that matches their needs and goals. Yet in an attempt for a world-wide collusion of resources to combat and prevent the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation, a unified definition is an appropriate place to start. As such, with varying definitions among varying countries and the governments and agencies within those countries, investigative and prosecutorial efforts, prevention and information campaigns, deportation and re-integration efforts lack cohesion and encounter many obstacles when attempting to work together, which furthermore disadvantages trafficked women because they are often wrongly identified, categorised and registered, and as a consequence they unwittingly forfeit their right to receive proper assistance. Such conditions influence the accuracy of data on trafficking (IOM, 2001) and the means and methods utilised to study the crime and assist its victims. Compounded with this inadequacy is the lack of a holistic approach to addressing the problem – not only through a unified definition but by considering all sides of the crime-solving equation can the trafficking of women be effectively understood and prevented.

Apart from its lack of a unified definition, varying perspectives and the criticisms surrounding those definitions or perspectives, the trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation does enjoy competent definitions.

The United Nations Convention

The United Nations 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others stands as the sole international treaty on trafficking (Coomaraswamy, 2000). Along with its Protocol, it is the most commonly applied tool to define trafficking. Although out-dated, it arises out of a prohibitionist approach to prostitution and...
trafficking, it seeks to criminalise acts and third parties associated with prostitution, though not prostitution itself, but lacking is a specific focus on trafficking for sexual exploitation but rather it encompasses all forms of trafficking.

**The United Nations Protocol**

Supplementing the Convention, the updated Protocol defines trafficking as:

(a) “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability (1) or of the giving or receiving of payment or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (2) forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

(1): The abuse of a position of vulnerability is understood to refer to any situation in which the person involved has no real and acceptable alternative but to submit to the abuse involved.

(2): Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation.

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

**Causal (push and pull) Factors**

Depending upon the region studied, some factors reveal themselves to be more relevant than others, for example, war in the Balkans, powerful and integrated organised crime networks in Asia and cultural practices in West Africa of sending young girls to be reared elsewhere may all be considered factors that facilitate or sustain trafficking since such factors can ‘push’ people into the hands of exploitive traffickers or ‘pull’ them towards certain countries. But despite differences from countries, regions or cultures, a belief remains that some variables are consistently more potent to women who become trafficked and sexually exploited (Kangaspunta 2001).

Predominant in the current fight against trafficking are legal measures and discourse, yet even though causal factors are simultaneously acknowledged as relevant in understanding trafficking, they are not often considered; nevertheless, any crime solving equation must include the (proactive) study of causal factors that lead to the trafficking of women and not solely the reactive or legal efforts implemented to curb its growth or deter its criminals.

**Push and Pull Factors**

Women leave their homes for many different reasons - and one of the consequences of the changes within the CIS, has been to open doors to “a better life” in the West (Caldwell et al., 1997). In search of job opportunities, education and/or to help support the family, young women are ready to travel abroad (Henderson, 2003). The feminization of poverty; declining public health; new forms of organised crime have all increased the number of women and girls being victims of prostitution and trafficking (Winberg, 2003).
The reasons behind her willingness to leave her country can be described firstly as ‘push’ factors in terms of their influence on her decision (poverty, no jobs, escaping war or familial violence) and secondly, as ‘pull’ factors that can draw her knowingly or unwillingly to another country (demands of the sex industry, organised crime networks, corrupt officials, or porous borders). Such causal factors are believed to be at the root of trafficking (Winberg, 2003). For without these circumstances, a woman is not willing to leave her country and consequently place herself in a position of vulnerability or trust to persons or agencies capitalising on her needs and exploit her.

Moldova is a relatively new country, proclaiming its sovereignty in 1990 and gaining its independence from the Soviet Union on August 27th 1991, yet despite the benefits of this independence almost one-quarter of the population now lives below the poverty line. Women account for nearly two-thirds of people unemployed nationwide, but as much as 85 or 90 percent in some regions of the Russian Federation such as within Moldova (Caldwell, G et al., 1997). In 1996, 87 percent of Russia’s employed urban residents whose monthly income was less than 100,000 rubles (US$21) were women (Caldwell et al., 1997).

In a speech commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette recognised how violence and discrimination against women pushes them to society’s margins, that most countries affected with trafficking have experienced severe economic and social decline. Unemployment, inflation, income differentials and poverty have increased and as a result of conflict and economic change, living conditions and access to services have all deteriorated.

Because trafficking is an issue encompassing varying perspectives, legislative issues and social-political concerns, it is difficult if not impossible to diminish the bevy of interrelated factors towards a specific list of push and pull factors influencing women in the dynamic of trafficking (poverty, violence, corruption, demand of the sex industry, criminal networks and so on). Yet, push and pull factors are validated within the literature of trafficking (Kelly and Regan, 2000; Hughes, 1999; IOM, 2001b), making the study and analysis of such factors a worthy venture. Continuing upon this theme, this research chose seven specific causal factors believed to be relevant to women who are trafficked from East to West for the purpose of sexual exploitation and divided them into two categories: those that would be empirically tested in the study and others that were supplied with a theoretic discourse. The seven factors considered were Economics; Violence; Customs; Education; Corruption & Organised Crime; Demand; Legalisation of Prostitution. Within the confines of this paper, economics as the most potent push and pull factor will be elaborated upon and the empirical results will be discussed.

Economics

Encompassing issues of the Feminisation of Poverty, Unemployment and Inequality

In the stricter sense, the feminisation of poverty refers to the fact that women who, despite supporting themselves or their families, are becoming the majority of the poor (Goldberg, 1990). Despite their rising level of education (Soviet pre-collapse), today’s women are employed in jobs that are below their level of skill and which result in lower rates of pay (McAndrew and Peers, 1981; Morgan, 1984 as cited in Kremen, 1990), representing 68% in 1997 of the total number of unemployed persons in Moldova and earning 60-70% of men’s average salary (IHF, 2000).

The feminisation of poverty stems from a complex set of circumstances. It is important, first of all, to recognise that although women are increasingly part of the labour force, much of the work they do is unpaid (housekeeping, housewifery, child care, elder care). Further, such work keeps women from supplementing their earnings through overtime pay or bonuses (Goldberg, 1990). And stereotypical of certain societies, husbands are still perceived as the family’s breadwinners and women as the housekeepers and child minders; regardless of feminist advancements and democratisation, some societies are hesitant in accepting new forms of gender
roles and therefore the cyclical nature of the feminisation of poverty continues.

Increasing poverty in Moldova is depriving many people of the means to sustain themselves. Approximately half the population lives under the poverty line. Using a minimum poverty threshold of 120 lei per month (US$11.50), it was determined that 58 percent of the population were living below the poverty line in 1998 (UNICEF, 2000). Social support networks have been cut, everything from education to healthcare have now become chargeable, and the dimensions of poverty in Moldova are bigger than in CIS and CEE countries in transition (UN, 2000).

Bystydzienski (1989) reported that when Russian women were interviewed about divorce, they “express confidence that a divorced woman and a single parent could manage well in their society” (Bystydzienski, 1989 as cited Kremen, 1990). However, in this study, the majority of women displayed a reluctance in their confidence for such a lifestyle (i.e. ‘can a working mother establish close relations with her children same as a mother who does not work?’ eight answered ‘no’ and two answered ‘don’t know’; ‘in times of job shortages, should men have the priority of jobs?’ eight answered ‘yes’ and two did not answer the question; ‘are men better workers?’ five answered ‘yes’, one answered ‘no’ and four answered ‘don’t know’) (IHF, 2000).

Granted, several years have passed since Bystydzienski’s study and the USSR is no longer, and a more thorough interview process in this study would have elicited greater response and in-depth commentary on the issue; however, the issue remains pertinent -that the loss of jobs among Moldovan women was reported to be three times that of men in the late 90’s (UN, 2000) and its perceived acceptance. Scanlan (2002) also supported such claims in that over 70% of trafficking victims qualified their material situation, prior to being trafficked, as either poor or very poor wherein 85% of cases therefore claimed to have gone abroad for work (up to 1 million from a population of 4.5 million in Moldova are estimated to be currently abroad).

Methodology

There is an acknowledged paucity of empirical information from trafficked women survivors and this deficit does not assist academics and practitioners in preventing, prosecuting and protecting those victimised. With competent empirical data, more information concerning causes can be learned and subsequently utilised to devise strategies to prevent and combat trafficking, and to address all of the needs relating to trafficked women. The method of data collection chosen for this project partially served this purpose. Due to certain constraints, an extensive quantitative study was not be possible but rather a small number of questionnaires to trafficked women survivors housed at a participating NGO in Moldova were distributed. This population and their completed questionnaires constituted the empirical portion of the study wherein the theoretical questions were answered by collecting data from staff working at non-governmental organisations around Europe, their materials, legal documents and materials, media reports, conference publications and academic literature relevant to the issue. For the purpose of this article, only the empirical data has been presented.

Research Questions

The study analysed the prevalence and potency of specific causal factors based on the experiences of the women who had survived being trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The study assessed, whether the hypothesised push and pull factors were relevant to the trafficked woman survivor, and if so in what order of potency and prevalence? And subsequently, what other push and pull factors were relevant, and if so, in what potency and prevalence?

Participants

The sample consisted of ten trafficked women survivors assisted by and housed at the safe
house of La Strada Moldova in Chisinau Moldova. These women originated from Moldova and upon being discovered as trafficked victims in various countries across Europe, were returned to Moldova and brought to this NGO for assistance and reintegration. Since Moldova does not typically present as a country of destination, women from different parts of the world are typically not trafficked into Moldova and therefore not housed at this NGO. Rather one of the NGO’s mandates is to seek women who originate from Moldova abroad, return them to Moldova and provide them with assistance and reintegration.

Procedure

Completed questionnaires were sent to the Social Worker via email who then randomly selected women who were living at this NGO’s safe house between October and December 2002. The interviews were conducted in either Russian or Romanian, depending upon the literacy of the participant, in an informal atmosphere within the safe house and only with women survivors who were willing to participate.

In choosing participants, no distinction was made between women who were willing to work in the sex industry to those who were not, but rather the only eliminating factor from participating as a member of the sample was that the type of trafficking experienced had to have been for the purpose of sexual exploitation (not for labour, sport or marriage). All information gathered was coded as to protect the anonymity of the participants.

Instrument

The formulation of the final questionnaire was prefaced by a pilot study wherein a draft version of the questionnaire and interview technique was tested on staff and trafficked women survivors at a Belgian NGO in April 2002 and later in August and September 2002 with staff from NGOs in Moldova, Poland and Bulgaria. The feedback obtained as a result of this process was incorporated into the final version. The questionnaire, written in English, comprised six sections and a total of 92 closed-format questions most of which had the option of “other” to allow for open-ended answers.

Results

Demographics

Of the ten women who completed the questionnaire, all originated from Moldova and nine of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 25 years with one participant being under 18 years of age. Four had been housed at the NGO for less than one year and the remaining six for less than six months. Five participants had some level of secondary education (four having completed high school and one technical college), and furthermore, all women were trafficked at least once (trafficked, returned, then trafficked again) with two women having been trafficked twice and one woman having been trafficked three times. IOM Chisinau reports that 13% of victims returning to Moldova in 2001 had been trafficked before. The possibility of being trafficked more than once seems to be a growing phenomenon since over 30% of returnees through the IOM shelter (which works in conjunction with La Strada) have disappeared within a few months and the assumption invariably is that they have been trafficked again. Set on gaining entry to Europe for work, they end up resorting to untrustworthy individuals again and again as their only means of reaching their desired destination (Scanlan, 2002).

Countries of Transit and Destination – push and pull factors

Seven of the ten women were trafficked to one destination country while three were trafficked to two or more countries. With the exception of one woman who was trafficked to the United Arab Emirates, all women were trafficked within Europe, primarily to countries within the
Balkans (five), which is in line with other studies such as those by IOM (2001b). Other destination countries included Russia, Romania, Greece and Turkey.

When asked to which country she originally wanted to go to live and work, there was a mix of responses not always including Western Europe: Italy (three); Spain or Portugal (one); Romania (one); Russia (two); Israel (one); Turkey (one); and Greece (one), all of which challenges the postulations concerning the presumed ‘push’ of a Western European country when other countries were considered by the women as also offering more opportunities for work, better salaries, having friends and/or family in the country, and fluid borders as large motivating factors. The following distribution was revealed:

Table 1
Factors pulling women towards other countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item indicated</th>
<th>Number of times marked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘jobs that pay good money’</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘more opportunities for work’</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I have family and/or friends living there’</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘it is easy to enter this country legally or illegally’</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I can speak the language and know the customs’</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘more opportunities for women’</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘less crime and violence’</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘no war or civil violence’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘more jobs’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘women are more respected’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘better chance for education’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘there is sex industry’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘sex industry is legal’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to the question: “Please mark with an X all that are relevant reasons why you wished to go to this country”

Clearly further research is needed to examine the causes or reasons why such women choose certain countries as possible destinations in addition to acknowledging that regardless of, or despite economics, there are other potent and therefore relevant reasons for which women choose certain countries (i.e. wishing to join family or friends; knowing the language; porous borders – indicating knowledge of possible lack of border control and/or corrupt officials).

Prior Employment & Job Willingness – push and pull factors

Prior to being trafficked six of the ten women did not have employment; four identified being employed - as a student (one); sewing (one); waitress (one); house cleaner (one). For those unemployed, three women indicated they had been unemployed between one and five years; two for less than six months and one woman was unemployed for less than one year. Pertaining to those employed, two had their job for less than six months; one for less than one year and one woman had her job between one and five years (the student), all four indicating a monthly income between 0 and 499 US$ and all four indicating that this was not enough money to take care of family and buy food with nine women indicating they have family members to support in Moldova (parents, siblings, children and/or grandparents). Six of those family members needing support were also unemployed, three were employed and one woman did not have family members to support.

When asked what types of jobs were they intending to do in the country of destination, none of the women indicated they intended to work in the sex industry but rather indicated their willingness for one or more options.
### Table 2
Willingness for work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item indicated</th>
<th>Number of times marked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'waitress'</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'clean houses or hotels'</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'care for old people'</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'care for child'</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'agricultural'</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'dancer or stripper'</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'artistic field'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'business manager'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'hotel industry'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'medical field'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'other'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'police, courts'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'researcher'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'secretarial worker'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'sex industry'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'sciences or engineer'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'sports area'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'student'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'teacher'</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to the question: “What kind of work did you want to do in this new country?”

However, none of the women indicated professional, academic, scientific or clerical options, but when asked about employment aspirations, some women indicated such options.

### Table 3
Job aspirations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Times marked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘cleaning houses or hotels’</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘waitress’</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘dancer or stripper’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘medical field’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘student’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘secretarial work’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘all jobs’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘none’*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘artistic field’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘business manager’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘hotel industry’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘medical field’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘other’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘police, courts’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘researcher’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘secretarial worker’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The First and Second Most Potent Causal Factor

Throughout the questionnaire respondents were asked to indicate which response(s) fit their experience of pre- and post-trafficking. When asked which three factors were most relevant or important to their situation, economics was indicated as the first and the second most potent factor. The women acknowledged answers such as: ‘had no job’; ‘jobs pay too little’; or ‘no opportunities for work’ (six, three and one response respectively), totalling all ten women indicating economics as the most potent causal factor. In second place, economics remained relevant with three women agreeing that ‘jobs pay too little’ and two stating ‘no opportunities for women’ combining for a total of five women. As evidenced, economics reveals itself to be a predominant and ever present factor for trafficked women, and also indicated in some fashion in all three positions. Scanlan (2002) found similar results in that 65% of recent returned victims to the IOM shelter in Chisinau were trafficked on the basis of false job promises thereby indicating their motivation (employment) for approaching others for help and trusting those individuals.

The Third Most Potent Causal Factors

All of the women responded that within the past five years they experienced some form of physical violence against them with several women reporting that more than one person was responsible for this type of violence against them. Prior to being trafficked, husband or boyfriend, fathers or step-fathers or mothers were the perpetrators and during the trafficking experience the women were assaulted by clients, pimps and/or brothel owners; supporting other studies that most violence against women is perpetrated within the home and/or by someone they know (Ba-Obaid and Bijleveld, 2002). Minnesota Advocates’ results offer that 22% of the women interviewed reported that they had been abused by a partner or former partner at some time in their lives (USDH, 1997 as cited in MNAD, 2000).

Although the hypothesis offered that violence within the home and/or country of origin act as a causal factor ‘pushing’ women away from Moldova, indeed many experienced such a reality but also experienced violence away from home (by pimps & clients in brothels etc.) causing one to further speculate. Firstly, that the potency of violence as a push factor (violence in the home or society) may not be as potent; secondly, the belief that violence against women is normalised to the point that it is so pervasive in many aspects of life, which continually influences how women are treated regardless of the country or setting; and thirdly, living in a brothel with owners could be considered a home setting and yet another arena in which women are abused, supporting other domestic violence research.

All women reported being emotionally abused within the past five years, again with several women indicating multiple perpetrators such as husband or boyfriend, father, mother, step-father (pre-trafficking) in addition to clients and pimps and bodyguards during the trafficking experience. Relatively often, victims of women trafficking, especially Central European victims, come from problem families – single parent families, alcohol abusing parents, incest, mistreatment, financial and housing problems, psychosocial problems and so on (Vocks and Nijboer, 2000). All ten women reported that in the past five years they experienced some form of sexual abuse, indicating various perpetrators (husband/boyfriend, step-father, father) pre-
trafficking as well as labelling pimps, recruiters and clients as the perpetrators of this sexual violence.

IOM Pristina discovered 70% of victims they assisted were living with their families at the time they were recruited. Nearly 18% reported being engaged in difficult to bad relationships with their parents or with their husbands or partners, and 16% admitted having been raped or suffered physical abuse in the past (IOM, 2001).

Nine of the ten women indicated that they did not report any of this abuse to the authorities (one respondent indicating ‘don’t know’ as her answer to the question). When asked why not, a majority of the answers offered insight into their belief that nothing would be done (MNAD, 2000), a distrust of the criminal justice system (MNAD, 2000) and authorities in their community (all ten women indicated they do not trust the police in their country) and no confidence in the rule of law (Kevorkian and Erez, 2002). Although Moldova accessed to the CEDAW Convention on July 1st 1994 the implementation and regulation of the Convention remains limited or inadequate as evidenced by the absence of women confident enough in their legal system to report the abuse (IHF, 2000). In the pre-trafficking stage, social problems such as sexual and physical abuse within families force girls and women to leave in search of safety and a better life, but often find themselves further abused and exploited (Hughes, 1999).

Tied with violence as the third most potent factor in the dynamic of trafficking was the belief in finding it is easy to cross borders. This factor was not offered within the hypothesised causal factors and thus not specifically listed within the questionnaire but resulted from open-ended answers. After each grouping of questions, the option of ‘other’ was given to allow the naming of any factors not previously identified, and it was within this option that crossing borders revealed its importance to these women. Believing borders are easy to cross speaks to either the knowledge of corrupt border patrols, ease with which to obtain legal or illegal visas and permits, using green borders (forests and rivers), and/or no border checks within the countries of the European Union, all providing additional factors in sustaining trafficking and a need for more research into their relevance.

The following open ended responses supplemented the causal factors offered as reasons for choosing to leave her country of origin.

“My mother became crazy and started biting me.”

“Absence of financial means and bad relations with brothers (parents are deceased).”

“My child is ill and I had to earn money for medical surgery, my parents are retired and have no money to help us.”

“Had no living space and had quarrels with relatives.”

Discussion

When motivated to fight trafficking, laws are enacted and legislation ratified to facilitate criminal justice system cooperation; however, focusing an abundance of attention to the legal aspects of trafficking is paying attention to only one half of the equation. To understand any crime and to create effective means of deterrence and prevention, the causes of a crime must also be understood in order to effect change. A doctor does not only offer medicine (a reactive solution) to a patient for her heart attack, but attempts to educate the patient on her disease’s causes (excess weight, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, stress) in order to facilitate change – change being the elimination or reduction of future heart attacks. The same analogy can be used when analysing trafficking. By offering only reactive solutions (increasing sentences, facilitating closer law enforcement cooperation, and restricting migration) only half of the equation (and understanding of the crime) is being addressed; in essence the crime is not experiencing the full advantages of criminological analysis and application.
Preventing trafficking

Attention to causal factors from the women who have been trafficked must be a starting point in fighting trafficking. In addition to the various perspectives and amounts of research available discussing and supporting causal factors of trafficking of women for sexual exploitation, each woman’s experience, in particular from certain countries versus others, must be understood. Each country and its issues concerning women (unemployment, inequality, laws against violence, advocacy, attitudes etc.) must be taken into account for it is those specific environments and experiences that influence a woman’s decision to leave her home country for work abroad. In addition to supporting the relevance and potency of economics and violence, the women identified other factors requiring attention in order to prevent trafficking of women from their county.

Table 13
Addressing causal factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item indicated</th>
<th>Number of times marked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘make it easier to get legal visas &amp; work permits’</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘better government’</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘more jobs for people in the cities &amp; rural areas’</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘better opportunities for education’</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘people in society believing that violence against women is wrong’</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘changing police attitudes that violence against women in the home is wrong’</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘more money to border guards &amp; police so they will not be tempted for bribery &amp; corruption’</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘shelters for women who are abused &amp; wish to leave their husbands or partners’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘people in society believing harassment is wrong’</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘laws against sexual harassment in the workplace’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘people changing their belief that women are property’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘make the sex industry legal’</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to the question: ‘Please make with an X which do you think could PREVENT the trafficking of women from your country?’

Therefore increased and empirically sound attention must be paid to the various causes of trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation from women and countries of origin and an elaboration on certain factors. Their individual experiences, stories and biographies must be acknowledged and the situation within the country must be considered when seeking any answers to questions such as why trafficking occurs, in particular from certain countries and not others? What is happening to these women within these countries to make them desperate to risk their safety to strangers in order to leave their country and their homes? For time and again studies reveal that high levels of poverty and economic instability are major contributors in this crime and that other factors such as violence against women, border porosity and ineffective rule of law could also be relevant. Once we acknowledge this competent starting basis the paucity of data can begin to become filled and consequently the ‘crime solving’ equation can be adequately and appropriately addressed.
References


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i The figure was accumulated as a result of La Strada cooperation with various other NGOs and shelters across Europe.

ii Transnational AIDS/STD Prevention among Migrant Prostitutes in Europe Project
http://www.europap.net/links/tampep.htm

iii The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR-UNOG) Geneva, Switzerland
http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm


vi For further elaboration and discourse consult the writer’s *Doktor Arbeit* 2003 forthcoming, Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law Freiburg, Germany.

vii Assessment done by independent experts from the Center of Market Problems, 2000 for UN in Moldova.

viii For more information regarding La Strada and its mandate see http://www.ecn.cz/lastrada/