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Psychological Health Impact of Trafficking (PHIT):

Training for professionals working with (potential) victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation

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PHIT

Psychological Health
Impact of Trafficking
in Human Beings



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Introduction

This training was developed in the framework of the 'Psychological Health Impact of Trafficking (PHIT)' research project. The project focuses on sexual exploitation of female victims from West-Africa, Eastern Europe, national victims in The Netherlands and Latin American victims in Spain. This two-year research project was funded by the Internal Security Fund (ISF) of the European Commission and carried out in Spain and The Netherlands. Over the period of December 2017 – September 2018, interviews were carried out with 50 stakeholders and 15 victims of trafficking (VOTs) in The Netherlands. In addition, interviews with 30 stakeholders and 30 victims were carried out in Spain.

Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) for sexual exploitation has serious psychological health consequences for its victims. Trafficking inflicts different kinds of harm including harm to victims' physical health and psychological wellbeing. The concrete means of coercion used by traffickers, the duration of trafficking and the coping mechanisms of the victim determine the psychological health impact of THB (PHIT), which varies between cases. The overall aim of the project is to improve and optimise the assistance to THB victims (protection) and prosecution of perpetrators by taking into account PHIT.

Human trafficking for sexual exploitation is a serious form of organized crime. Unlike other crimes, which are often marked by a single instance of violence, victims of human trafficking experience a period of repeated sexual assault and abuse. This has serious psychological health consequences and it has implications for victim identification and criminal investigation.

Target group and training goals

This training is intended for professionals working with (potential) victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. The training is particularly aimed at law enforcement officers as front line workers who, in that function, have opportunities to identify victims.

The goals of this training are:

1. To provide an understanding of **pre-trafficking life** of victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation;

2. To provide an understanding of **how traffickers exploit pre-existing vulnerabilities** of their victims and create dependency;
3. To understand **how pre-trafficking experiences and the modus operandi of traffickers, impact victim identification.**

Definition human trafficking

International law¹ speaks of trafficking in human beings when three criteria are met:

Firstly, an activity is needed: for example the recruitment, transport, receipt or harbouring of the victim.

Secondly, the activity is executed with the threat or the actual use of different means of coercion such as force, deception or abduction. When underage victims are involved, this element is not required.

Lastly, the activities are aimed at exploiting the victim. In other words: the purpose or intent of the activities is exploitation.

Trafficking in human beings is a process in which multiple activities are executed, possibly by multiple individuals. One person may be responsible for recruiting the victim, another for transporting the victim and yet another for the exploitation. The definition of trafficking makes all individuals involved, even the ones with marginal roles, punishable.

Multiple forms of exploitation exist. Sexual exploitation is well-known. But other forms also occur, such as forced labour, forced criminal activities, forced begging or removal of organs.

Trafficking of human beings is often associated with the crossing of international borders. However, this is not a prerequisite for trafficking.

Optional: Discussion on the definition of (forced) prostitution, human trafficking and exploitation (appendix 1).

¹ United Nations, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (A/45/49) (15 November 2000) (“the Palermo Protocol”).

Pre-trafficking vulnerabilities and modus operandi traffickers

Life pre-trafficking

This training specifically concerns the sexual exploitation of women. All women can become victims of trafficking. What are risk factors of becoming a victim? In other words, which groups of women have a higher chance of falling victim to human trafficking?

To be able to answer this question, knowledge is needed of the life of the victims before they were trafficked. Which characteristics made them more vulnerable to becoming a victim? Let's take a closer look at the life stories of three victims who were trafficked. One woman is from the Netherlands, one from a West-African country and the third from Eastern Europe.

[Divide the participants into three groups and hand out the case studies from appendix 2]

The case studies describe the situation of the three different victims, who were sexually exploited in the Netherlands. Please read through their statements and try to discern the risk factors for human trafficking. What made these women vulnerable to becoming a victim? Try to put yourself in the position of the trafficker: what elements of these women's stories can be used to recruit, exploit, manipulate and control the women concerned?

[Discuss the outcomes of the group discussions]

In some cases, the risk factors for trafficking are easier to identify than in other cases.

West-Africa: This is the life story of one of the clients that stayed at Fier². Her story is exemplary for many West-African women that are trafficked in Europe. Research

² Fier is a Dutch organization which provides nationwide expertise and specialized care in the field of violence in unequal relationships, including human trafficking. Fier's mission is to prevent violence, to stop violence and to offer help with the consequences of violence. The main areas of expertise are domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, child abuse, adverse childhood experiences and honour crimes. Fier offers protection, safe shelter and specialized treatment programmes; outpatient care; an online chat service; research and advise. Apart

among the clients of the shelter indicated that a majority of the West–African women find themselves in difficult circumstances: the majority of these women lost one or both parents at a young age and grew up outside of their nuclear family; a majority received little (primary school) or no education; almost all of them experienced violence (physical, sexual or psychological) during their childhood; lastly, a large part ran away from their community to escape female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage.³

The Netherlands: it seems more difficult for this national case to identify vulnerabilities. It is more challenging because little is known of life pre–trafficking. With only the information that is given, the (young) woman involved could possibly be described as someone leading a dissolute life with multiple sexual partners or someone who enjoys experimenting with sex. But could she possibly be a victim of trafficking? Is she showing signs of sexual exploitation? It is hard to tell with the limited information provided. If the following information had also been available, would a different judgement be made about the possibility of a human trafficking case?

When Ellen was in kindergarten, her parents got divorced. Direct cause for the divorce was the fact that her father displayed transgressive behaviour towards Ellen. After the divorce, her mother found a new partner. He, too, turned out to be bad news. He peeped at Ellen and he was too ‘uninhibited’ and ‘amicable’. Ellen loved him, but Ellen’s mom thought this was unacceptable behaviour and she also showed him the door. After Ellen turned twelve, it became clear that during the weekends when Ellen and her brother stayed with their biological father, the transgressive behaviour, the impertinence and touching had continued.

Given this background, it is understandable that it was impossible for Ellen to establish her boundaries and deal with boys and sex in a ‘normal’ way. Perhaps she was not even aware of what those boundaries were in the first place, due to a history in which her boundaries had never been respected in any shape or form.

Girls can display sexualized and promiscuous behaviour as a response to sexual abuse, molestation or (group) rape, or after having sex when they were too young and not yet ready for it. While some abused girls in response cannot tolerate the touch of men at all anymore, others have sex with boys and men almost by compulsion. No longer as a victim, but as the person in charge, as the one who is in control of things and who determines what happens. They exchange their victim role for the role of the person in charge, which often expresses itself as highly sexualized behaviour.⁴

from treatment, Fier focusses on rebuilding a safe future through the re–establishing of healthy relationships, engagement in sports activities, education and work.

³ For exact percentages, see: Doornbos, B. (2017). *Kwetsbaar, buiten beeld en in onzekerheid: (West)–Afrikaanse slachtoffers van mensenhandel*. Leeuwarden: Fier.

⁴ Text is copied and translated from: Dijke, A. V., Lamers, F., Talhout, M., Terpstra, L., Werson, S., & Wind, A. D. (2012). *Wie zijn de meiden van Asja. De gang naar de jeugdprostitutie*. Amsterdam: SWP.

Eastern Europe:

In this case we see a lot of possible vulnerabilities: domestic violence, poverty, hunger, the loss of parents, lack of education, lack of opportunities, child sexual abuse and rape. Against this background, Simona later made a decision to accept an offer to travel to The Netherlands, being aware that she would (continue to) work in the sex industry, but in the hope of better circumstances. The police invested in building trust and putting safety first. This helped Simona disclose the full circumstances of her background and exploitation: threats to her mother, threats of exposure, threats of deportation (as a non EU-citizen), threats of and actual sexual and physical violence and being forced to pay more than 75% of her earnings to the owner of the sex club and pimps.

Exploiting vulnerabilities: modus operandi of traffickers

It is possible to extract from the case studies certain vulnerabilities and to link them with modus operandi from the traffickers. In other words: how do traffickers make use of women's pre-existing vulnerabilities to lure them into prostitution and control them? In the chart below, some of the vulnerabilities are selected and combined with the modus operandi of the trafficker.

This list is not exhaustive. Four vulnerabilities have been selected. Apart from these four, one can think of other vulnerabilities such as for example a lack of education,⁵ women who are already involved in prostitution at home⁶ or women from ethnic minorities⁷.

Risk factor	Vulnerability	Modus operandi trafficker	Modus operandi description
Mild intellectual disability	(Young) women with mild intellectual disabilities often feel a strong need to be accepted by others. They resolve conflicts by being submissive. They are easily tempted by material gains.	Combination of methods.	Combination of offering attention, grooming, providing reward and applying pressure.

⁵ With no or little education, it is hard for women to imagine life abroad and decide whether an offer is realistic. This creates an immediate dependency on the trafficker. Educated women may also be specifically targeted for a better career abroad.

⁶ In most countries work in prostitution is considered shameful and illegal. For women already involved in prostitution, this creates a vulnerable position.

⁷ Women from these communities can be discriminated against and as such have less possibilities in society.

Social isolation/fleeing home	<p>Life stories of West African women often contain an element of fleeing for violence. This can be in the case of war but also on a family level, in the case of fleeing for an arranged marriage or for FGM.</p> <p>(Young) Dutch women can be in similar situations when running away from their (foster)parents.</p>	Offers help to someone in need	The trafficker pretends to listen to the women and understands their hardships. They offer help to women in need (safety, a 'job'). Since the women left home, they have little protection, no one who warns them and no alternative sources of assistance.
(Sexual) violence	Research continuously demonstrated that victims have experienced violence and/or neglect in their pre-trafficking lives, either physical, sexual or psychological. These experiences can affect their self-esteem and self-image, make them susceptible to attention and normalise abuse.	Loverboy strategies	Contact between victim and trafficker often starts as a normal relationship. Trafficker pretends to care for the victim. The emotional attention is combined with abuse.
Poverty⁸	Women in rough financial situations are more prone to accept an offer from a trafficker. Often single mothers or women who take care of their parents/relatives are prepared to take risks when it comes to accepting job offers.	Offering a (reasonable) salary	The trafficker will make a job offer but at the same time will deduct all sorts of costs from the salary, for example travel expenses, costs for protection, for clothing, penalties etcetera.

These four selected vulnerabilities and modus operandi are put in a table. It makes the differences between the different risk factors and modus operandi of traffickers comprehensible. However, it is important to realise that these categories are artificially distinguished. In practice traffickers make use of multiple means of deception and coercion, often combined with threats and violence.

⁸ The term 'relative' poverty is often used: a situation in which a person does not have the necessary means to live the life she has envisioned.

Cooperation with police

Only a minority of Dutch trafficking victims file charges. The Centre against Human Trafficking (Centrum tegen Kinder- en mensenhandel; CKM) conducted research on this particular topic. The question they tried to answer is: which factors influence the decision to file charges? They interviewed victims and stakeholders within police and justice departments. The results were incorporated into a short film:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ppp9_V5zYxo (3:14 min)

[English translation of the clip is available in the appendix 3]

The research was particularly about Dutch under age victims of sexual exploitation. However, the conclusions are also relevant for adults and foreign women. In the video, it is explained that in order for victims to press charges they go through three steps:

- 1) The victim needs to label her experiences as a crime/offence;
- 2) The victims need to conquer her fear of retaliation;
- 3) In the last phase, the phase of action, the victim needs to come to the decision that filing charges is the most desirable option.

A lot of knowledge is available on the second topic (fear of cooperating with the police). In the video, the fear of retaliation was mentioned. Other thresholds might be fear of deportation, blackmailing, shame, guilt, distrust of authorities/police and voodoo.

Optional: Information on how voodoo is used by traffickers (appendix 4).

Optional: Group exercise on experiencing shame (appendix 5).

The remainder of this workshop will focus on the first step: labelling the victims' experiences as a crime. There are two sides to this process of identification.

- 1) Outsiders, like police and social workers, need to recognize a victim as such. They need to determine: an offence has taken place, in which a perpetrator is involved and has made a victim. It concerns the acknowledgement of victimhood by others.
- 2) The identification by the victim herself, self-identification. She has to realise: what was done to me is wrong, therefore, I am a victim.

These two processes, self-identification of victims and identification of victimhood by others, will be explored during the last session of this workshop.

The ideal victim

Everyone has ideas concerning the ideal victim and how to recognize one. You, me, but also the women involved, have certain assumptions about what a victim looks like (what is she wearing?); how she behaves; how and about which topics she speaks (during the interrogation); what choices she makes (filing charges). Victims are often expected to be passive, helpless, afraid, needy and vulnerable. This is a stereotypical image of a victim. These expectations can complicate the process of identification of a victim. When victims do not meet our expectations, in other words, when they do not look like victims, they are not identified as such. This way, victims can be overlooked by others and by themselves.

Optional: Group discussion about the ideal victim (appendix 6).

The general view on trafficking is coloured by these stereotypical ideas on victimhood. Women who are exploited in the sex industry are to meet certain criteria to be a legitimate victim. They are not allowed to have any suspicions that they were recruited for prostitution. They need to be forcefully abducted and locked up to prevent them from escaping the traffickers. They need to have faced extreme (physical) violence.

The reality of trafficking is more complex. Women may know that they will work in the sex industry, but not under which circumstances. The trafficker might force her to perform certain sexual acts or have a minimal amount of clients a day or pay her less than agreed. The trafficker can use different methods to keep exploiting the victim: (the threat of) violence can be used, but often more complex forms of force are used such as deception. Such cases qualify as human trafficking.

Implications for practice: (self) identification of victims

Sometimes the ideas about victims of trafficking prevent identification. In this section, we will take a closer look at the ways that the risk factors and the modus operandi adopted to these vulnerabilities hamper (self) identification of victimhood.

Risk factor	Example	(self)identification
Mild intellectual disability	In one case a woman with an intellectual disability was asked a very fundamental question for establishing whether (forced) prostitution took place: did you have sex with men? Her denial confused everyone. As it turned out: she had anal sex with customers and did not count this as sexual activities. ⁹	For the victim herself it is difficult to establish that she is being manipulated. As in the example, a victim might be convinced she is cooperating and telling the truth. The (incorrect) information she provides, hinders identification by police.
Social isolation/fleeing home	A girl interviewed showed the reasoning of victims: "It is my own fault, so I will not ask for sympathy. I said yes in the first place. Now things are not going the way I wanted to: I did not receive any money. That is no reason to press charges". An expert added: "The victim is also blamed by others: You had to run away from home and now you end up giving blowjobs because you have to get a place to sleep. That is your own responsibility". ¹⁰	The women themselves 'chose' to flee their home/community. All difficulties that follow are seen as consequences of the decision they made. The trafficker will emphasize that (s)he helped the victim in this difficult situation. Non-EU citizens, especially West-African women, are often accused of being untruthful about their trafficking experience in order to acquire a residence permit. Previous research has determined that these assumptions are false. Yet, these assumptions persist and may interfere with victim identification.
(Sexual) violence	Quote of a victim: "In some ways, I see myself as a victim, but in other ways, I don't. I wasn't in chains. In the beginning, I had chosen this guy, so it had been my own choice. Then again, if you can't leave... At the same time, it was out of my own free will that I moved in with him and that I dropped all of my friends. That was my choice. So, I don't know whether I am a victim or not. I don't think I deserve everything that	In a child's early years, the image of the self, the other and the world is formed. The way they are taken care of by parents is established as the norm. Women who experienced a lot of violence in their lives, especially from loved ones, normalise abuse. A trafficker often offers this familiar combination of abuse and intimacy. Victims who are in a relationship

⁹ The confusion can also arise out of seemingly less important questions like: how many days a week did you work? How many hours a day did you work? For women with an intellectual disability these questions can be hard to answer.

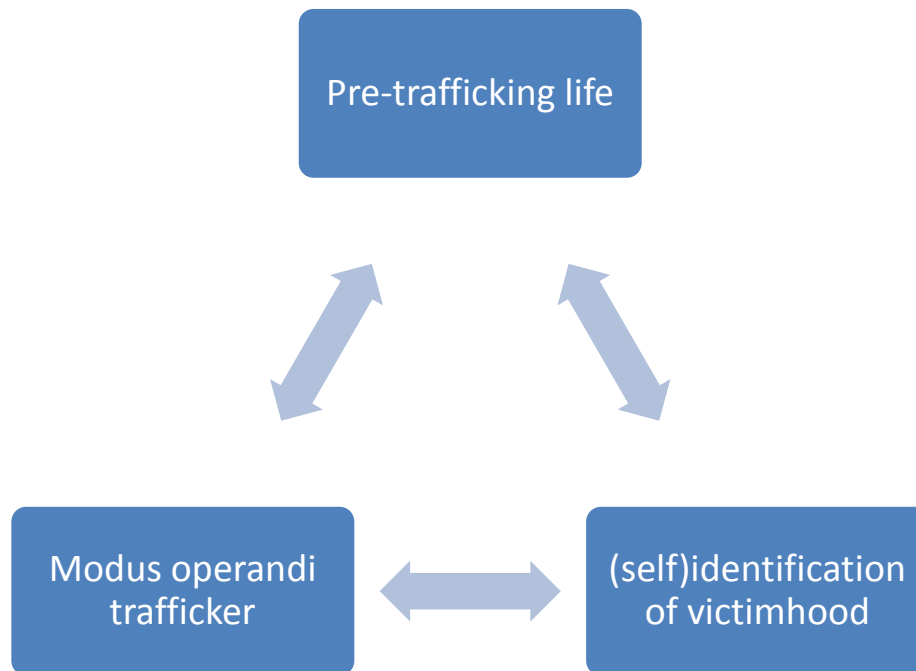
¹⁰ See: Leermakers, S. D. E., Simons, E. I., & Noteboom, F. (2018). *Aangifte doe je niet. Een studie naar factoren die een negatieve invloed hebben op de aangiftebereidheid van Nederlandse, minderjarige slachtoffers van seksuele uitbuiting*. Den Haag: CKM.

	has happened to me, but I probably should have seen certain things coming much earlier. I was very naïve". ¹¹	with their abuser are often ambiguous about pressing charges. They are loyal to their trafficker who is the cause of misery but also of attention. For outsiders, it might be difficult to understand why women go back to an abuser and consequently might argue that the situation is not severe enough.
Poverty	Nigerian victims often promise to pay back the travel expenses to their traffickers for bringing them to Europe. However, they do not know the amount of debt and how fast they can repay it. When they arrive in Europe they find out their debts might be as high as 60.000 euro. Moreover, their job is badly paid and the debt is increased with interest.	The women are still hopeful they will pay off their debts and will eventually earn for themselves. They consider themselves economic migrants and view the deal with the trafficker as a business-like transaction.

Optional: Read the theory on the influence of trauma on the memory and implications for police identification of victims (appendix 7).

¹¹ See: Dijke, A. V., Lamers, F., Talhout, M., Terpstra, L., Werson, S., & Wind, A. D. (2012). *Wie zijn de meiden van Asja. De gang naar de jeugdprostitutie*. Amsterdam: SWP.

Conclusion



Police officers are not social workers. Psychological assistance is not their primary task. Then why is it crucial for them to gain insight into the pre-trafficking lives of victims? As this training has shown, the answer is twofold:

- 1) The modus operandi or the way in which traffickers recruit, exploit and control their victims is based on the vulnerabilities of victims. By exploring the life histories of the victims involved, we learn about the strategies traffickers employ.
- 2) Within the process of identification of victims, the identification by the victim and by others was distinguished. The vulnerabilities of the women and the modus operandi of traffickers influence the process of identification of victimhood. Both ways (self-identification and identification by others).

Appendix 1: human trafficking

The following fragment is taken from O'Connell Davidson article (2006) called 'Will the real sex slave please stand up?' She describes three cases of women (forcefully) working in the sex industry. Read the text below.

The Spectrum of Working Conditions and Employment Relations in 'Working Flats' in London

In November 2005, Gavril Dulghieru, a Moldovan living in London, was convicted for conspiracy to facilitate illegal immigration, misuse of stolen credit cards, forgery, money laundering and conspiracy to traffic for prostitution and sexual exploitation. The women he trafficked worked twenty-hour shifts in brothels in Park Lane, Mayfair and Soho, were fed only one meal a day, and charged for the use of cutlery:

They were forced to have sex with up to 40 men a day for as little as £10 a time to pay off £20,000 debts each – the price for which they were "bought". They were charged rent, and subjected to fines if they refused anal or unprotected sex or a client was not attracted to them... One 23-year-old described how she had to pay £300 per day to live locked in a shared basement and her captors threatened to kill her family. Like many trafficking victims, the computer graduate was lured to Britain by promises of a respectable, well-paid job in a hotel or restaurant but ended up in a brothel: "I believed they would kill my family," she told the court. "I thought I hadn't a way out of this situation. I didn't think I had a life in front of me. I wanted to escape but everything was locked. We were locked up all the time. I was told I need to go with clients and I needed to do sex with them. I felt very bad. The first time I wasn't able to talk afterwards." (Cowan, 2005).

The 23-year-old quoted above conforms closely to popular understandings and images of a VoT [Victim of Trafficking]. She was tricked into travelling to the UK with the promise of 'respectable' work, she was locked into a building and forced (both through the use of death threats against her family and through demands to repay a debt) to provide sexual services, and she was psychologically devastated by the experience.

A second example of working conditions and employment relations comes from an interview with a woman, 'Pat', a former sex worker who runs three 'walk up' brothels or flats in Soho, indirectly employing nine sex workers, only one of whom is a British national. Pat does not actively recruit workers either in the UK or abroad, and so has no involvement in facilitating or arranging the migration of the sex workers she employs. Instead, women looking for work (who may or may not be acting under duress from third parties who arranged their migration) telephone or knock on the door and ask to be taken onto her books. The flats are open for business 24 hours per day, every day of the year except Christmas Day and New Year's Day, and the sex workers work 12-hour shifts on a roster system. Only one woman at a time works in each of the flats, which means that on average, every worker on Pat's books takes on between four and five shifts per week, and so works for somewhere between 48 and 60 hours per week. As it is illegal to directly employ a sex worker, Pat's workers do not receive a set wage per shift. Instead, they are required to pay Pat £350 for every shift they work – a sum which in theory pays for the rental of workspace plus other services supplied by Pat (advertising the brothel, employing a maid to take phone calls and clean the flat, provision of food, tea and coffee, also items necessary to their work such as tissues, clean sheets, uniforms, and finally safety precautions such as CCTV).

However, whilst the relationship between Pat and the sex worker is, in this sense, constructed as a contract between two independent entrepreneurs rather than an employment relation, it is Pat who sets the rates for services and lays down rules concerning working practices, and so, in effect, exerts close control over their work rate. Walk up brothels in Soho cater primarily to demand for cheap, quick sexual services. Pat's pricing system, which is based on extremely short time units, reflects this. The cheapest service available at £20 is either penetrative sex in the missionary position or oral sex for ten minutes. If the client wants both penetrative and oral sex in his ten minute slot, it will cost him £25; if he wants oral sex plus penetrative sex in a position other than missionary, it will cost him £30. The next time unit is fifteen minutes, then twenty minutes, then thirty minutes, and then to the highest possible unit, one hour, which costs £120 for oral and penetrative sex. Anal sex costs an additional £100, and the prices for oral sex without a condom, and for ejaculating over the worker's breasts or body are also much higher (£140) regardless of the unit of time.

If all the clients that arrived during a shift were to ask for the cheapest service, then in order to pay Pat the shift fee of £350, a worker would need to service 18 clients before even beginning to earn for herself. And if she continued on to service a further 17 clients, she would – like Gavril Dulghieru's forced prostitutes – in effect be having sex with a large number of men for as little as £10 a time. In practice, many clients do ask for more expensive services, and/or can be persuaded to spend more on extras, and sex workers rely in particular upon regular customers who tend to spend longer with them and request more expensive services. Indeed, Pat claims that during a 12-hour shift, workers regularly gross £700, so that they usually take home £350 per day. And yet it is clearly the case that her workers could, on bad days, experience a strong financial pressure to engage in acts that they might otherwise refuse, and that potentially carry serious health risks, such as anal sex, or oral sex without a condom.

As we only interviewed Pat, and not any of her workers, it is not possible to say whether any of the migrants she indirectly employs are working to pay off debts incurred during the process of migration, but other research with migrant women working in the sex industry suggests that it is likely that some are (see Andrijasevic, 2003, Agustín, 2005, for example). The need to repay such debt, especially if combined with the pressure to pay for accommodation in London, and to support dependants back home, could thus operate as strong pressure to continue to work for Pat, also to accept a volume of clients and to provide services that the worker would not otherwise agree to.

A third example comes from an interview with 'Ava', another former sex worker who runs a 'working flat' in the East End of London, and offers indirect employment to eleven sex workers, six of whom are British nationals. The flat is open between 11 am and 10 pm, and each day, two sex workers work the eleven-hour shift together. Ava does not, therefore, offer full time employment to the women who work for her (though they may end up working as many hours per week as Pat's workers, since some of them are also indirectly employed in other working flats or massage parlours). Like Pat, Ava does not actively recruit workers – women approach her for work – but as noted in relation to Pat, it is possible that the non-British nationals she employs are working to pay off debts to third parties who arranged their migration. However, if this were the case, the women concerned would not be exposed to the same degree of exploitation as those who work for Pat. Ava provides all the services that Pat provides her workers, but does not charge them a session fee for so doing. Instead, each worker's takings are split equally between Ava and the worker. This means that the worker is not forced to shoulder the cost when trade is slow, and it is not possible for a worker to end up owing money to the house at the end of a session, as it is in establishments that operate the session fee system. Ava sets the prices for services, and they are set at a similar level to those in Pat's Soho walk up. However, unlike at Pat's, there is no ten minute fee and the price structure and employment relation is not designed to encourage a high throughput of low price trade.

Ava's 'house rules' are also distinctive, leading to different working practices. Ava does not permit her workers to provide any services without condoms, indeed, this rule is important to the way in which she markets her flat in her internet advertising as a clean, safe place to buy sexual services. Furthermore, she actively encourages those who work for her to refuse to provide services that they do not feel comfortable about providing. She explained that she tells workers that it is wrong to assume that they will lose business if they do not agree to anything and everything clients request, saying:

If anything, it's the other way around, the less you offer, the busier you can be. There's the safety aspect of it, and also the fact that then the guys can look at you and think, "Well, what she does offer, she must like, because she feels free not to offer what she doesn't like".

Ava does not have a high turnover of staff. In fact, several of the women who work for her have been with her for a number of years, something that doubtless testifies to the fact that the working conditions and earnings opportunities she provides are good relative to other similar establishments.

Questions:

- To which extent do concepts like (forced) prostitution, sexual exploitation and human trafficking differ and overlap?
- Use the case studies provided by O'Connell Davidson to discuss where a free choice ends and where coercion begins.
- In your work, have you encountered situations in which you were in severe doubt whether the activities were forced?

Appendix 2: case studies

Case study West Africa¹²

Blessing is from a small village in the countryside of a West African country. She spends a few years on a local religious school and is unable to read or write. Blessing's parents are farmers and every day she helps them work the land. Blessing is raped when she is thirteen and as a result, has a child. This brings shame to the family and the community looks down on Blessing and her child. Years later an older man is prepared to marry Blessing and Blessing is forced to accept the proposal. She begs her father not to marry but he forces her with violence. Blessing has no other option than to run away with her daughter. In the capital city, she is able to find a job. Someone offers her a job abroad with a higher salary. At the age of 21, she leaves for Europe. She leaves her daughter behind.

Case study Netherlands¹³:

Ellen tells her story: I've had sex with several different guys. There was never any coercion. Quite the contrary, I've always been sexually active. When I was eleven years old, I was already taking nude pictures of myself and emailing them to kids in my school. I also behaved rather provocatively towards boys. I thought that that was thrilling. But I never pushed through. I was too scared. I think my boyfriend had grown tired of that. A year ago, he forced me to sleep with him. If that was rape? No, that's not how I see it. I had always been the one provoking him. That's when the verbal abuse started. He also pressed me to have sex with his friends. I was quite afraid of him. Bizarre, huh? I stalked him, too. I felt extremely pressured by him. At one point, I simply decided to just go to bed with his friends. No, I wasn't paid for it. Yes, it was done voluntarily. I could have said no, right? I don't really know how to put it. I found boys extremely exciting, but I did not want to sleep with them. After it had finally happened, I didn't really care all that much anymore.

Case study Eastern Europe¹⁴:

Simona is 27 years old and a Ukrainian citizen. She works in a sex club in the south of The Netherlands. Simona grew up in a small village in the Ukraine. Her father was an alcoholic and abusive towards her mother. The family lived in poverty and did not have enough money for food. At age 12, their father disappeared and her mother fell ill. Simona had to take care of her mother. Later, her brother, who now provided for her and her mother, was arrested. The money ran out. At age 14 she was recruited into prostitution by friends of her brother and suffered a violent rape. When her mother became bed-bound and in need of permanent care, Simona was offered work in the sex industry in The Netherlands and accepted the offer in the hopes of a better income and more opportunities. When the trafficker assaulted her in public in the sex club for not earning him enough money, the police became involved. Applying a new method for interviewing vulnerable victims, Simona was comfortable enough to disclose her full story.

¹² Case study taken from: Doornbos, B. (2017). *Kwetsbaar, buiten beeld en in onzekerheid: (West)-Afrikaanse slachtoffers van mensenhandel*. Leeuwarden: Fier.

¹³ Text is copied and translated from: Dijke, A. V., Lamers, F., Talhout, M., Terpstra, L., Werson, S., & Wind, A. D. (2012). *Wie zijn de meiden van Asja. De gang naar de jeugdprostitutie*. Amsterdam: SWP.

¹⁴ Werson, H. (2012). *De fatale fuik: achter de schermen van mensenhandel en gedwongen prostitutie in Nederland*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Carrera.

Appendix 3: translation video clip

Video: Loverboy victims' willingness to report to the police – CKM

Available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ppp9_V5zYxo

1. It is estimated that 1,320 young Dutch women between the ages of 12 to 17 years old fall victim to sexual exploitation by loverboys. This is a reprehensible name for a what is in fact a human trafficker.
2. Only one in ten of these 1,320 girls are recognized as victims. The others remain invisible.
3. Of the girls who are recognised, only a small percentage reports to the police. Although the exact number is unknown, professionals estimate that this concerns about ten or twenty percent.
4. Why don't the women report to the police? There are a multitude of reasons for this. Moreover, no decision-making process is the same. We'll take a closer look at this through Jennifer's story.
5. This is Jennifer. Jennifer fell victim to a loverboy.
6. What are Jennifer's options now?
7. Victims go through a three-step-process in deciding to report to the police or to provide a statement.
8. The first step is for Jennifer to label the events as a crime and recognize that what has been done to her is reprehensible and criminal. This is where it often goes wrong. Because Jennifer thinks it was her choice to have sex with strangers, even though it was her loverboy who arranged the transportation, the venue and the customers. For she agreed the first time her loverboy manipulated her to have sex in exchange for money.
9. If Jennifer does recognize that she is a victim, she arrives at step two.
10. Fear for the loverboy will dominate. The threat can be directed at Jennifer herself or her family, or the loverboy may threaten to publish sexually explicit material.
11. The degree to which Jennifer can cope with this fear will determine how she deals with step 3: the action phase.
12. In step 3, there are three possibilities for Jennifer to choose from.
13. The first option is the so-called personal solution. Jennifer can choose to flee or she can comply with the wishes of her loverboy, so that the threat will not be executed.
14. The second option for Jennifer is to twist her reality. She wants to reduce her fears. This usually results in her blaming herself for what happened. This is also called victim-blaming.
15. The third option is for Jennifer to choose to involve the authorities and start a criminal procedure. She reports her loverboy to the police.
16. Research shows that most victims do not start a criminal procedure. How come?
17. The degree of trust Jennifer has in the police's ability to protect her largely predetermines her preparedness to file charges. Also, she dreads the lengthy and taxing criminal procedures. She has to testify several times and is afraid that people will not believe her. The low sentences are another reason not to press charges.
18. How can we help these young women?
19. Have a look at our website to see how you can contribute: maakhetzichtbaar.nl.

OPINION

A Voodoo Curse on Human Traffickers

By Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani

March 24, 2018

ABUJA, Nigeria — Human traffickers have officially been cursed. On March 9, Oba Ewuare II, the traditional ruler of the kingdom of Benin, in southern Nigeria, put a voodoo curse on anyone who abets illegal migration within his domain. At the same time, he revoked the curses that leave victims of trafficking afraid that their relatives will die if they go to the police or fail to pay off their debt.

Before being smuggled into Europe, women and girls in the area, which falls in present-day Edo State, are made to sign a contract with the traffickers who finance their journey, promising to pay them thousands of dollars. The agreement is sealed with a voodoo, or juju, ritual, conducted by a spiritual priest, known here as a native doctor. Pieces of their clothing, fingernails or hair are mixed with drops of their blood into a concoction that the women are made to drink.

The oba has authority over all the spiritual priests in the Benin kingdom (not to be confused with the West African country of Benin). He summoned them to his palace that Friday to make his announcement.

David Edebiri, a high-ranking traditional leader, was there, and described to me what happened during the ceremony. First the oba “released all those bound by juju.” Then he put a curse on the head of any priest who makes “any concoction for anybody with a view to promoting any immigration to any part of the world.” This curse, Mr. Edebiri told me, “manifests in various ways: Some may die mysteriously, some may go mad in the street.”

¹⁵ Nwaubani, Adaobi Tricia (24 March 2018). A Voodoo Curse on Human Traffickers. *The New York Times*. Accessed 29 April 2019. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/24/opinion/sunday/voodoo-curse-human-traffickers.html>

What the oba has done is likely to be more effective than anything the international anti-trafficking community has managed to do after millions of dollars and many years.

The Benin kingdom of the Edo people has a proud history dating back to the 13th century. But lately Edo State has gained notoriety as a hub of sexual exploitation. According to the United Nations, over 90 percent of the thousands of women taken from Nigeria to Europe to work as prostitutes are coming from Edo.

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Edo is not one of Nigeria's poorest states. But in the early 1980s women there started traveling to Italy to trade in gold and beads, and "saw a thriving market in prostitution," said Kokunre Agbontaen-Eghafona, a professor at the University of Benin and a researcher for the International Organization for Migration. She believes this "founders factor" is the main reason Edo has become such a center of human trafficking.

During a reporting trip there in 2016, I came across heaps of secondhand winter clothes for sale to those planning to make the journey to Europe. I also met girls who had traveled thousands of miles to find a trafficker who would send them there.

The oba's intervention was probably motivated by a recent CNN series on human trafficking that focused on Edo. Mr. Edebiri said that the portrayal of the kingdom as a "den of illicit activity" outraged him and his colleagues. Around the same time, Julie Okah-Donli, the director of Nigeria's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, paid the oba a visit. She said she told him that it was difficult to prosecute traffickers because the victims worried about breaking their oaths.

It is all well and good to imagine Africa as a Wakanda, where technology rules and everything works. But Africa is not a Wakanda. At least, not yet. We must use what Africa has today to get it to where we want it to be.

Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani is a journalist and the author of the forthcoming young adult novel "Buried Beneath the Baobab Tree."

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Appendix 5: group exercise on shame

A list of general thresholds in pressing charges is given in many publications about human trafficking. It is a valuable enumeration but it does not necessarily make us understand the weight of these powers. This training concerns sexual exploitation and as such, shame is often an emotion involved. This exercise allows us to begin understanding what challenges the victims face.

Ask the group to think about the most embarrassing sexual situation they have had. Give them some time to consider this. Then walk around the room and announce that you will pat one person on the shoulder who then has to share their experience with the group. Walk around the room and let the tension rise. Do not pick a candidate but instead point out the shame, tension and anticipation that is felt. Asking her to speak about sexual acts, go into detail about her experiences, is a big thing to ask and a huge threshold in itself for victims to come forward.

Appendix 6: the ideal victim

Nils Christie is a well-known author that has written about the ideal victim. In his 1986 article he mentions an example of a victim in its most classic sense:

“Let me give you one from my own culture: the little old lady on her way home in the middle of the day after having cared for her sick sister. If she is hit on the head by a big man who thereafter grabs her bag and uses the money for liquor or drugs – in that case, we come in my country [Finland], close to the ideal victim” (...).

From this example, he deducts five requirements which a victim (and perpetrator) needs to fulfil:

- (1) The victim is weak. Sick, old or very young people are particularly well suited as ideal victims.
- (2) The victim was carrying out a respectable project – caring for her sister.
- (3) She was where she could not possibly be blamed for being – in the street during the daytime.
- (4) The offender was big and bad.
- (5) The offender was unknown and in no personal relationship to her” (...).

Questions:

- Christie starts his article with a few questions: “Have you ever been victim? When was that? Where was it? What characterized the situation? How did you react? How did your surroundings react?” (These questions can be posed to the group but do not need to be discussed. It can also function as a means of reflection).
- Christie mentions five criteria an ideal victim needs to fulfil. Do you recognize these in the way our community thinks about crime and victimhood (examples: rape of a virgin versus a sex-worker versus rape within marriage; a man as the victim of violence etcetera)?
- Have you ever doubted a person who claimed victimhood (either within your job or in your personal life)? What caused the ambiguity?
- Are the categories of victim and perpetrator mutually exclusive?

Appendix 7: trauma and memory

Trauma can influence the memory. The effects of trauma on memory may pose challenges for front line workers when questioning possible victims. Similarly, it can complicate the identification process of possible victims of human trafficking. The following excerpt¹⁶ explains the main concepts central to the debate on trauma and the memory:

When assessing the quality of recollection as a function of the memory itself, a number of terms are important to consider. Central [...] are the terms consistency, accuracy and completeness – terms which are frequently muddled together. In order to prevent confusion when debating the quality of traumatic memories, it is important that the terminology be defined briefly:

- Accurate: agreement between a memory and the objective, actual event.
- Inaccurate: lack of agreement between a memory and the objective, actual event.
- Complete: all details of an event are correctly reminded.
- Incomplete: some details of an event are not reminded correctly:
 - Omission: some details have disappeared from the memory.
 - Commission: new details have been added to the memory.
 - Distortion: some details of the memory have been changed.
 - Consistent: to give the same information at different moments.
- Inconsistency: changing the given information throughout time:
 - Omission: a decrease of information in the course of time.
 - Commission: an increase of information in the course of time.

Another article describes the main elements that can influence memory¹⁷ and lists them in the following table:

Forgetting	With the passage of time details can be forgotten and an increasingly larger part of the memory has to be reconstructed. This allows room for error and decreases the reliability of the memory.
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¹⁶ Bloemen, E., Vloeberghs, E., & Smits, C. (2006). Psychological and psychiatric aspects of recounting traumatic events by asylum seekers. Bruin R, Reneman M, Bloemen E. *Medico-legal reports and the Istanbul Protocol in asylum procedures*. Utrecht/Amsterdam: Pharos, Amnesty International, Dutch Council for Refugees.

¹⁷ Hupperetz, M., Nierop, N., Ter Beek, M., Van den Eshof, P., Van Beek, M. (2018). De invloed van trauma op de accurateheid van verklaringen. *Nederlands juristenblad* 4–5, afl. 18.

Source confusion	The witness has observed or heard something, but when retrieving the memory, does not remember exactly which specific information he retrieved from which source (television, internet, fantasy or their own observation).
Scripting	An incomplete memory is completed without the witness being conscious of this process. This completing of missing elements is done by using certain schemes: patterns of how a common event usually occurs.
Interference	Old knowledge on an event is 'overwritten' when receiving new information, which makes the retrieval of the original memory increasingly difficult.

Note that when someone experiences a similar event several times, source confusion, scripting and interference can conflate memories of these events. This is particularly the case with victims of human trafficking and a period of sustained sexual abuse.

Exercise, memory test:

- Show the group a list of the following words:
 - o Rape
 - o Scream
 - o Wounded
 - o Knife
 - o Red
 - o Cut
 - o Pain
- Give the group some time to try and remember them. Then move on discuss one or more of the questions below before coming back to the next part of this exercise.
- Show the group the list of the following words:
 - o Cut
 - o Knife
 - o Blood
 - o Rape
 - o Scream
 - o Victim
 - o Wounded
- Can they look at these words and count the number of words they still remember? Which words have been in the list that you had studied before?

- Now show the group the list of original words again. The words 'blood' and 'victim' were not in the original list. However there probably were people who did remember these words as one of the words that had been shown before. These are called 'lure words.' There is a strong association between the words and the combination of the words cut knife red might have easily lured the word blood.

Questions:

- Can you provide an example from your practical experience of a testifying victim whose credibility was disputed? Please explain what made that the credibility of this testimony was doubted. Try to refer to the main concepts in box 1.
- Research has shown that the testimony of persons who display emotion is more likely to be judged as truthful than that of a person who remains impassive, likewise it is shown that the testimony of persons who are very sure about their story is more likely to be judged as truthful than that of a person who is insecure. However, neither emotion, nor 'sureness' influences the accuracy of a statement. Do you recognise this from your experience?
- Equally, the way of phrasing questions, can influence the response. For example, the question 'how fast was the car driving as it crashed into the truck?' is shown to trigger a difference of about 20 kilometre an hour to the question 'what was the speed of the car at the time of the incident?'. This is explained by the words 'fast' and 'crashing' implying speed. Do you have other examples of phrasing questions?
- Some argue that a witness who received trauma therapy, is more likely to be susceptible to be influenced by others in their testimony. Therefore it is argued that it would be best to interview a potential victim as soon as possible after identification, to prevent influencing or misattribution of memory. Others argue that therapy improves the ability of potential victims to recount traumatic experiences. Please discuss.