

Silent Suffering:
A Critique of Sex Trafficking Policy in
the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic

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Introduction

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism across central and eastern Europe in the late eighties and early nineties ushered in a new stage of history for this part of the world. The formerly communist and Eastern Bloc countries each went along their separate paths; some quickly gained EU and NATO membership, others fell into deep economic recession, and still others broke out into civil war. This change in the international system also led to a darker, more sinister trend: the fourth wave in global human trafficking.

Human trafficking ranks third in the world in terms of profit, behind drug trafficking and the criminal arms trade. The first three waves originated in Southeast Asia, Northern Africa, and Latin America, respectively. This most recent wave is the largest of all four. The chaos that immediately followed the collapse of communism in Europe resulted in varied reactions to transitions in each country, and this is no different with human trafficking; some countries suffer this problem more than others. The Czech Republic and the Russian Federation are two post-communist countries whose paths sharply diverged. However, trafficking is a serious problem in both of them. Both the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation have failed to address human trafficking successfully in their national policies. Instead, they have downplayed the issue and have only dealt with it when facing pressure domestically and abroad. Lack of efforts by the administrations of these countries minimizes the problem to the point where they are either nonexistent or cosmetic at best. Furthermore, the actions that they have taken so far do not address many factors of sex trafficking, such as a trafficked person's agency, complicity by state structures and home communities, and the swiftly changing structure of the trafficking apparatus itself.

The focus of this project is to examine two very different countries, describe why trafficking is a problem for these countries, and explain why they have failed to address this problem. Much of the study conducted on human trafficking looks at it as a transnational problem, and only delves into national narratives in order to situate a state in the global situation of trafficking. Often, studies only compare countries when talking about migration between them and movement of trafficked persons across borders. The intent of this study is to fill a gap in trafficking scholarship, and provide a type of variational study on two actors in the region. Trafficking is indeed a transnational phenomenon, but to understand it at the transnational level, we need to understand it at the national level as well.¹ Women who are trafficked are not themselves transnational: they live in national communities and cannot be separated from their national contexts.

The Czech Republic and the Russian Federation differ in how they handled political and economic transition because of many cultural, geographical and historical reasons that set these two countries apart. However, they share many commonalities as well, especially in their attitudes toward and treatment of women. Both countries share the Leninist legacy, which prescribed a particular approach to the treatment of women in a communist society that later had political and economic implications in the nineties and beyond. Both countries also share

¹ While the trafficking situation in Russia is well-documented, some may question the Czech Republic as a choice for this study. The Czech Republic is not the only country which is often ignored or whose human trafficking situation is downplayed. According to statistics compiled by the International Organization for Migration, Czechs and Poles constituted the same percentage of trafficked women in year 2000 (8%). Higher than these two nationalities were Ukrainian (12.4%) and Lithuanian (17.5%), which is a higher percentage than Russian women in the same year (15.1%). These statistics are based on the nationalities of women helped in Germany during the same year. Frank Laczko, Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels and Jana Barthel. "Trafficking in Women from Central and Eastern Europe: A Review of Statistical Data." *International Organization for Migration (IOM)*. September 20, 2002. accessed: June 2, 2012.
<<http://www.belgium.iom.int/STOPConference/Conference%20Papers/Trafficking%20in%20Women%20from%20Central%20and%20Eastern%20Europe%20A%20Review%20of%20Statistical%20Data.pdf> >

patriarchal cultural perceptions on gender that contribute to sex trafficking.

This project focuses primarily on the sex trafficking of women in the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation. Anti-trafficking efforts often concentrate on sex trafficking to the detriment of labor trafficking, but labor trafficking is in fact the more prevalent of the two.² The focus on women in this thesis is not meant to overshadow or silence the men who are also affected by trafficking, but to make the analysis and aim of trafficking policies much more specific and clear. The trafficking of women is deeply rooted in patriarchal culture, and a comparison of trafficking in women versus trafficking in men is a topic in and of itself, beyond the breadth of this paper.

Human trafficking on the global scale has changed so much over the past decade that many of the first initiatives to stem trafficking are no longer applicable, or are simply inadequate. Additionally, the nature of human trafficking makes it notoriously difficult to study and draw solid conclusions. We have been attempting to complete a puzzle for which we have too few pieces. Instead of operating on tropes, stereotypes and extreme models, we would be better served to recognize the shadowy and ever-changing nature of this issue in our fight against it.

² Andrees, Beate, and Patrick Belser. 2009. *Forced labor: coercion and exploitation in the private economy*. Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Chapter 1: Definitions of Terms, Trafficking Process

There are many different definitions and perspectives on trafficking and issues surrounding trafficking. Some are less useful than others, and many only vaguely define trafficking or conflate it with similar yet separate phenomena and trends. The definition of trafficking formulated by the United Nations is the most widely used definition of trafficking. The United Nations' *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons* defines human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the 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 or of the giving of receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation... Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation...”³ This definition appears to address an overlap of migration and prostitution in that trafficking is *forced* migration and *forced* prostitution. However, in light of the reasons for migration and prostitution at large, the UN formulation is not helpful. This definition does not capture the fluidity of trafficking. A migrant or prostitute who is not trafficked may become trafficked while in the process of migration or prostitution. The broadness of the UN definition is both a blessing and a curse: on one hand, it encompasses anything that may be a trafficking situation, while on the other it muddles the differences between trafficking and other seemingly exploitative situations in order to maintain its breadth. We turn now to a discussion of those nuances.

Trafficking is often perceived as a full experience in which someone is either tricked or forced into moving abroad, illegally smuggled across borders, and then placed in slave-like

³ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2004. “United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto.” 42.

conditions, exploited for labor and/or sex. The reality is much more complicated than that: someone can find themselves trafficked at any stage in moving abroad, or they can be trafficked in their own country. Sex trafficking can happen at any point in the migration or prostitutional process. “Trafficking” begins the moment a person is deprived of their freedom of choice and forced to perform labor, sexual or otherwise. For example, some women from other countries in this region move (legally or illegally) to the Czech Republic in hopes to find work. Some of them are unable to find work, and fall prey to traffickers who take advantage of their vulnerability and coerce them into prostitution.⁴ Prostitutes are also highly vulnerable to trafficking, and pimps and traffickers can force them into worse and more exploitative situations.⁵ Domestic trafficking is also a common occurrence, in which someone is deprived of their freedom on their home soil. This type of trafficking most often occurs during internal migration from the countryside to the city, which happens with regularity in both the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic.⁶

Defining and differing between “prostitution” and “sex trafficking” is particularly important as the two terms are often erroneously conflated. Broadly defined, prostitution is “the act of establishing relations with other people that logically culminate in a sexual act with the purpose of obtaining payment in the short term.”⁷ Sociologist Mathilde Darley fleshes out this definition in her study of prostitution in the Czech Republic. Prostitution is a social construct that takes the form of a market where prostitutes supply the sexual demand of their customers.⁸ The focus of the supply in prostitution is the services they provide, and not the prostitutes themselves

⁴ M. Darley 2009. "Prostitution in nightclubs in border areas of the Czech Republic". *Revue Francaise De Sociologie*.50: 99

⁵ Hana Malinova. 1995. "The recent rise in prostitution in the Czech Republic". *Journal of Community Health*. 20 (2): 214

⁶ Ibid., 213 ; Victor Malarek. 2004. *The Natashas: inside the new global sex trade*. New York: Arcade. 90-91

⁷ Darley.,95

⁸ Ibid. 97-98

as a product of consumption. This focus is not meant to minimize the potentially destructive relations between a prostitute and a customer, but to delineate exactly what constitutes that relationship: the exchange of currency for services. To extend further this economic analysis, a laborer in any industry is similarly vulnerable to different types of exploitation from employers or consumers. This relationship is not particular to prostitution, but the risk of exploitation is higher and the nature of the exploitation is much more destructive than usual job exploitation.

Migration and trafficking are also interlinked, as trafficking can be considered a form of forced irregular migration.⁹ However, trafficking can also occur separately from migration, as explained above. The issue of migration is particularly important with regards to the European Union because of the current, overwhelmingly negative politicization of migration into the EU, especially from the east and from the newer member states.¹⁰ The current perception of migrants is that they are terrorists and criminals penetrating the borders of states, and this perception is then projected onto transnational people who are moving across borders for any number of reasons.¹¹ This perception produces a generalized discourse instead of explaining a highly diversified process of globalization, urbanization, unemployment and birthrates,¹² all of which are also factors that push people into trafficking situations.

Most research conducted on human trafficking often categorizes countries into three different groups, based on their international position in relation to the flow of trafficked persons.

Origin countries are those countries from which people are trafficked, transit countries are those

⁹ I will use the term “irregular migration” here as opposed to “illegal migration” in order to avoid the overt criminalization and politicization that the latter term produces. Furthermore, the term “illegal migration” denies the humanity of the migrants and complicates asylum situations. (See Khalid Koser 2005. “Irregular migration, state security and human security”. *Global Commission on International Migration: Policy Analysis.*)

¹⁰ D. Bigo. 2002. “Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease.” *Alternatives* 27: 63

¹¹ Idem.

¹² Ibid. 78

through which traffickers transport trafficked persons, and destination countries are those in which the traffickers exploit the labor of those whom they've trafficked. This categorization was useful immediately following the collapse of communism. At the time, Russia was by and large an origin country,¹³ and the Czech Republic was an origin and transit country.¹⁴ However, globalization and the economic development of the countries in question have changed this situation. According to Dr. Helga Konrad, who is currently the head of the Austria Regional Initiative to Prevent and Combat all Forms of Human Trafficking, categorizing countries into these three groups is no longer a useful analytic tool. Human trafficking has become so transnational that nearly every country plagued with the problem is to some degree an origin, transit, and destination country.¹⁵ However, we can instead use these terms in order to analyze the different aspects of human trafficking within a country, rather than labeling the country as such. For example, when looking at the Czech Republic as a destination, we would break down the populations who are trafficked into the country, to where they are precisely migrating – border towns and urban centers – and so on. This approach clarifies the make up of human trafficking in each individual country, instead of narrowing and limiting the analysis of that country as playing a singular and definitive role in the human trafficking apparatus, thereby rendering certain populations invisible.

Having established an understanding of what trafficking looks like on an international scale, I will now outline the human trafficking apparatus. However, it is important to note that

¹³ Johanna Granville. 2004. "From Russia without Love: The "Fourth Wave" of Global Human Trafficking". *Demokratizatsiya*. 12 (1): 148

¹⁴ Government of the Czech Republic: Ministry of the Interior. 2005. *National Strategy of the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings*. 9

¹⁵ Helga Konrad, "Recent Developments in Combating and Preventing Human Trafficking: Facts, Myths, Challenges." (colloquium, University of Washington, Seattle, January 19, 2012).

there is no “general” experience or framework of human trafficking. Each human trafficking situation arises from a multitude of unique factors, and recognizing this uniqueness is key to understanding how human trafficking works and how to combat it. Attempts to summarize the trafficking experience tend to muddle and hinder attempts to combat it. Nevertheless, definition of certain terms and loose identification of the actors and groups involved can prove useful as a foundation for increasingly detailed discussion.

The trafficking process begins at procurement, which is when a trafficker targets an individual or a group of individuals. Some populations are more vulnerable than others, but no one is truly exempt from being a target. The Russian Federation and the Czech Republic underwent economic reform throughout the nineties, which made some populations more vulnerable to exploitation. As the general narratives tell, economically disadvantaged women are the most vulnerable to sex trafficking. However, there are more recent cases of wealthy and educated young women looking for well-paid work abroad who were also trafficked.¹⁶ There are also those who know the nature of the work for which they are being hired, but do not know or understand the extent of the exploitation or the “job conditions” involved.¹⁷ At the other end of the spectrum are seemingly well-meaning employers visiting orphanages ostensibly to offer legitimate employment to young women who have come of age and must now support themselves. Such “opportunities” have turned out to be clever ruses designed to compromise the girls' security and then traffic them.¹⁸ The reality is that many different types of women are vulnerable to trafficking: prostitutes, students, working mothers, and many others.

¹⁶ Idem.

¹⁷ Jacqueline Berman. 2003. "(Un)Popular Strangers and Crises (Un) Bounded: Discourses of Sex-Trafficking, the European Political Community and the Panicked State of the Modern State". *European Journal of International Relations*. 9 (1). 46

¹⁸ Victor Malarek. 2004. *The Natashas: inside the new global sex trade*. New York: Arcade. 15-16

In this stage there are two groups of actors: those who are trafficked, and then the traffickers or procurers. As explained above, the population at risk for trafficking is broad. The traffickers themselves are just as difficult to identify distinctly, as there is no one type of trafficker. The usual suspects are involved in organized crime, as evidenced by the UN protocols that target organized crime along with human trafficking. UN policies have led to a specific focus on nationally-based mafia groups,¹⁹ which in the past may have been appropriate but has become irrelevant given the thoroughly transnational character of today's human trafficking market, as previously described.²⁰ Organized crime does not have national loyalty, and often works to the detriment of its “home country.”²¹ Furthermore, sex trafficking is not handled centrally through mafia groups, but through individual and localized gangs.²² Policies directed at organized crime will only shut down individual operations and drive other groups further underground. The reality is that anyone with funding and international connections can potentially traffic other humans for sexual exploitation.²³ International work placement companies and programs can be complicit in trafficking as well. An entire company or program can sometimes be a front for a trafficking group,²⁴ or a job placement that an unknowing but legitimate company or program finds may lead to a trafficking situation.²⁵ This reality is complicated by the fact that the employment opportunities provided by such entities are vital sources of support for both individuals and families in this region.

¹⁹ King, Charles. 2010. *Extreme politics: nationalism, violence, and the end of Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 174

²⁰ Konrad.

²¹ For example, Russian mafia groups do not keep their finances in Russia. (King, 174.)

²² Emily E. Schuckman. 2004. *Human trafficking and the potential for grassroots activism: the Russian Far East and Asia*. Thesis (M.A.I.S.)--University of Washington. 21

²³ Idem.

²⁴ Ric Esther Bienstock, dir. *Sex Slaves*. (Frontline series, PBS, 2006), documentary.

²⁵ Idem.

Selling people as commodities is already the purest manifestation of objectification, either sexual or labor based, in which people are literally transformed into an object to be bought and sold. Many traffickers are simply businessmen and women who engage in the commercialization of sex. National narratives do not play a very large role in their motives for trafficking, or how they present themselves. Filmed footage in a Frontline documentary shows a decoy discussing a trafficking proposition with a known Russian trafficker, Olga. Out of context, the conversation could sound like any sort of business transaction. They bargained prices, and Olga explained that she had to pay expenses such as transportation. She also continually assures the decoy that the product is good quality. Another trafficker interviewed in the documentary, Vladimir, sold his friend's wife, claiming that it was an easy way to make money with little risk. He later felt guilty and “helped” his friend by giving him the contact information of the pimps to whom he sold her.²⁶ Bar and club owners are also businesslike, but relate to prostitutes as employees where it suits them. They charge room and board, taking it out of their pay along with expenses owed to procurers. On the Czech border, most of the bar and club owners are Czech, but they work closely with German and Austrian partners for advertisement, promotion, translation, and other services.²⁷

Families and communities can also take the role of a procurer or simply make other family and community members more vulnerable to trafficking. Often, a harmful home situation can drive someone to search for employment elsewhere, whatever that employment may be. In other situations, parents may sell their children off, or family members may be directly complicit

²⁶ Idem. Vladimir was given a reduced sentence for turning himself in and working with the authorities on this investigation.

²⁷ Darley, 102-103

in trafficking one another through criminal connections.²⁸ Previously trafficked women can also become complicit in this structure as well. The trafficking group that exploits them may send them back to their home town to recruit more young women, threatening them or their family with death if they tell the truth about their situation or attempt to run away.²⁹

A voice often left out of many trafficking narratives is that of the trafficked persons themselves. Many of the women who answer these job postings know the nature of the work for which they are applying to varying degrees. Some of them know people who have successfully moved abroad and are making money, so the question they ask themselves is: why can't I? Similarly, we as humans so often think that tragedy cannot strike us. This mentality coupled with the need to support one's family results in the motif: we have to get out, we have to make money, and there are no other opportunities. A trafficking survivor named Tanya actually returned to prostitution in order to pay for a younger sibling's surgery because she could think of no other way to make enough money.³⁰

Other migrants who leave their home communities in search for work sometimes end up in prostitution because they cannot find other work, or the wages are insufficient.³¹ Some prostitutes at the Czech border see their position as “transitory,” and a stepping stone to better work in the future once they find a way out. Many of them assimilate to their situations, adopting the mentality that they have to “accept the rules” of their profession. They consider wage cuts and work conditions to be a part of the job.³² However, they unite in solidarity against the pitying and victimizing views many have of them, as well as to protect one another against dangerous

²⁸ King, 175.

²⁹ Schuckman, 77

³⁰ Bienstock, dir.

³¹ Darley, 114.

³² Idem.

consumers. Some of them are able to enforce safe sex with consumers, and systematically refuse consumers whose demands are dangerous or violent. If one of them gets in the car with a consumer, others will notate the license plate and make sure that she returns safely.³³ Unfortunately, trafficked persons are not in a position to protect one another to this degree, depending on their situation.

The next stage is actual sale or labor exploitation. The actors involved in this part of the trafficking process sometimes also function as the procurers. This makes it particularly difficult to distinguish between the two stages. It would perhaps be useful to invoke a key concept of market analysis: procurers are essentially transportation middlemen who freight goods from one location to another, whereas at this stage the “merchandise” has reached the actual “sales floor,” and the erstwhile procurers now fill the role of “salesmen.” In the case of larger corporations (or organized crime), the same organization handles both freight and sales, whereas smaller operations have to hire out other companies to handle separate processes. In either case, the actors involved in this stage generally take the form of pimps and bar or club owners. They imprison trafficked victims through numerous means: confiscation of travel documents so that the victims cannot move freely, threatening to kill friends or family, drug addiction and psychological abuse, and actual physical entrapment. Law enforcement and local authorities are also a part of this structure. In some places, the traffickers bribe local authorities, and sometimes the authorities are customers of the traffickers.³⁴ Even when law enforcement agencies are not corrupt, however, they generally fail to recognize and to deal with trafficking situations

³³ Darley, 115

³⁴ Malarek, 157-173.

occurring in their jurisdictions.³⁵

Another separate actor-group involved in this stage is the consumer. They are often not considered part of the human trafficking equation, especially when considering prostitution *per se* as separate from human trafficking. Many countries outlaw the sale of sex, but even in countries that criminalize buying sex as well, prosecution rates for consumers are low.³⁶ The purchase of sex is illegal in Sweden, Norway and Iceland, where consumers face harsh penalties but prostitutes themselves are not criminalized.³⁷ Secondly, in trafficking cases they are not always directly involved in the trafficking apparatus itself. Nevertheless, from a market standpoint, they produce the demand for which trafficking victims are the supply, motivating traffickers to continue business. Finally, this group can be easily overlooked precisely because its members make every effort to distance themselves from the “prostitutional world.”³⁸ While they exercise a more privileged position in relation to prostitutes, should they be exposed they would be seen as “losers” because paying for sex is also stigmatized on some level.³⁹

The final stage in the trafficking process is rehabilitation after departing a trafficking situation. Unfortunately, many do not reach this point in the process. Most who try to leave their trafficking situation either die or are re-trafficked if they escape their traffickers. There are several reasons for this. As noted above, families and communities can often be complicit, so trafficking victims have nowhere to go or are absorbed back into the process the moment they reach home soil. In other cases, families and communities simply will not accept trafficked

³⁵ Konrad.

³⁶ Heiges, Moira. 2009. *From the Inside Out: Reforming the State and Local Prostitution Enforcement to Combat Sex Trafficking in the United States and Abroad*. Minnesota Law Review. 94: 444

³⁷ Joyce Outshoom. 2004. *The politics of prostitution: woman's movements, democratic states, and the globalisation of sex commerce*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

³⁸ Darley, 109-112.

³⁹ Ibid., 109

victims' return due to stigma.⁴⁰ Furthermore, if the victim was trafficked at an especially young age, they do not know much else outside of the trafficking or prostitutional worlds. Finally, the psychological trauma induced while being trafficked makes escape difficult in the best of situations.

The state and NGOs play a very important role in this stage in particular. If law enforcement does not recognize a trafficking situation, many will often default simply to deporting the victims back to their home country as if they were irregular migrants.⁴¹ Even when law enforcement does recognize a given situation as an instance of trafficking, the legally mandated protection periods are too short, and the state does not provide adequate resources to rehabilitate fully trafficking victims and to give them their lives back. NGOs can only handle a limited amount of this work due to budgeting and staffing limits. Policies of the state administration also play one of the most important roles in many of the long term conditions that affect sex trafficking, such as women's employment and equality, crime, corruption, and overall economic health of the country's regions. The history and culture of a nation in turn shapes what attitude the state administration takes in handling these conditions.

⁴⁰ A public opinion poll conducted in Russia showed that many families would not immediately accept the return of their daughter in the hypothetical situation that she would return after having been trafficked. (Mary Buckley. 2009. "Public opinion in Russia on the politics of human trafficking." *Europe-Asia Studies* 61.2: 227)

⁴¹ Konrad.

Chapter 2: Country Narratives and Case Studies

Geography, economy, history and culture are the main factors that affect human trafficking and anti-trafficking policies in a country. The Czech Republic and Russia represent very different sides of the post-communist experience in this region. However, the two countries share the Leninist legacy and many cultural factors which affect attitudes towards and the social and political position of women in each society.

Economic reforms and the transition to the free market system in Russia led to economic and political devastation and chaos throughout the nineties. The reforms have rendered rural Russia irrelevant in the eyes of political authorities and have left it in total poverty.⁴² Women have been hit particularly hard by these economic factors. They are burdened with family care in the face of a collapsed childcare system and they must also be the family breadwinners as alcoholism and mortality among Russian men continues to rise. The numbers of women engaging in criminal behavior and ending up in prison have skyrocketed.⁴³ Furthermore, more and more people have become desperate to leave the countryside for the larger urban centers and economic opportunity.⁴⁴ This trend has created opportunities for potential traffickers to exploit people looking to move.

The Russian Federation also faces many issues in its political culture, as well as logistical difficulties from governing territory so vast. In the nineties, the state administration under Yeltsin and later Putin was too busy dealing with the aftermath of the USSR's dissolution and the

⁴² David J. Brien. 2002. "Land privatization in rural Russia". *Economic Systems*. 26 (2). ; Roman Yushkov and Vassily Moseyev. "Flowers on a dung heap: markets, politicians and the demise of Russian rural life." *oDRussia*, January 26, 2012, accessed January 27, 2012, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/roman-yushkov-vassily-moseyev/flowers-on-dung-heap-markets-politicians-and-demise-of-russi>. ; Sergei Shubin. 2007. "Networked poverty in rural Russia". *Europe-Asia Studies*. 59 (4).

⁴³ T. M. Iavchunovskaia, and I. B. Stepanova. 2009. "A Social Description of Female Narcotics Crime". *Russian Social Science Review*. 50 (3): 17-25.

⁴⁴ Stephen K. Wegren, David J. O'Brien, and Valeri V. Patsiorkovski. 2006. "Social mobility in rural Russia, 1995-2003". *The Journal of Peasant Studies*. 33 (2): 189-218.

disaster of economic transition to pay attention to human trafficking, despite warnings from the West. They finally acknowledged the problem with an amendment to their criminal code in 2004.⁴⁵ Russia does not react well to human rights criticisms, especially when they come from the West. This is evident in the case of trafficking, in which many Russian officials for so long refused to admit that the problem is a Russian problem.⁴⁶ At the same time, it is important to recognize that the state administration of any country is not a monolith, and some Russian officials pushed for reforms in the criminal code to include trafficking.⁴⁷ However, the overwhelmingly popular opinion in the Russian administration in the nineties and today is that sex trafficking is not a problem at all, or it is a minor problem.⁴⁸ This attitude towards the issue, compounded with the difficulty of governing the largest state territory in the world, makes travel through and from the Russian Far East much easier for traffickers and much more difficult for law enforcement to control. Rampant corruption in the RFE also exacerbates this issue.⁴⁹

Corruption is a ubiquitous problem in the Russian Federation. The types of corruption that affect trafficking are mostly through law enforcement and border control, both of which remain significant problems.⁵⁰ The state loses one trillion rubles (approximately \$32bn as of May 2012) every year through the manipulation of state tenders, according to an estimate by the Russian federal government.⁵¹ This is not a direct indicator of corruption in law enforcement or

⁴⁵ Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. 2003. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/>

⁴⁶ Clara A. Dietel. 2009. "'Not our Problem': Russia's Resistance to Joining the Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings". *Suffolk Transnational Law Review*. 32 (1): 167

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 169

⁴⁸ Buckley, 216

⁴⁹ Schuckman, 10-11

⁵⁰ L.A. McCarthy. 2010. "Beyond corruption: An assessment of Russian law enforcement's fight against human trafficking". *Demokratizatsiya*. 18 (1): 6

⁵¹ Natalya Krainova. "Bill on Tenders 'Legalizes Corruption.'" *The Moscow Times*. March 17, 2011. accessed May 10, 2012. <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/russia-bill-tenders-corruption-mar-553.cfm>

border control, but it is an indicator of how widespread and systematic corruption is in the country. Recent opinions in the country suggest that civil society in Russia has done more to fight corruption than official policies and former President Medvedev's war against corruption.⁵² Unfortunately, civil society suffers from lack of development and increasing hostility from the state administration.

The ruling administration is an obstacle for any civil society development in Russia, which presents a twofold problem to anti-trafficking efforts. Firstly, organizations can reduce the risk for women to be trafficked, providing them with avenues for support and awareness of the dangers of traveling abroad to work. Secondly, hostility from the state prevents women's groups and NGOs engaged in anti-trafficking work from growing. Groups that push women's issues in Russia have historically faced opposition from the Putin administration because they are largely funded by foreign donors.⁵³ Many NGOs that had operated throughout the nineties collapsed when their funding was pulled after Russian authorities placed pressure on their foreign donors.⁵⁴ The administration's wariness to NGOs has grown in light of Putin's re-election. The wave of demonstrations and the state's violent reaction to them, as well as Putin's allegations that the original protests against his re-election were funded by the US Department of State,⁵⁵ are evidence of this trend. The administration's takeover of Ekho Moskvyy, which has remained as one of Russia's few independent media outlets for years,⁵⁶ is another indicator that civil society

⁵² Yelena Panfilova. "Russia's Civil Society 'Beats Authorities' in Tackling Corruption." *Ria Novosti*. May 2, 2012. accessed May 3, 2012. <http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20120502/173178312.html>

⁵³ Schuckman, 70.

⁵⁴ Idem.

⁵⁵ David M. Herszenhorn. "Putin Contends Clinton Incited Unrest Over Vote." *New York Times*. December 8, 2011. accessed May 16, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/09/world/europe/putin-accuses-clinton-of-instigating-russian-protests.html>

⁵⁶ Max de Haldevang. "Ekho Moskvyy Journalist Calls Board Shakeup Political." *The Moscow Times*. March 30, 2012. accessed March 30, 2012. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/ekho-moskvyy-journalist-calls->

development will only worsen in the recent future.

Outcomes of transition in the Czech Republic differ sharply with those in Russia. Economic transition in the Czech Republic resulted in winners and losers in the new system as it had across eastern Europe, but the new administration handled it more smoothly than in Russia. Transition to capitalism brought higher levels of corruption,⁵⁷ but other economic factors indicated stability. The Czech Republic enjoyed a surplus in its budget throughout the nineties, inflation remained at a manageable level, and unemployment in Czech lands was one of the lowest in the region (3.5%).⁵⁸ As a result of these positive outcomes and Václav Havel's widespread popularity in Europe, the Czech Republic was one of the first countries granted candidacy for the EU during enlargement. Furthermore, they do not suffer the massive rural exodus that Russia did. For one, the Czech administration did a better job of retaining the economic relevance of the smaller towns and cities. Secondly, because of the country's size, topography and infrastructure, commuting from a distance is much easier. Therefore, living in the countryside and working in Prague is more of a possibility than living in the countryside and working in Moscow or Saint Petersburg would be in Russia.

Despite many of the positive results of the Czech Republic's economic transition, corruption still remains a problem in the country. Corruption may in fact be growing, as public opinion in the country indicates. The largest protests in the country since the collapse of communism have been against state corruption, amongst other things.⁵⁹ According to the most

board-shakeup-political/455818.html

⁵⁷ Pick, Otto. 1994. "The Czech Republic--a stable transition". *The World Today*. 50 (11): 208; also see Hilary Appel. 2001. "Corruption and the Collapse of the Czech Transition Miracle". *East European Politics & Societies*. 15 (3).

⁵⁸ Pick, 208.

⁵⁹ "Czechs stage massive anti-government protest." *AlJazeera*. April 21, 2012. accessed April 23, 2012. http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2012/04/201242119223472324.html?utm_content=automate&utm_campaign=

recent Eurobarometer survey, 70% of Czechs believe that corruption has increased in their country over the past three years.⁶⁰ Eighty two percent (82%) of Czechs believe that this corruption is linked to organized crime.⁶¹ Unfortunately, most Czechs also believe that “corruption is unavoidable and has always existed.”⁶² However, according to Dr. Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, who chairs the European Research Centre for Anti-Corruption and State Building Research, much of the corruption in the Czech Republic is most likely bureaucratic and political rather than in law enforcement and border control.⁶³

Transition to a free market system also shaped a political culture in the country that proved detrimental to women's interests. General political changes, such as repluralization and political recruitment, gave women the potential to become political actors.⁶⁴ However, the Velvet Revolution pushed women's issues to the background. Women were marginalized in politics and most officials considered women's issues “low priority concerns.”⁶⁵ Poor attitudes towards women involved in politics were reactions to Communism, which had focused mostly on women's employment. As with many other patriarchal structures, women were complicit in this increased oppression and held many of these same views. Furthermore, most women rejected Western ideas of feminism and “gender equality” as such.⁶⁶ The popular opinion of the time was that women's employment was too high, and that politics was an inappropriate career path for them. Men and women both claimed that women were too split between work life and familial

⁶⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_374_en.pdf (accessed May 12, 2012) 7

⁶¹ Ibid., 8

⁶² Ibid., 10

⁶³ Alina Mungiu-Pippidi. Conversation. Seattle. May 11, 2012.

⁶⁴ Sharon L. Wolchik. 1994. "International Trends in Central and Eastern Europe: Women in Transition in the Czech and Slovak Republics: The First Three Years". *Journal of Women's History*. 5 (3): 101

⁶⁵ Ibid., 100

⁶⁶ Ibid., 101

duties, and therefore emphasized a return to woman's "maternal role."⁶⁷ These attitudes were largely a backlash against Communist rhetoric, which officially supported gender equality but never went beyond focusing on women's employment.⁶⁸ At the same time, the situation for women on the societal level was worsening. Women faced declining living standards, threat of unemployment (which was three to four times higher for women than men in 1993), workplace competition as a result of privatization, and increased prostitution and violence against them.⁶⁹ International companies felt free at this time to engage openly in gender discrimination in post-communist countries than elsewhere in Europe because of the lack of concern for gender equality generated by transitional politics.⁷⁰

The Czech Republic's candidacy and later membership to the EU places additional institutional pressure on the administration to address trafficking. The country is bound to adhere to certain standards and had to reform its criminal code to include trafficking before it was granted EU membership. Membership to the EU also gives the Czech Republic access to European NGOs who address human trafficking, the largest of these being La Strada.⁷¹ Access to the Schengen region also provides Czech citizens with greater mobility and economic opportunity across the continent. On the other hand, this dynamic also makes the Czech Republic vulnerable to the anti-immigration discourse leveled at the newer member states. Czech

⁶⁷ Ibid., 101-102

⁶⁸ Idem.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 102-104

⁷⁰ Idem.

⁷¹ At the same time, current president Václav Klaus is vehemently opposed to NGOs in the Czech Republic. He considers them a "threat to democracy," and while he acted as Prime Minister under Havel during the nineties, Klaus pressured many NGOs, especially those focused on environmental issues, into leaving the country. Please see: Cynthia Durcanin. "Central European University to Leave Prague." *The Prague Post*. January 20, 1993. accessed: June 2, 2012. <<http://www.praguepost.com/archivescontent/13126-central-european-university-to-leave-prague.html>>; Jan Richter. "Václav Klaus: the experienced and predictable." *Radio Praha*. February 7, 2008. accessed: June 2, 2012. <<http://www.radio.cz/en/section/election-special/vaclav-klaus-the-experienced-and-predictable>>; Adam Fagan. 2005. "Taking stock of civil-society development in post-communist Europe: Evidence from the Czech Republic". *Democratization*. 12 (4): 535.

membership in the EU is of course much more complicated than described here, especially since the Czech Republic is traditionally recognized as a very Eurosceptic state.⁷² Because of this Euroscepticism, the Czech government tries to guard against what it considers attacks on its sovereignty from the EU.

Russia and the Czech Republic share many similarities in their political and cultural legacies. Both countries were Communist and their state ideologies were based on Lenin's revisions of Marx. Lenin disclosed his views towards women and sexual liberation in a Communist framework during a conversation with a famous German Marxist at the time, Klara Zetkin. He believed that the “liberation of love” that many of his contemporary Communists espoused was bourgeois, and not Communist at all. According to him, the vanguard had to uproot these ideas and preach self-control and self-discipline.⁷³ He in fact chided Zetkin for allowing the discussion of sex and marriage issues to dominate women's Communist circles in Germany, declaring these topics to be very low priority.⁷⁴ At the same time, Lenin called for “equal rights and duties” between men and women under Communism, and sought to bring women into economy and politics. In order to accomplish this, he planned to establish communal kitchens, childcare centers, and other similar institutions to relieve women of the burden of domestic labor.⁷⁵ However, the implementation of such a system was never fully realized, and women were left with the double burden of house and work. Furthermore, the advent of Stalinism saw a backlash against the “sexual liberation” of the Soviet twenties, which rolled back

⁷² Seán Hanley. 2004. "A Nation of Sceptics? The Czech EU Accession Referendum of 13-14 June 2003". *West European Politics*. 27 (4): 691-715.

⁷³ Klara Zetkin and Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. 1934. *Lenin on the woman question*. New York: International publishers: 12-13

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 20

many of the gains women did achieve under Bolshevism. Abortion was recriminalized, and the traditional “family cell” became the unit of Stalinist society.⁷⁶

The sexual “revolutions” in both countries following the collapse of communism were largely a reaction to these ideologies. Women turned to hyperfemininity in defiance against the paradigm of a Communist/Soviet woman paragon, shedding the double burden of work and home in order to become the “perfect wife.”⁷⁷ Both men and women in Russia expressed that the country was suffering a “crisis in masculinity” because of Soviet ideology and policies. Women's double burden destabilized gender relations, feminizing men and masculinizing women, and after the dissolution of the USSR there was a general cry that men had to “rise up and reclaim their 'natural' prerogatives as leaders in both the public and private spheres.”⁷⁸ As explained above, the situation was similar in the political and work culture of the Czech Republic.

The sexual revolution also brought with it extreme sexual excess, and exposed sex in the public sphere more than ever before. In Russia, this manifested in the popular magazine *SPID-Info*, which started as an HIV/AIDS awareness publication and quickly turned into pornographic smut material. Another example of sexual visibility was the first Russian talk show entirely about sex, *About That*.⁷⁹ Changing attitudes towards sex and sexuality was more widely visible in both Russia and the Czech Republic in changing fashions and the ubiquitous presence of pornography

⁷⁶ Eliot Borenstein. 2008. *Overkill: Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture*. Cornell UP: 32

⁷⁷ Jennifer Patino. 2010. “Kinship and crisis: embedded economic pressures and gender ideals in postsocialist international matchmaking.” *Slavic Review*. 69 (1): 18

⁷⁸ Borenstein, 44-48 I have personally heard this argument often from Russian women. Many complain that there are no “real men” left in Russia, due in part to Soviet policies as well as to the economic crisis of the nineties. The economic crisis saw a severe decline in the life expectancy of Russian men due to alcoholism, drug abuse, poverty and other factors. Some even go so far as to blame this “crisis of masculinity” for sex trafficking, claiming that women are forced to find work abroad and will take whatever they can in order to support themselves because men cannot.

⁷⁹ Borenstein, 25, 35-36

and pornographic imagery in mainstream culture.⁸⁰ Furthermore, prostitution was glamorized in both countries. In the Czech Republic, prostitution became an “attractive occupation” after its decriminalization in the early nineties.⁸¹ The reasons for this are many. One Czech scholar claims that prostitution is an easy way for women to make money, and the easiest way for less educated, working class women to become rich.⁸² Another claims that prostitution is an avenue of economic enterprise in the free market economy, and therefore an expression of women's new independence.⁸³ This type of discourse was the same in Russia, where a 1990 survey showed that over one third of high school aged Soviet women would engage in prostitution given the chance.⁸⁴ This same survey ranked prostitution as eighth among the top twenty “professions” for women at the time.

Many people in both countries reacted to the sexual revolution negatively, as well. Russians who feared the “corruption” of capitalist ideology blamed prostitution and the new visibility of sex in the public sphere on *glasnost* and *perestroika*.⁸⁵ One prominent media figure called it a “sexual apocalypse.”⁸⁶ The wider media warned that sexual excess would have consequences for state and family, bringing up questions of national security.⁸⁷ Respondents in a sociological study blamed sex trafficking on the ideological void and moral vacuum left after the

⁸⁰ Schuckman, 62; Wolchik, 104; Malinova, 213

⁸¹ V. Kastankova. 1995. "Increasing sexually transmitted disease rates among prostitutes in the Czech Republic". *Journal of Community Health*. 20 (2): 220.

⁸² Malinova, 214.

⁸³ Kastankova, 219

⁸⁴ Helena Gosilo. 1996. *Dehexing sex: Russian womanhood during and after glasnost*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 14

⁸⁵ Schuckman, 63

⁸⁶ Borenstein, 38

⁸⁷ Pyaterim Varfolomeyev. 2001. “Carried away by sex: Instead of starting a family, thousands of girls in the Voronezh province have taken up prostitution.” *Current Digest of the Russian Press*. 53 (1) 8-9 <<http://dlib.eastview.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/browse/doc/19929468>> ; Yakov, Valery. 1993. “Ministry of Internal Affairs warns that an increase of sex crimes has begun.” *Current Digest of the Russian Press*. 45 (32): 24-25 <<http://dlib.eastview.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/browse/doc/13578961>>

collapse of the USSR.⁸⁸ Czechs living in border towns where prostitution is most visible also blame the fall of communism, claiming their hometowns have been turned into brothels for rich Westerners.⁸⁹ Some researchers note a rise in both prostitution and sexually transmitted infection on a broader scale throughout the Czech Republic, but they do not encase these rises in ideology.⁹⁰ Discourses equating capitalism with a corrupting force and the West as the perpetrator of this corruption were also present to varying degrees in the political sphere. Prior to their accession into the EU, one of the chief concerns Czech citizens had about EU membership was economic equity. Some feared that membership would destroy domestic production and agriculture, and that the Czech Republic would become a “market for selling goods that could not be sold in the West.”⁹¹ Russian politicians in both the ruling party and the Communist party use similar discourse today as a propaganda tool, claiming that the Russian Federation will become a raw material appendage for the West if the opposing party were elected.⁹² The trafficker is the representation of these two ideas combined – sexual excess and the takeover of Capitalism – and therefore the greatest threat to the people of these two countries. But, the trafficker may represent something else entirely through the eyes of the state elites, who have benefited from the transition to capitalism.⁹³

⁸⁸ Buckley, 233

⁸⁹ Darley, 28

⁹⁰ See Kastankova and Malinova.

⁹¹ Marek Kucia. 1999. "Public opinion in Central Europe on EU accession: The Czech Republic and Poland". *Journal of Common Market Studies*. 37 (1): 150

⁹² Eric Damiana, trans. "United Russia's Program Address." *School of Russian and Asian Studies*. December 12, 2011. accessed: May 18, 2012. http://www.sras.org/united_russia_program_address ; Eric Damiana, trans. "The Communist Platform and View of Post-Soviet History." *School of Russian and Asian Studies*. October 5, 2011. accessed: May 18, 2012. http://www.sras.org/communist_platform_post_soviet_history

⁹³ Some of the factors identified in this section – such as shared patriarchal culture and Leninist legacies – can be applied to the region at large. However, the main point is that human trafficking in each of these countries looks very different, even though trafficking itself was stimulated by similar factors. Persons trafficked through, to, and from the Russian Federation are as specific of a population as trafficked persons through, to, and from the Czech Republic or any other country in the region. A question for further research is why these cultural factors and

Chapter 3: Policy and (In)action

Attitudes in the Russian government have not changed since the problem became widespread and well-known in the nineties. Officials initially denied that the problem existed at all despite pressure internally from domestic women's rights groups and externally from foreign national governments and international human rights groups.⁹⁴ Representatives of the State Duma have asserted that trafficking is not a Russian issue because it happens beyond state borders.⁹⁵ As a response to this inactivity, the US State Department's initial TIP reports placed Russia on Tier 3 until 2003, when the Russian government finally amended the country's criminal code to include trafficking in 2004.⁹⁶ From 2004 to the present, the State Department has placed Russia on the Tier 2 "Watch List." However, some researchers have criticized the improved rating as politically driven.⁹⁷ The Trafficking Victims Protection Act binds the US government to impose certain economic sanctions against any country that does not fulfill minimum anti-trafficking standards based on the TIP report's criteria, and the US is unlikely to enforce such sanctions against a country as globally significant as Russia. As noted, the State Duma did pass legislation and establish anti-trafficking institutional mechanisms and support, and these are certainly important first steps. Unfortunately, however, politicians in Moscow appear satisfied that they have done enough to stop human trafficking in Russia, despite the

political legacies lead to a more acute trafficking situation in some countries rather than others – Slovakia or the Baltic Republics, for instance.

⁹⁴ Buckley, 216

⁹⁵ Ibid., 8

⁹⁶ Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. 2003. *Trafficking in Persons Report*. <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/> The tier system of the State Department's TIP report evaluates countries on their anti-trafficking efforts. They categorize tier 1 countries as those who fully comply with the Report's standards, tier 2 countries as those who are making a visible effort to comply, and tier 3 countries as those who do not comply with the minimum standards and are not making any visible effort to do so. Initially, if a country was evaluated as tier 3 for a certain period of time, reception of US aid to such a country would be jeopardized. As of 2004, the State Department created the tier 2 "Watch List," which is slightly below tier 2 but does not carry the same consequences as tier 3.

⁹⁷ Malarek, 187-193; Buckley, 8; Schuckman, 15-17

Russian Federation's abysmal rehabilitation and prosecution statistics.

The Russian government was late to act against trafficking. International and domestic groups pressured the administration to do something about the growing problem throughout the 1990s. The State Duma eventually established an Inter-Agency Working Group in 2002 to draft legislation specifically targeting trafficking, which they adopted in 2003. In 2004, the federal government drafted 119-FZ “On State Protection of Victims, Witnesses, and Other Parties to Criminal Proceedings,” which established state-guaranteed security to witnesses in trafficking cases. In 2006, the CIS accepted the Programme of Cooperation to combat human trafficking across the territory from 2007-2010, which they later renewed for the 2011-2013 period.⁹⁸ The next year, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) created a specialized division to enforce anti-kidnapping and anti-trafficking laws.⁹⁹

Concrete results from these reforms have varied since their legislation. For example, in 2010 there were 42 trafficking convictions, while in the previous year there were 76. Of these 42 recent convictions, 31 were sentenced for periods ranging from several months to 12 years. Government complicity is still an issue. In 2010, a police colonel in St. Petersburg was arrested for involvement in organized prostitution, and in 2011 a Moscow military court convicted a senior officer and ten accomplices. Many other incidences were reported from 2008 to 2010, but most of these are either at a standstill or further information about them is unavailable.¹⁰⁰

Russian law enforcement does not have a system to identify trafficking situations, and there are no real safeguards in place for trafficked persons. They are often subject to criminalization and

⁹⁸ Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. 2011.

⁹⁹ “Prevention of Human Trafficking in the Russian Federation.” IOM, accessed December 2, 2011, <http://www.no2slavery.ru/>

¹⁰⁰ Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. 2011.

deportation when discovered. Finally, the national government provides no funds or programs for assistance. Shelters across the country assist victims as they can despite inconsistent funding. International donors support the majority of organizations in the country, as described above.

Authorities in Russia also continue to deport foreign trafficking survivors without reason, or because the survivors refuse to stand as witnesses in prosecutions of their traffickers.¹⁰¹ This trend is problematic and shows that the authorities do not understand certain important aspects of trafficking situations. Trafficking survivors may not want to testify against their traffickers for any number of reasons. Many of them fear retribution, and for many others, facing their traffickers in court would be a psychologically traumatic experience. Forcing trafficking survivors to stand as witness in trials is insensitive on one hand, and careless on another. While the situation may be traumatic for the survivor, there is also a chance they may succumb to perceived threat and shift blame from the trafficker onto themselves. At the same time, carrying out a prosecution without a witness standing trial makes prosecution itself more difficult.

The media in Russia was also silent on the issue until the government was forced to address it. By 2007, trafficking had become a popular topic in the media, and reportage was distortive, sensational and informative all at once.¹⁰² Articles, news stories, documentaries, and awareness-raising projects all focused on a “portrait of the victim” without addressing root causes.¹⁰³ They did address broad factors that contribute to a trafficking problem – poverty, economic inaccessibility, and lack of education – but they did not study the impact of these

¹⁰¹ Idem.

¹⁰² Buckley, 216

¹⁰³ E.V. Tiurukanova, and Institute for Urban Economics. 2006. "Human Trafficking in the Russian Federation." *Trends in Organized Crime*. 10 (1). 39

factors on specific population groups.¹⁰⁴ The consequence of this presentation of information is that the Russian media did not draw logical connections between the economic and political instability in Russia and Russia's people. They did not establish a correlational or a causal relationship between them as a way to direct anti-trafficking efforts. These projects used the most extreme of examples, in which women and children were physically kidnapped and trapped in a brothel without any access to the outside world, when in reality these constitute a minority of trafficking cases. For example, some studies suggest that the majority of women who respond to work placement ads can read between the lines and know that they are applying to “exotic” work, but they do not know the conditions or the extent of exploitation.¹⁰⁵ They expect to receive reasonable pay for their work, under reasonable and hygienic working and living conditions. Furthermore, because prostitutes already represent a highly vulnerable population, these portrayals render them invisible and unworthy of help. Because the Russian media exhibited only the most extreme of circumstances, it undermined awareness raising efforts because the public does not understand how easy it may be to become trafficked.

Society also reflects these attitudes. Public awareness and opinion on trafficking issues has a direct impact on efforts against trafficking for many reasons. Attitudes towards women and the social value placed on woman’s labor can make women more prone to trafficking, and attitudes toward prostitution and sex in general affect rehabilitation efforts. Trafficked persons originate in home communities and families who shape and hold these attitudes and ideas, and trafficking survivors return to them: the home community is the beginning and the sometimes hoped-for end of a trafficking situation. There is often a disconnect between communities and

¹⁰⁴ Idem.

¹⁰⁵ Buckley 221

trafficked persons when talking about trafficking as a phenomenon, especially when talking about a country as a transit or destination country. Locals and average citizens then see the trafficked persons and prostitutes simply as “foreign prostitutes” - sometimes in a sense that they are an invasive force, especially in the case of Romani and markedly ethnically “different” prostitutes – and not as women who led lives in other countries that are not necessarily unlike their own.¹⁰⁶

Like many who face tough economic circumstances, trafficked persons might seek work elsewhere for economic reasons, either to support themselves or their families. Sometimes, their families pressure them to seek this work and support them if they find an opportunity.¹⁰⁷ In other cases, a husband's or father's alcoholism or domestic abuse might force the trafficked person to find work and make a living elsewhere. In still other cases, a family can be complicit in trafficking a family member. The home community presents a very complex picture, and these different scenarios are integral to understanding the needs of trafficked persons.

Sociologist Mary Buckley conducted a study in 2007 to determine precisely how much Russians knew about trafficking and how they viewed the issue. She issued a survey through the Levada Center, which conducts most of the major public opinion polls in the country. Buckley also organized two focus groups in Moscow and Vladimir, a much smaller town three hours' drive from Moscow. Participants were from many walks of life ranging in age from their twenties to their seventies. The focus group discussions took a life of their own and evolved into a very organic oral history about how Russians perceive human trafficking.

The results from the survey are broad, showing an understanding of trafficking and

¹⁰⁶ Buckley, 233 ; Darley, 118-119

¹⁰⁷ Frontline

Russia's position in trafficking for some. However, the results also show that others underestimate and do not understand the scale and operation of trafficking. Thirty-three percent believe that trafficking affects five to ten thousand people a year and 18 percent believe that it affects ten to 20 thousand.¹⁰⁸ These figures compare with an estimate that traffickers deceive between 20 to 60 thousand individuals every year.¹⁰⁹ The majority of the respondents also place responsibility on the shoulders of the trafficked persons themselves. They either believe that the trafficked persons have only themselves to blame (40.8%), or that they are mostly prostitutes who hope to earn more abroad (33.4%). A significant percentage of respondents however admit that job opportunities in the country for women are slim, forcing some to look abroad for opportunity (37.1%).¹¹⁰

The survey also exposed some very negative attitudes toward trafficked women and prostitutes, even when they may be related to the respondents. When the survey asked what the respondents believed should be done with the women who return, about half said that they should be sent back to their family or to rehabilitation. The rest of the responses regarding the appropriate disposition of survivors included leaving them to sort out their own lives (14%), deportation (8.6%), and punishment as criminals (3.9%). One question asked how respondents would treat a daughter who returned home from a trafficking situation. The highest percentage would welcome her back home (39.4%), and some would invite her back home for a short while (10.3%). The rest would speak to her but tell her to live elsewhere, either in a different neighborhood or a different city altogether (14%), never speak to her again (5.6%), or beat her

¹⁰⁸ Buckley 220

¹⁰⁹ Idem.

¹¹⁰ Buckley, 221.

and exclude her from their lives (3.6%).¹¹¹

Results also reveal significant doubt that the Russian government is capable of dealing with human trafficking. When respondents were asked which institutions would be most effective in tackling the problem, both federal and local administrations received abysmally weak assessments, and NGOs did not rank much higher. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents felt these same institutions ought to play a significant role in a solution to the problem. Their proposed solutions stressed international cooperation, police work in catching criminal gangs, prosecutions in the legal system, and border controls.¹¹² Twelve percent believed that nothing could be done.

The focus groups in Moscow and Vladimir produced a much more nuanced illustration of what they believed constitutes human trafficking in Russia. The discussions did not start out explicitly centered around trafficking: moderators asked the participants what they would do should they find themselves in tough economic circumstances. The participants themselves quickly turned the topic to human trafficking, though neither group explicitly used the term, and only the group in Vladimir used the term for slavery.¹¹³ The groups discussed the processes and structures of trafficking in somewhat stereotypical ways, but admitted that sexism in the country was a problem. They also blamed the rise of trafficking on the collapse of Soviet ideology in the country, the war in Chechnya, and the chaos brought on by the free market transition in the nineties.¹¹⁴ The point is that respondents drew on many of their own conclusions concerning trafficking from their own personal observations in their communities, as well as drawing from

¹¹¹ Buckley, 227. A sizable percentage also admitted that they wouldn't know what to do (26%).

¹¹² Ibid., 225

¹¹³ *Torgovlia liud'mi* and *rabstvo*, respectively.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 233-236

the public discussion of a variety of topics that contribute to trafficking. Furthermore, they analyzed trafficking in this way without strictly adhering to the vocabulary and framework used by the media and many awareness projects. Discussion of trafficking between more or less ordinary people evolved organically based on a variety of experiences and factors. These experiences and factors called back to the political legacy of the country and transitional politics. Respondents saw clearly what transition did to women in Russia. They recognized the consequences women faced because of the country's struggle to transition: increased unemployment, narcotics abuse, and violence. They understood what drove many women to search for work abroad, and how those women could fall prey to traffickers.

State recognition of trafficking happened earlier in the Czech Republic, but women's issues were still a low priority. Prosecution of trafficking offenders in the Czech Republic is more frequent than in Russia, but the numbers widely fluctuate from year to year. The number of prosecutions is also low considering the projected number of trafficking incidents per year. In 2010, the Czechs prosecuted 26 traffickers, which compares to 115 prosecutions in 2009. There were 12 prosecutions in 2006 and eight sentences in 2001, so the frequency of prosecutions is increasing over the long term.¹¹⁵ It is important to recognize that many of these cases were reported by NGOs in the country based on their definitions. Many traffickers are not prosecuted under the codes that specifically criminalize trafficking, but under other, related criminal codes. In fact, as of 2011, there has only been one legally recognized case of trafficking, which was in 2008.¹¹⁶ The government's national strategy admits that prosecution rates are low and that the

¹¹⁵ Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. 2011.

¹¹⁶ Cat Contiguglia. "Human trafficking rife in the ČR." *The Prague Post*. May 4, 2011. accessed: April 17, 2012. <http://www.praguepost.com/news/8527-human-trafficking-rife-in-cr.html>

“quantitative occurrence” of trafficking is actually much higher in the country.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, reports of government complicity have decreased over the years but as recently as 2011 some NGOs in the country have complained of government involvement in some labor trafficking operations.¹¹⁸

The Czech government has also established a system to protect trafficked persons in the country. Specifically, the Program of Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings provides both short- and long-term care for domestic and foreign trafficked persons. Formal identification procedures and victim referral mechanisms are included in this program.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, the official numbers of those helped by this program yearly are very low, and authorities are still deporting some trafficked persons without referring them to assistance.¹²⁰ Many organizations both inside and outside the country continue to criticize the administration for ignoring the plight of Romani women, who remain one of the most vulnerable populations to date.¹²¹

The obscurity of prostitution legislation exacerbates the problem of sex trafficking in the country. Since its decriminalization in 1990, prostitution has remained in a legal gray area. Individual prostitution is technically legal but it is not regulated, whereas organized prostitution through brothels, including pimping, is illegal. Despite this, advertisements for sex services and parties are pasted throughout public transport in Prague. There are no formal services to protect prostitutes and the government does not take action to dissuade commercialized sex. In 2004, the

¹¹⁷ Government of the Czech Republic: Ministry of the Interior. 2005. *National Strategy of the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings*. 12

¹¹⁸ Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. 2011.

¹¹⁹ Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. 2011.

¹²⁰ Contiguglia.

¹²¹ Rebecca Surtees. 2008. "Traffickers and Trafficking in Southern and Eastern Europe". *European Journal of Criminology*. 5 (1): 50.

Ministry of the Interior pushed legislation that would have regulated prostitution under a “narrow framework,” criminalizing and punishing any other form of prostitution, including trafficking. Regulation would have included regular medical examinations, regulations of legal brothels, and it would give power to law enforcement to search nightclubs for illegal prostitution and trafficking.¹²² The legislation was shot down, and efforts at regulating prostitution have ceased.

Small communities on the border where prostitution is particularly visible and present have dealt with this legal gray area through their local governing institutions. For example, Aš in Western Bohemia introduced billboards in 2006, demarcating which neighborhoods may engage in commercialized sex and which cannot.¹²³ At the same time, the prevalence and visibility of prostitutes in these small communities has resulted in a normalization process in terms of social interaction. Because prostitutes are a part of these small communities, they shop at the same stores and use the same services as the other Czechs in the towns. Locals began to treat them as they would anyone else.¹²⁴

The most recent national strategy against trafficking that the Ministry of the Interior released in 2008 makes some sound distinctions about both trafficking and prostitution, and it deals with these issues very seriously. It admits that sex trafficking remains a serious problem for the country, but claims that sex trafficking has “stabilized.”¹²⁵ It does not elaborate further on what it means by “stabilization,” but it does say that the Czech Republic is primarily a destination and transit state because of its economic position in Europe.¹²⁶ In terms of domestic

¹²² Government of the Czech Republic: Ministry of the Interior. 2005. *National Strategy of the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings*. 20

¹²³ Darley, 121

¹²⁴ Idem.

¹²⁵ Government of the Czech Republic: Ministry of the Interior. 2008. *National Strategy of the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings*. 7

¹²⁶ Idem. The strategy for 2005-2007 made the same claim.

prostitution, the document cites that 35-40% of the women working as prostitutes in Prague are foreign, while in the border regions of West Bohemia this statistic raises to two-thirds of the prostitution demographic.¹²⁷ Furthermore, the document contends that the majority of prostitution of Romani women is “organized voluntary prostitution” domestic and exported to West European countries.¹²⁸ In terms of other types of domestic prostitution, the Ministry of the Interior admits that forced street prostitution remains a problem, especially on the border and in economically disadvantaged areas.¹²⁹ The document also makes a very important note that it is often difficult to distinguish between “forced” and “voluntary” prostitution.¹³⁰ Regardless, this discourse is inconsistent with prosecution and rehabilitation policy and statistics in the country. Whether this inconsistency is due to disagreement within the government as to how to deal with these issues, actual indifference towards trafficking, discrimination towards Romani and foreign prostitutes and trafficked women, or a combination of these factors is unclear.

Research on prostitution in the Czech Republic more heavily focuses on “voluntary” prostitution rather than sex trafficking. This focus is especially clear when compared with research conducted on Russia, which deals primarily with sex trafficking. This difference may have to do with the respective legal status of prostitution in each country: in the Czech Republic, it is in a gray area, while in Russia, all forms of prostitution are illegal. There is a sizable amount of research devoted to prostitution as sex work and the health of the prostitutes themselves. On one hand, this attention is helpful in criticizing the current structure of prostitution and exposing holes in the system. On the other, distinctions between what constitutes

¹²⁷ Ibid., 10

¹²⁸ Ibid., 7

¹²⁹ Ibid., 10

¹³⁰ Idem.

“sex work” and what constitutes “trafficking” are sufficiently ambiguous as not to be helpful (in much the same way as the UN protocol addressing the problem) thereby creating a false dichotomy between the two. The line between supposedly voluntary prostitution and trafficking is thin, and the ways in which the Czech state and some Czech researchers frame prostitution do not recognize it as a gradient of sexual exploitation. For example, as noted above, the Ministry of the Interior claims that most Romani organized prostitution is voluntary. Considering the extreme poverty, discrimination, and lack of any economic opportunity Romani women face, the chance for sexual exploitation is high, and the stated voluntary nature of their prostitution is suspect. Furthermore, two Czech studies from the nineties concerning prostitution both claim that it is a viable option for women to earn a living.¹³¹ One even goes so far as to blame Russian and other foreign prostitutes who have immigrated to the Czech Republic and don't use proper protection, thereby endangering native Czech prostitutes, who have the same circle of clients.¹³² Both, however, discuss the high risk of sexual exploitation that prostitutes face, without connecting this vulnerability to their main argument that prostitution has become an attractive occupation for women.

There is also a significant gender bias towards women in this rhetoric. Czech media frames male prostitution almost solely in terms of trafficking. A series of Czech films and documentaries by Polish director Wiktor Grodecki focuses on male sex trafficking in Prague. His feature film *Mandragora* in particular sensationalizes the issue and demonizes sexual difference as sadomasochistic and homosexuality as a foreign malaise to Prague. This same discourse was inherent in the protests to the first ever Prague gay pride parade in the summer of 2011, in which

¹³¹ Kastankova, 219; Malinova, 214

¹³² Malinova, 215

right-wing groups in the Czech Republic warned that the event would see a rise in child prostitution in the nation's capital.¹³³ The implication of this artificial dichotomy between male and female prostitution is that women have more agency than men, when in fact the opposite is more likely to be true. The different presentations of male trafficking and female prostitution imply that female prostitution is acceptable and should be legal because it is not entirely out of the bounds of heteronormative sexual relations. Male prostitution, because it is “sexually different,” could not be anything other than trafficking. At the same time, male sex trafficking is certainly an issue that should not be rendered invisible, but the artificial dichotomy between the two obfuscates the reality of trafficking of all sexes.

¹³³ It is important to note that in all other respects the pride event was no more controversial than it would be in many conservative regions of the US.

Conclusion

The problem of human trafficking across the world seems insurmountable. Even when the issue is presented in the simplest terms, the situation is dire. The more closely we consider its specific national contexts, the more apparent the problem's complexity becomes, and the more desperate it seems. Anti-trafficking approaches from all institutional levels operate from faulty assumptions and ignore the individuality of experience. Furthermore, state actors, bound by the bureaucratic machinery of their state structures, continually produce the kind of discourse that works to the traffickers' advantage. They conflate migration, prostitution, and trafficking, and have not made a credible effort to close the gender gap and make economic opportunities available for vulnerable populations. It seems, under current conditions, that even those state actors with the best intentions are unable to do so.

In other words, the immensely complex challenges of human trafficking require an equally complex and flexible solutions that no state structure so far has proven capable of developing. We cannot solve trafficking simply by directing reforms at trafficking itself because trafficking is the product of a multitude of various cultural, political, and social factors. Therefore, an anti-trafficking approach needs to address all of these factors. I propose a dual approach combining short- and long-term measures.

Trafficking will not end until certain root causes are eliminated. Both the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation need to address problems of corruption, especially at their borders. Attitudes toward women and commercialized sex also need to change. These two countries must address the problems created by their Leninist political legacies and the post-communist backlash to them in terms of these attitudes. A significant part of this includes resolving hostility towards NGOs in these countries, because this hostility creates a cyclical problem, tied to

attitudes towards women. Groups focused on women's rights and issues cannot become effective under current state structures, and so women's place in society and social attitudes about women's roles cannot change. Allowing NGOs to organize and civil societies to develop would break this chain of events, and women's groups would also be able to aid and to rehabilitate trafficked women more directly. Vulnerable populations, including women, the poor, and ethnic minorities – most notably the Romani in the Czech lands – need to have economic opportunity domestically and abroad. Legal migration and searching for work outside of one's own country is not the problem here. Opportunities to work abroad are tremendously beneficial to anyone, but most especially people from this region. Legitimate work placement programs, through the facilitation of the EU and national governments, could help people in these countries find work in the West where destination countries would benefit from migrant labor.

The social and cultural problems facing anti-trafficking efforts go beyond the borders of these countries, however. Views in both the East and the West leave trafficked women with nowhere to go. In their home countries they are symbols of sexual excess, and to some degree the economic failures of their states. Furthermore, the strong patriarchy and hostile attitudes towards women that is strongly embedded in these societies renders trafficked women and prostitutes untouchable: no one wants to help them, even their own families. Their situation in west European countries is no less dire. East European and Slavic women represent another facet of the invasion of Fortress Europe and the loss of state control over their borders. To west European states, trafficked women are the visible symbol of organized crime from the East operating in their country.¹³⁴ These women are only useful to them in the highly racialized image of the new and terrifying “white slavery” which dominates many Western discourses on human

¹³⁴ Bigo.

trafficking.

Furthermore, Western actors play a significant role in the trafficking apparatus itself. German and Austrian men on the borders of the Czech Republic fuel the demand for sex that these prostitutes fulfill. The problem does not just lie on the borders, but also in brothels stretching from Amsterdam to Istanbul. Soldiers on UN and NATO peacekeeping missions in the Balkans and elsewhere have not only generated demand where they are stationed, but have been involved in setting up trafficking rings, as well.¹³⁵ In short, the West is not necessarily the place to search for systemic solutions.

A long term approach, while absolutely necessary in any anti-trafficking movement, unfortunately does not help trafficking survivors and those caught in the trafficking apparatus. Addressing these aspects of the problem requires a more direct approach. National governments should establish regional task forces to deal with the human trafficking on the ground. They should be independent branches of law enforcement – that is to say, independent of the same departments that deal with drug trafficking and terrorism, as reflected by the current structure¹³⁶ – with lawyers and social workers on staff. These task forces should be widely publicized in their respective regions, so that trafficked persons and potentially trafficked persons know where they can find help. The task forces must provide full protection and privacy, as well as rehabilitation, to domestic *and* foreign survivors. Furthermore, national governments need to reform trafficking laws so as not to pressure trafficking survivors to stand as witnesses in trials, and they must institute formal procedures to identify trafficking situations in *all* branches of law enforcement and throughout society.

¹³⁵ Malarek, 160-183, 281

¹³⁶ Department of State: Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. 2011.

This approach is far from perfect, and there are many obstacles to its implementation. However, what is most important is that it is flexible, addresses the main factors in trafficking, and incorporates actors and organizations from across the board to help anti-trafficking efforts. These recommendations are not new. Anti-trafficking organizations have proposed them before, and some of them have been applied to varying degrees of success in many different countries. The only road to resolution lies in acknowledging and addressing the widely varied manifestations of human trafficking, and understanding that, like the problem itself, any countermeasures must ever be subject to change.

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