

Report 2008:21

# The Organisation of Human Trafficking

A Study of Criminal Involvement in Sexual  
Exploitation in Sweden, Finland and Estonia

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brottsförebyggande rådet

Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention

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Exploitation in Sweden, Finland and Estonia

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## **Brå – a centre of knowledge on crime and measures to combat crime**

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet – Brå) works to reduce crime and improve levels of safety in society by producing data and disseminating knowledge on crime and crime prevention work and the justice system's responses to crime.

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# Preface

In recent years, trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation has become a major issue for politicians, practitioners and researchers. Knowledge and sensitivity have increased and there have been national and international initiatives on various levels, including in the field of crime prevention. However, there are still gaps in our understanding of human trafficking. One main area that may need further study is that of organisations and networks and how they relate to the market in order to maintain the trade. Another issue is whether there is a convergence of legal and illegal markets and whether legal actors are facilitating the trade.

For this reason, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, in partnership with the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI) and the Institute of Law at the University of Tartu in Estonia, initiated a study aimed at further examining the structures of criminal networks and organisations involved in trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as well as the conditions and factors of the market and the trade in Sweden, Finland and Estonia. The process of trafficking was also studied from recruitment in the source country to the transport of women and girls to the destination country where procuring has occurred. The study was mainly financed by the AGIS programme of the European Commission.

This is the final report presenting the results from a survey carried out in the three countries and is intended to describe these issues.

The final report was written by the researcher and assistant project leader Cecilia Englund, under the direction of Dr Lars Korsell of the National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet, Brå). The sections on the situation in Finland and Estonia were based on two reports from the project participants in Finland and Estonia. The Finnish report was written by Minna Viuhko, Anniina Jokinen and Kauko Aromaa of the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI). The report on the Estonian situation was written by Aigi Resetnikova and Anna Markina of the Institute of Law at the University of Tartu. Researchers Ulf Söderström and Marie Nilsen of the National Council for Crime Prevention participated in the Swedish data collection. The initial project plan was written by Monika Karlsson and Dr My Lilja. The final report was scientifically reviewed by Professor Sven-Axel Månsson of Malmö University. Valuable comments were also provided by colleagues at the National Council for Crime Prevention including researcher Johanna Skinnari. The cover and illustrations are by Jonas Nilsson Design. Seminars have also been arranged in connection to the project. The seminars were attended by, from Sweden, Michaela Hedberg-Mäkynen of Project Europa, Stockholm County Police, and Patrik

Cederlöf, Stockholm Social Services; from Finland, Essi Thesslund of Pro-tukipiste Ry, Panu Toiviainen of the Helsinki Police Department Homicide Unit and Ilkka Herranen of Border Guard Headquarters; and from Estonia, Brit Tammiste of the Ministry of Justice and Katrin Spiegel of the Central Criminal Police.

We would also like to thank everyone who has in some way contributed to the effort in all three countries. In Sweden, we would like to thank Project Europa, the Surveillance Unit, Stockholm County Police and the Trafficking Unit, County Criminal Investigation Division, Västra Götaland County Police for their support during the work with data collection.

Stockholm, November 2008

*Jan Andersson*  
General Director

*Lars Korsell*  
Head of Section

# Summary

Trafficking in human beings for sexual purposes has attracted great attention in recent years. Many activities have been initiated to combat such global trafficking. However, some areas may have been neglected, in particular the situation with regard to criminal activity. This report sheds light on this aspect, as its aim is to describe trafficking in human beings for a sexual purpose with a focus on the organisation of the criminal networks involved.

## **The study in Sweden, Finland and Estonia**

This report is based on a study carried out in 2007–2008 in three countries on the Baltic Sea: Sweden, Finland and Estonia. The aim of the study was to examine the organisation and structures of criminal networks involved in human trafficking for sexual purposes and the conditions and factors of the market and the trade in Sweden, Finland and Estonia. Further, the process of trafficking was studied, from recruitment in the country of origin, to the transporting of women and girls to the country of destination, where procuring has taken place. This study has been carried out by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention together with the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI) and the Institute of Law at Tartu University in Estonia.

## **Methods**

The study has mainly used qualitative methods, such as analysing court verdicts and pre-trial investigations and interviewing different actors knowledgeable about human trafficking. A total of 53 interviews were carried out in the three countries with professional participants, such as representatives from government authorities, law enforcement, NGOs and social services, and criminal actors and facilitators, such as taxi drivers and hotel staff.

## **Recruitment**

The survey shows that recruitment most often takes place in countries nearby. Most trafficking takes place within a geographical region. The majority of the women and girls recruited to the Swedish, Finnish and Estonian sex trade came from Russia, the Baltic countries and Eastern Europe. There are few examples of women being recruited from countries in Asia or Africa. Estonia is mainly a source country, while Sweden and Finland in most cases are destination countries. In addition, Estonian women are one of the most commonly found nationalities among the women and girls working in the Swedish and Finnish sex trade. The majority of the women are in their twenties. There are few reports of very young children. However, there are reports of girls 15–18 years of age being recruited.



Poverty and discrimination are two key structural factors emerging in the survey. Many of the women and girls recruited to the sex trade belong to minority groups in their home countries, such as the Russian-speaking minority in Baltic countries and the Roma people in Eastern Europe. Among individual factors found in the survey are social problems such as youth delinquency, school dropouts, drug abuse and family violence. There are some exceptions in the survey of women who are highly educated and come from better social backgrounds. The majority come from the lowest social strata.

### **Several levels of victimisation**

The results show several levels of victimisation through which the women are recruited. However, few examples of complete coercion, such as abduction or other methods involving violence, are found in the three countries. The survey shows that the lower levels of victimisation are more common, that organisers deceive the women regarding job offers, the nature of the jobs, earnings and so forth.

### **Informal recruitment most common**

The survey also shows that it is most common that the women have been voluntarily and openly recruited. This mostly takes place informally in their circle of acquaintances, such as through friends and family. In many cases female recruiters are involved, such as friends and colleagues. This informal recruitment often takes place at strip clubs and bars. Formal recruitment is not as common, but in such cases the majority of women have been recruited through employment ads in newspapers or magazines.

Another major finding is that money is used in several ways in the recruitment phase, primarily as a tool for control. By paying for the journey to the destination country, the traffickers acquire a debt from the women. Thus the women are forced to work to pay off their debts. Payments and financial rewards are also instrumental when women and girls are recruited from brothels and strip clubs.

## **Transport**

What routes and means of transport are chosen are decisive in several respects. The study shows that to a great extent traffickers choose the easiest and cheapest means of transport and routes. As most trafficking takes place within the region, in this survey the most common route found was the Russian-Baltic route, transporting women from Russia and Estonia to Finland and Sweden. Ferries are the most commonly used means of transport in the survey, because the majority of transports have to go by sea, from Estonia, to Finland or Sweden. From Russia, the women are transported mainly by bus across the border.

### **Transiting uncommon**

The survey shows that transiting is not common, especially for Sweden and Estonia. However, Finland is used for transiting to the greatest extent, also when transporting women to Sweden, due to immigration regulations. Transiting is also done because of cheaper flights. This is exemplified by the transiting of Nigerian women to the Norwegian sex trade through Sweden from one of the airports where a budget airline flies. Also, Finland has this kind of transit for long-distance travel, but that is mainly related to trafficking for other purposes, rather than for sexual exploitation.

### **Most transport straightforward**

Most transport is organised in simple ways. In Sweden, it is mainly the traffickers that arrange transport and buy the tickets. Most small-scale organisations drive the women by car. The more professional and sophisticated organisations use more expensive means of transport, for example air. There are some indications from the survey that travel agencies are involved in arranging transport related to trafficking women for sexual purposes. For instance, the Finnish survey showed that travel and documents are arranged for Russian women trafficked to the Finnish sex trade. Sweden had also only a few examples of travel agency involvement.

As most travel is arranged legally, the survey found few examples of illegal migration. This only applied to Sweden, as a few cases involved human smuggling in the trafficking of women. The Swedish survey also contained several examples of how traffickers use creative solutions when organising travel arrangements, mainly with respect to travel from countries that are not Member States of the European Union or parties to the Schengen Agreement. As immigration regulation and border controls change constantly at the national level, criminal networks have to adapt quickly and find new solutions to obstacles that hinder their activities.

## **Procuring**

Procuring is mainly about marketing and trading. Much of the marketing takes place between men. This is evident in the survey in many ways. One example is seen on the chat forums on the Internet where men chat and spread information about where and how to find women for sexual services. There are several forums for marketing found in the survey data.

### **Internet main method**

The marketing method that in recent years has become number one in all of the three countries is the Internet. Only in Estonia are sexual services still advertised in magazines and newspapers to some extent. A number of factors are behind the success of the Internet as a mar-

keting method. First, it is fairly easy to use; that is, it is easy for criminal organisers to publish ads for sexual services. Second, the sex buyers are easily accessible by this tool. With the Internet it is also easier for traffickers and procurers to conceal the organisation of the trade, as it is not always visible to sex buyers. It is not considered an advantage for a trafficking or procuring business to be behind the services.

The categories of prostitution are in all three countries mainly brothels and escort services. Estonia is the only country of the three with formal brothels, but in Finland and Sweden sexual services are to a great extent provided in apartment brothels, where several women are working and living together. Estonia also has apartment brothels.

In all three countries, massage parlours are used in the sex industry. In Finland, a major debate has concerned Thai massage institutes, as there are reports that women may also provide sexual services there. In Sweden, there are similar massage parlours, but the police have no evidence that they involve women being sexually exploited.

Sexual services are also provided on the street, though this is not as common. In addition, sexual services are sold in circles of male acquaintances. Regarding this kind of prostitution, male networks are important, and the arenas for prostitution are restaurants and cafés, where traffickers and sex buyers meet and the women are sold.

### **Different arenas for organisations operating on different levels**

The survey shows that the higher the organisation, the more professional and sophisticated the methods for marketing and trading. The smaller networks organise procuring among a circle of friends or on the street. The more highly skilled organisations use the Internet for marketing, and the trade takes place in apartment brothels or through escort services. Apartment brothels demand more arranging and organisation, because the survey shows that finding flats is not always an easy task.

This also becomes evident when looking at how housing is arranged. The degree of the sophistication of the criminal organisation is apparent in whether and how they hire flats. The most organised and skilled organisers hire through agents, sometimes also using the existing market as well as the black market. Less organised traffickers have women stay with family and friends. In this kind of network, women and organisers live together to a greater extent than in the highly organised network, where only the women live together in flats rented for the purpose.

### **Violence not as common as more subtle control methods**

The organisations use different methods to keep the women in their organisation and network. The survey shows that in very few cases

the highest levels of victimisation are used, which implies complete coercion. However, there are incidents of violence, such as rape, threats of violence and robbery in the survey. In most cases, the organisers use more subtle methods to control the women. There are several reports that the methods of organisers have softened in recent years and that they were more violent before. This may be seen as criminals' adaptation to jurisdiction in the area of trafficking. They have learned how to act to avoid the harsher punishments. One of the more subtle control methods that has become more common is control by telephone, where the women in many cases are always available and in constant interaction with traffickers. Another very common means of control in all three countries is to get the women into debt. The traffickers can do this in several ways. First, they can pay for the women's travel arrangements, the journey, visas and other documents. Second, they control through money, by making the women pay daily fees. This is common practice in all three countries, and the women have to pay the procurers and traffickers for different kinds of services, such as rent for housing, advertising on the Internet and sometimes for having been recruited.

### **Large fluctuations in profits**

Much has been said about the fact that criminals profit easily from the trafficking business. The survey of the three countries shows different results. In the Finnish survey, there are reports of the profits going to the main Russian and Estonian organisers, often staying in their home countries. The Swedish survey shows little evidence that supports this. Only in one of the larger organisations was there information that some of the profits leave the destination country and go to a criminal organisation in the source country. On the contrary, there is information that the criminals do not profit much, and that the profits are used for luxury consumption and drugs. Otherwise the profits made seem to vary to a great extent between different organisations and depending on how long they have operated. Estimates of profits may also depend on how long the police have monitored the business.

There are also great variations in the cost of sexual services, in particular between the three countries but also regarding the kind of service and the category of prostitution. However, in the three countries there are some established prices, in particular with regard to the sexual services provided on the Internet. The cheapest prices may be found on the street and sometimes also in a circle of acquaintances. In nearly all cases, the women must pay part of what they earn to the organisers and traffickers, but this varies also from case to case and from woman to woman, as in some cases the contracts are very individualised. Apart from this, in many cases they also have to pay daily fees for rent and advertising. There are also cases where the women

are not paid at all; they only get food and somewhere to stay. This is true mainly of the very small-scale networks.

The organisation of procuring depends on several factors, for example the demand, sex buyers' preferences and – not the least – legislation. This is evident in Sweden, where it is forbidden to purchase sexual services, and in Finland, where it is illegal to buy sexual services from procured or trafficked women.

## Organisation

The organisations vary in structure, size, levels of organisation, and how they set up and operate. In all three countries, many small-scale networks operate as well as medium-sized ones. There are few large-scale organisations. The level of organisation differs due to several factors such as the number of women involved, the number of traffickers and the level of diversification. The small-scale organisations are characterised by spontaneity and few women and organisers involved. Recruitment is mainly carried out personally and informally, often in a circle of acquaintances, while in the medium-sized organisations recruitment is semi-systematic and sometimes involves other actors such as brothel owners or recruiting agents. One large-scale organisation is characterised by a kind of pipeline recruitment, in which women are always exchanged, as one of the requests from the sex buyers is new women.

### **Criminals work alone or in partnerships**

In the criminal networks the organisers work either alone or in partnerships consisting of several persons, often two. The larger scale organisations are characterised by a higher degree of diversification, as there are several people involved, each with a task of their own, recruiters and real estate agents, drivers and debt collectors. In the smaller scale organisations, only a few persons are involved, and the main organiser does several tasks at the same time, for example both recruiting and transporting the women to the destination country where he sells the women to sex buyers. In all kinds of organisations and networks, facilitators are involved. Among the most commonly found facilitators are friends, family and acquaintances, who help with different tasks such as publishing on the Internet, translating into the local language when needed. There are also facilitators such as taxi drivers and hotel staff found in all three countries. In particular, taxi drivers are involved in many cases in different ways. Some are organisers, others are facilitating the business, such as by driving the women to the customers in exchange for free sexual services or by taking customers to trading places, for example brothels or central streets of prostitution. The sex buyers may also in some cases be regarded as facilitators. There are cases where they have been actively

involved. They are also found to facilitate trade by spreading information to each other on chat forums on the Internet.

### **Women and organisers have the same background**

Most information in the survey shows that the organisers and women recruited to the sex trade most often come from the same socio-economic background and same ethnic and national background, as most recruitment occurs in circles of acquaintances. The people who are involved in trafficking for sexual exploitation are in most cases from the lowest social strata and often belong to different minority groups.

### **Establishment and operation vary**

How the organisations and networks are established and operate is also found to depend on factors such as size and level of professionalism. The major organisations come to the country of destination with one purpose, to establish sex trade, while the smaller to medium-sized networks often have people residing in the country and therefore choose to establish operations there. There is also a third category in which the organisers operate from home, sending women to different countries.

The organisations and networks involved in trafficking activities are seen to adapt to different circumstances. The most large-scale organisations are seen to be the most creative when inventing new strategies to avoid police attention and surveillance, for example.

The survey did not contain much information on advanced multi-criminal activities. Otherwise, organisers mainly deal in petty crimes or related criminal activities.

## **Recommendations**

In Sweden, Finland and Estonia, many activities against trafficking have been initiated. There are examples of improvements in anti-trafficking legislation and government policy in all three countries. There are also examples of cross-border cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, where all three countries are located. Results of the survey show that there is a need for several activities to be initiated to combat trafficking and sexual exploitation.

- **Recruitment.** There is a need for more research about recruitment and re-recruitment and about what happens when the women return. Cooperation also ought to be improved between important professional groups working with the women who are subject to trafficking activities, in both destination and source countries. In addition, awareness campaigns should be arranged and information spread to prevent women being trafficked.

- **Transport.** The recommendations relate to improvements in work along borders by training staff. To improve follow-up on specific cases, cooperation between different professional groups should be increased. Also the report recommends that cooperation between police, border guards and ferry lines, airlines and travel agents should be improved.
- **Procuring.** The major recommendations here regard further work on harmonisation as well as more research on victims and their situation, in particular with regard to the control situation, something that is very difficult to prove in court. Cooperation between different professional groups within regions as well as between regions and countries should be improved. With respect to sex tourism, an area that has been neglected and has a “reverse” character but the same actors, one recommendation was for more emphasis and research in this area.
- **Organisation.** The report recommends that more research be done on the legal and illegal actors involved. It is also important that the priorities are more evenly distributed on surveying and combating all kinds of networks involved in trafficking and procuring.

# Introduction

*A man took a young woman to the station in the city. He had arranged to meet three other men at the station whom they both had met at a party. The whole party were having coffee at a café. The woman went away for a while. When she returned she was informed that her trafficker had sold her to the three men. The trafficker told her not to worry. She felt like a commodity. She had to surrender her passport to her new traffickers. The next day, she was taken to a new city and sold again to new traffickers.*

This is the story of a 20-year-old woman who believed that she had come to Sweden to work in a restaurant. All persons involved (four men and one woman) were found guilty of the recruitment, transport and sexual exploitation of this woman in Sweden and convicted of trafficking in human beings.<sup>1</sup>

The experiences of this particular woman may not be unique. Annually, hundreds of thousands of people are trafficked within and across national borders, the majority of them women and girls, for sexual exploitation. Trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation is believed to be a very lucrative business as the goods – the people – can be consumed over and over again, unlike drugs, for instance (Nicolic-Ristanovic 2004, Aronowitz 2001). The criminal networks and organisations behind the trafficking operate transnationally. They recruit women and girls in source countries and organise transports, either through transit countries or directly to the destination countries, where the women and girls are used in the sex industry as prostitutes.

A great deal of attention has been paid in recent years to trafficking in human beings, especially for sexual exploitation, and to the victims, mainly women and girls. Little research has been done on the criminals and organisations involved in trafficking for sexual exploitation (Kelly 2002).

This study on the organisation and structure of trafficking networks was initiated on this basis. The aim of the report is to present the results of the study, which was conducted in Sweden, Finland and Estonia. The project was financed by the European Commission's AGIS fund.

The selection of three countries in the same region – Sweden, Finland and Estonia – provided an opportunity to study the entire trafficking chain from the recruitment of women to transport to the destination. Finland and Sweden are defined as transit or destination

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the trafficked woman's story in the police interrogation. The case is the only one of two in Sweden up to 2007 in which the injured party was over 18 and the offenders were convicted of trafficking.



countries through or to which women are trafficked; in most reported cases, Finland and Sweden are destination countries, while Estonia is mainly defined as a source country according to the trafficking literature, but in some cases also as a destination country (Rikskriminalpolisen, Lehti 2003).

## Purpose of the survey

The main purpose of the study presented in this report was to survey the structure and organisation of criminal networks trafficking women and children for sexual exploitation. The survey took place in three countries simultaneously: Sweden, Finland and Estonia.

Three main questions were answered during the survey:

How can the organisational structure of human trafficking be described, and what factors explain the structure?

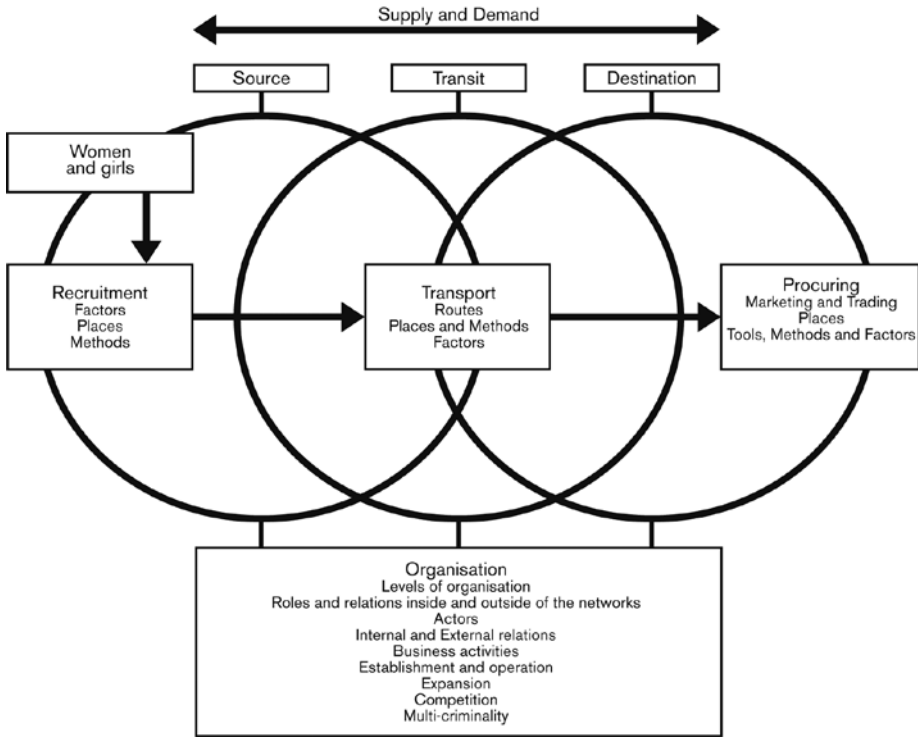
How do various market conditions affect organisational structure?

What legal channels are being used to maintain and simplify the trade?

## Analytical model

For this project, development of an analytical model as a guideline for the entire effort through all phases was consistent with procedures for similar research projects carried out by the National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet, Brå 2005). The model was developed based on theoretical literature and explorative interviews with professionals working with issues related to trafficking. Observation and monitoring of court trials related to trafficking and/or procuring were included as another method. The analytical model was then further developed in a working seminar among the participating researchers in all three countries. The model served as an interview guide when conducting interviews and as a guide for structuring data analysis and the report itself.

Figure 1. Analytical model.



### Report structure

Because trafficking is a process, the most logical approach was to use the chronological perspective of the criminal chain of trafficking from the recruitment of women in source countries to their transportation, either through transit countries or immediately to the destination country for prostitution. Except for the introductory parts about background, definition and methods, accordingly, the first, empirical section of the report describes the first phase in the trafficking chain – **recruitment**. This chapter specifically describes the situations of recruited women and girls, the recruiting methods criminals use to succeed with the business and the influential factors. The following chapter presents the results found in relation to the next phase – **transport**. Routes, modes of transport and specific factors that may affect transport are further described. Other aspects covered in this chapter include the use of transit countries. The following chapter present the results from the final phase – **procuring** – which takes place in the destination country. The focus is on the market and marketing, the trade and trading methods. In the final chapter – **organisation** – empirical findings on the organisations and networks involved are presented,

including the actors involved and their internal and external relationships. The chapter also addresses operational aspects, such as how the organisations are established, expand and compete. The report concludes with a discussion and recommendations for future actions against trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation.

# Background

## Trafficking as transnational organised crime

Trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation may be regarded as a transnational organised crime because it is global and the criminal activities cross national borders and thus violate laws in different countries (Williams 2001:61). Transnational organised crime is to a great extent shaped by the “constant dialectic between the illicit business and law enforcement” (Williams 2001:71). The organisations involved in this type of crime may thus be regarded as creative, since they must be situational and contextual. For that reason, the organisations vary in size, level of organisation and structure. Perpetration of this type of crime depends on various factors: legal regulations, the number of competitors, pricing and marketing strategies, accessibility and barriers to illegal markets and attitudes towards the use of threats and violence (Schloenhardt 1999, 2003:115). For these reasons, it differs from transnational crime regulated by international law and local crime, restricted to one jurisdiction (Williams 2001).

There are several factors significant to transnational crime (Williams 2001:69–71). First, markets and sources should be attractive, since there must be a demand for the services the criminals supply. Second, the profits should be differential: prices and profits should be high. Third, differential regulations and laws are significant to the transnational criminal, especially where regulations are poorly implemented or there are gaps in regulations that may encourage criminal activities. Finally, the risks should also be differential. The criminal must consider the risks beforehand. The penalties for human trafficking are much lower than penalties for drug trafficking and there is less risk of getting caught. Attitudes towards the crime of human trafficking may be influenced by national differences in the approach to prostitution and procuring.

## How can trafficking be explained?

Many factors are brought up in the attempt to explain human trafficking. A more globalised world, weaker border controls, political instability and the collapse of Communist regimes may be important factors when looking at the increase of organised crime in the 1980s and 1990s (Nicolic-Ristanovic 2004). These factors are sometimes used to explain migration and criminality related to migration, defined as push and pull factors, which may be explained by socioeconomic, sociocultural and political factors. Factors on the structural level include mechanisms such as economic crises, for example in Russia, central and eastern Europe and Asia. Regional conflicts and political and religious persecution are other major push mechanisms. Demo-

graphic push factors like rapid population growth may explain why people want to emigrate, along with environmental factors like natural disasters and environmental destruction (Aronowitz 2001:170–171, Borg and Nilsson 2005, Schloenhardt 2001:334–336) Regarding the collapse of Communist regimes, there are links between powerful criminal networks and the still-surviving Communist powers; these groups, which are involved in the human trafficking trade, are filling the power vacuum and operating on a global scale in the former Soviet Union and China (Shelley 2003:235).

On an individual level, economic depression may manifest in the inability of people to survive on wages from legal businesses (Nicolic-Ristanovic 2004) who may choose illegal means to support themselves, which includes the involvement of men working as pimps. According to Nicolic Ristanovic, they would never choose that line of work if they were able to support themselves by legal means.

Pull factors include a country's attractiveness with respect to opportunities for a better future. Immigration regulations are another significant pull factor: the less restrictive, the greater pull, but the permeability of borders is a possible indicator (Aronowitz 2001).

### **Supply and demand**

Trafficking is also often explained in terms of supply and demand. The demand countries are often developed countries and the supply countries economically developing countries, many of them ex-Communist regimes (Nicolic-Ristanovic 2004). This may be a problematic definition, as the situation is sometimes the reverse, with demand for trade other than trade in human beings and drugs, in developing countries. In these cases the supply countries are the richer developed countries (Williams 2001).

In her work on human trafficking, Professor Donna M. Hughes has driven the demand thesis further. She believes demand in destination countries is one of the major factors behind trafficking. The rich countries are creating the demand. According to Hughes, there are four main components to demand (Hughes 2005:7): the men who buy commercial sex acts, the exploiters who make up the sex industry, the states that are the destination countries, and the culture, where, for instance, the mass media play an important role in disseminating a glorified picture of the sex industry.

Hughes asserts that the state plays an active role in how trafficking and general prostitution are addressed. There are four general approaches to prostitution (Hughes 2005:37–38):

- **Prohibitionist.** All activities relating to prostitution are criminalised in these states from buying and selling to organising and procuring. All states in the United States with the exception of a few counties in Nevada have a prohibitionist approach to prostitution and procuring.

- Regulationist. Sexual services are legalised and redefined as a form of service work and controlling regulations are set up. This is the state approach in the Netherlands, Germany and some states of Australia.
- Abolitionist. Prostitution is viewed as a harmful activity and prostitutes are considered victims. In these states buying sexual services is criminalised to protect prostitutes. Sweden and the United States at the federal level take an abolitionist approach. In Finland, purchasing sexual services is criminalised if the seller is a victim of trafficking or procuring. Several countries are discussing this approach, including Norway, which is preparing a law that will criminalise the purchase of sexual services.
- Decriminalisation. All criminal penalties for prostitution-related activity are removed, usually exempting activities involving underage children. In New Zealand, prostitution was first decriminalised at the national level as the first step towards legalising prostitution and procuring. In Sweden, selling sexual services was decriminalised as a step towards abolishing the purchase of sexual services.

## Existing law and policies

### International

The Palermo Protocol, Article 3 of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, may be seen as the first international effort to agree on a joint definition of trafficking. As of 2008, it has been ratified by 117 countries.<sup>2</sup> It is also the first document in which all forms of trafficking are described in detail. The UN Protocol is not only about regulating and combating prostitution like older international regulations; it is also a shift towards combating and preventing organised crime (Lehti and Aromaa 2006:139 and 173, Europol 2005a).

Another international convention that adheres to the definitions set by the Palermo Protocol is the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS no. 197), which was opened for signature in 2005. As of April 2008, 17 states<sup>3</sup> had ratified the convention and 21 Member States<sup>4</sup> of the Council of Europe had

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/countrylist-traffickingprotocol.html>

<sup>3</sup> Albania, Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Georgia, Latvia, Malta, Moldova, Norway, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia.

<sup>4</sup> The other 19 Member States are Andorra, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

signed it, including Sweden and Finland. Estonia has not signed the convention.

The Council of Europe Convention entered into force on 1 February 2008. Its purposes are to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, while guaranteeing gender equality; to protect the human rights of the victims of trafficking, design a comprehensive framework for the protection and assistance of victims and witnesses, while guaranteeing gender equality, as well as to ensure effective investigation and prosecution; and to promote international cooperation on action against trafficking in human beings.

## **National**

As mentioned, there are differences between the countries on the national level and international conventions may thus be seen as efforts to harmonise. This may be a difficult task, due to varying state approaches to trafficking and in particular to procuring, prostitution and purchasing sexual services.

Sweden, Finland and Estonia have all ratified the Palermo Protocol. Only Sweden and Finland have signed the Council of Europe Convention, but had not ratified it as of June 2008. Trafficking in human beings is prohibited in all three countries involved in this project. The Swedish law prohibiting trafficking in human beings entered into force on 1 July 2002 and is harmonised with the Palermo Protocol.<sup>5</sup> The law against trafficking in human beings was amended on 1 July 2004 to extend the criminalisation of trafficking to all forms of human trafficking, even within national borders.<sup>6</sup> The sentence for trafficking in human beings is imprisonment for a term of two to ten years (Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications 2005).

Trafficking in human beings was criminalised in Finland in 2004, based on international commitments. The crime is punishable by imprisonment for a term of four months to six years. Persons convicted of aggravated trafficking in human beings may be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of two to ten years (Työministeriö 2007, Finlex).

In Estonia, there is no comprehensive law as in Sweden and Finland

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<sup>5</sup> The Swedish law against trafficking in human beings is applicable only if there is an unlawful coercion or deception or other improper means involved. If the injured party is under 18 years of age, the improper means condition does not apply (Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, 2005). The majority of Swedish cases in which offenders were convicted of trafficking in human beings have involved minors. The injured parties were adults in only a couple of cases.

<sup>6</sup> Further amendments to the law against trafficking in human beings were proposed in 2008 in an official government inquiry (SOU 2008:41). The proposed changes include clarification of the wording on the requisites describing improper means, adding the possibility of a person who by improper means controls another person, rather than the present wording, which requires that the perpetrator has assumed control over the victim through improper means of control.

but two laws related to trafficking entered into force between 2001 and 2004, one in the Penal Code and one in the Criminal Code (IOM 2005:26–27). Various aspects of trafficking in human beings have been added in the new Estonian Penal Code, which now criminalises enslavement, abduction, encouraging or aiding minors to engage in prostitution, producing or disseminating child pornography and providing premises for unlawful activities, including prostitution.

In all three countries, a victim or witness in a trafficking case may be granted a temporary residence permit. The Aliens Acts in the three countries have been amended to include this possibility.

Sweden, Finland and Estonia have implemented different strategies to deal with prostitution. The purchase of sexual services has been illegal in Sweden since 1999, but there is no law against selling sexual services, other than procuring. Purchasing sexual services from a victim of procuring or trafficking was criminalised in Finland in 2006. The criminalisation also applied to buying sexual services from minors, i.e. persons under 18. Soliciting minors is illegal in Estonia but there are no other restrictions. Procuring is illegal in all three countries.

All three countries have implemented or intend to implement national action plans against trafficking and related issues. In July 2008, Sweden adopted a national action plan against prostitution and trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation (Integrations- och jämställdhetsdepartementet 2008). Another action plan is being drafted regarding trafficking for the purpose of other forms of exploitation (Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications 2005). In addition, the Swedish Government adopted in 2007 the third revised national action plan against sexual exploitation of children, which was first adopted in 1998.

In Finland, the second version of an anti-trafficking plan was finalised in 2007 and approved by the Finnish Government in 2008 (Työministeriö [Finnish Labour Administration], Publication 383/2007).

In Estonia, a development plan was approved by the Estonian Government on 26 January 2006 aimed at combating human trafficking during the period of 2006 to 2009.<sup>7</sup>

In Sweden, the National Criminal Investigation Department of the Swedish Police has been appointed the Swedish National Rapporteur on trafficking in human beings, in accordance with the 1997 joint declaration of the European Union (The Hague Declaration) (Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications 2005).

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<sup>7</sup> Development plan available at the website of the Ministry of Justice of Estonia: <http://www.just.ee/18886>.



## Evidence of trafficking and procuring in Sweden, Estonia and Finland

Worldwide, an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked every year. The majority, 80 per cent, are women and girls, and 50 per cent are minors (U.S. State Department 2006 and 2007). Measuring the number of victims is a very difficult task because the statistics are often very unreliable. One reason is that the figures vary from one organisation to the next, depending on their perspectives on trafficking. What the statistics measure also differs: sometimes it is the number of victims, sometimes the number of reported crimes (Lehti and Aromaa 2006, UNODC 2006, GAO 2006). This also applies to the situation in Sweden, Finland and Estonia.

A 2003 estimate in Sweden reported that 400-600 women had been trafficked to Sweden for sexual exploitation, but the police chose not to estimate a figure in later reports (Rikspolisstyrelsen [Swedish National Criminal Investigation Department] 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007). The general estimate of the number of women engaged in prostitution in Sweden is also vague. In 2007, the National Board of Health and Welfare estimated that 200 people were engaged in street prostitution in Stockholm, about 70 in Gothenburg and about 30 in Malmö (Socialstyrelsen 2007). In a survey of online prostitution activities, 304 people, including 57 men, were found to be engaged in selling sexual services. (Socialstyrelsen 2007:7-8).

As shown in the table below, police reports and convictions related to trafficking in human beings and procuring vary from year to year. The highest number of reports to the police on human trafficking occurred in 2005. The highest number of convictions occurred in 2006, when eleven people were convicted of the crime. As the crimes of trafficking and procuring are often not reported to police, the number of reports and convictions are mainly a result of police efforts to combat the crimes.

Table 1. Sweden – reports and convictions of trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation and procuring and aggravated procuring.

	<b>Reports of trafficking cases</b>	<b>People found guilty of trafficking</b>	<b>Reports of procuring cases</b>	<b>People found guilty of procuring</b>
2002*			46	6
2003	22	2	69	9
2004	29	0	98	24
2005	44	0	94	29
2006	27	11	58	8
2007	15	2	65	23

Source: Brottsförebyggande rådet (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention), [www.bra.se](http://www.bra.se)

\* The year the law against trafficking entered into force.

About 8,000 prostitutes are active in Finland on an annual basis (Kontula 2007, 2005), and on a daily basis, an estimated 500. Sex workers other than prostitutes are also involved in the Finnish sex industry, such as strip club employees and phone sex workers (Kontula 2007). There has been a significant increase in the online prostitution market in the 2000s. Online (Internet-based) prostitution is more prevalent today than street or restaurant-based prostitution. Restaurant-based and street prostitution mainly occur in the Helsinki area and the large tourist centres of northern Finland (Kontula 2007).

As of 2008, there had been only one conviction for trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation. According to the Finnish National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), eight people were suspected of trafficking in human beings in 2005, ten in 2006 and four in 2007.

Estonia is a source country for Scandinavian and western European prostitution and a destination country for Russian trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. The main destination is Finland, where approximately 500–1,000 Estonian women annually travel to work in prostitution (Lehti 2003:11), but it is difficult to estimate how many of them are trafficked. Sweden and Norway are other major destination countries for Estonian women. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), other countries reported as destinations for trafficked Estonian women are the Netherlands, Germany and Ireland (IOM 2005:37–40).

The exact number of women who work in local brothels in Estonia is unknown, with estimates varying from less than 3,000 to 5,000. According to an interview study with police officers in Tallinn, only half believed that more than 1,000 women were working as prostitutes in Tallinn. According to other studies calculating known brothels and estimating the number of people engaged in prostitution annually, the estimates could not exceed a total of 1,000–1,500 in Estonia (IOM 2005:34). An estimated 80 per cent of all prostitutes in Estonia are Russian-speaking, usually from the Russian-speaking minority outside Tallinn or from northeast Estonia (IOM 2005:36 and Lehti 2003).

Table 2. Estonia – Criminal offences that may be linked to trafficking in human beings, according to the penal code.

Type of criminal offence according to the corresponding section of the penal code	Number of criminal offences in 2006	Number of criminal offences in 2007
Enslavement	1	2
Abduction	0	0
Unlawful deprivation of liberty	44	55
Forcing a person to engage in sexual intercourse	7	10
Encouraging minors to engage in prostitution	0	1
Aiding prostitution involving minors	2	4
Use of minors in production of pornography	10	4
Production of works involving child pornography or supplying child pornography	29	22
§ 268. Aiding unlawful activities or pimping (2006), § 268 Aiding prostitution (2007)*	38	24

Source: Estonian Ministry of Justice

\* As of July 2006, a separate article for aiding prostitution was added.

## Underage victims of trafficking in Sweden, Finland and Estonia

The statistics on minors involved in trafficking in human beings are highly unreliable and there are very few reports. According to a report on child victims in the Baltic Sea region, only three cases of suspected child trafficking were reported in Sweden during the period of November 2006 to November 2007. There were five cases reported in Finland and none in Estonia (Weyler 2008).

According to the organisation ECPAT<sup>8</sup>, few minors are trafficked to Sweden and Finland for prostitution (ECPAT 2006, Global monitoring reports for Finland and Sweden). Another report on sexual exploitation of children in Sweden showed that 2 per cent (i.e. involving three children) of verdicts in sexual exploitation cases between 1993 and 2003 were cases of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.<sup>9</sup> The three cases involved three 17-year-old girls. One case that did not lead to conviction involved a 14-year-old girl and her older sister. The offender was convicted of procurement regarding three other women (Brottsförebyggande rådet 2003). In autumn 2004 the National Criminal Investigation Department began surveying trade

<sup>8</sup> End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes.

<sup>9</sup> Among the other sexual exploitation crimes were sexual harassments directed at children, but this did not include child pornography crimes.

in children for sexual exploitation and other purposes (Rikskriminalpolisen 2007).

Minors engaged in prostitution in the Baltic countries are estimated in the hundreds, and in the St Petersburg region in the thousands. A high percentage of the clients are sex tourists from the Nordic countries (Lehti 2003:10). ECPAT also believes this to be the case for Estonia, since it is a destination country for sex tourism as well as ordinary prostitution. For that reason, the number of children exploited in the sex industry is higher in Estonia than in Sweden and Finland, but the majority of the sex tourists to Estonia are men from Sweden, Finland and Russia (ECPAT 2006, Global monitoring report for Estonia). There were 12 criminal cases related to prostitution and pornography involving minors in Estonia between 2002 and 2004 (IOM 2005:35)

According to ECPAT, 27 per cent of Tallinn's estimated 1,000 sex workers were children, mainly girls age 15 to 17. Certain children are at greater risk of being the victims of traffickers than others: children lacking adequate parental supervision, children in foster care and children in orphanages. According to the report, other at-risk groups are children belonging to the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia and families with integration problems (ECPAT 2006, Estonian report).

## Transnational organised crime involved in human trafficking

Three major branches of transnational organised crime are believed to exist in Sweden: trafficking of arms, drugs and human beings (Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län 2007:4). According to the National Criminal Investigation Department, the organised crime groups are concentrated to the major cities, but are also found in smaller cities. Certain kinds of organised crime, such as trafficking, have begun to spread throughout the country (Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län 2007:22). However, the criminal networks observed by the police in Sweden are generally small-scale (Rikskriminalpolisen 2007).

There are several criminal networks from the former Soviet Union in Sweden involved in various property crimes as well as drug crimes, money laundering and smuggling. The criminal networks operating brothels in Sweden are the same groups that are smuggling alcohol and involved in extortion, forgery and smuggling of drugs. Swedish Customs confiscated amphetamines from a person belonging to a human trafficking group in 2004 (Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län 2007:27, Rikskriminalpolisen 2007).

According to data from the Finnish authorities, there were 79 organised criminal networks with close to 1,000 members in Finland in 2005. The figures have increased somewhat in the 2000s. In parallel, criminal activities have become more professional, extensive and

international to serve the main goal – maximising profits. The use of violence has also become more common. The majority of the people belonging to these criminal networks are Finnish citizens. Fifteen per cent are foreigners, most of them Russian or Estonian. Many groups interact and cooperate with foreign criminal networks. The predominant activity among Finnish criminal networks is smuggling and distribution of drugs. As Finland is a country with an outer border to the European Union, the country has become a transit country for illegal entry into the country and human trafficking into the region. In 2005, the Finnish National Bureau of Investigation estimated that hundreds of trafficking victims were passing through the country every year, most of whom ended up in the sex market. The Finnish police concluded that Russian and Baltic organised crime networks held a strong position in procuring activities in Finland (Finnish National Bureau of Investigation, NBI Annual Activity Report 2005).

# Definitions

## Trafficking in human beings

There are several definitions of material importance to the study. The first is the definition of trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation. Trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation is not the only issue addressed in this report. Related crimes, mainly procuring and aggravated procuring, were also studied in the three countries. These are similar crimes, and sometimes have elements that resemble the crime of trafficking, particularly with regard to the offence of aggravated procuring in Sweden and Finland.

The definition of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation varies from country to country, including Sweden, Finland and Estonia, as does jurisdiction. For this reason, the definition of trafficking will be used only to refer to court convictions for the offence of trafficking. When referring to other related crimes, such as procuring, that definition will be used. When referring to crimes resembling the crime of trafficking, the terms criminal organisations and organisers will be used.

As a starting point for the report, the definition provided in Article 3 of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children will be used, upon which national laws on trafficking are based in certain countries. The Convention, also called the Palermo Protocol, was adopted by the United Nations in December 2000.

In Article 3 of the Protocol trafficking is defined as follows:

- a) "Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. "Exploitation" shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.
- b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used.
- c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article.
- d) "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

## **Human smuggling**

The distinction between human trafficking and human smuggling is not always clear. Although there are similarities, for instance that both involve illegal activities and contribute to the illegal market, human smuggling is exclusively transnational, while human trafficking may occur within national borders. People are smuggled voluntarily, while trafficking involves an involuntary aspect from the victims' perspective. Trafficking is an illegal market in and of itself, while smuggling only has a connection. Smuggled people may ultimately become victims of trafficking (Nikolic-Ristanovic 2004:120, Aronowitz 2001). In this report, human smuggling is treated as a separate issue, although it has some elements that resemble trafficking.

## **Organised crime**

Organised crime is the second definition important to clarify in this report.

The United Nations has defined an organised criminal group as: “a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit” (United Nation Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime 2000).

As defined by the European Union, organised crime is “a structured association, established over a period of time, of more than two persons, acting in concert with a view to committing offences which are punishable by deprivation of liberty or a detention order of a maximum of at least four years or a more serious penalty, whether such offences are an end in themselves or a means of obtaining material benefits and, where appropriate, of improperly influencing the operation of public authorities.” (EU 98/733/JHA: Joint Action of 21 December 1998).

Participation in an organised criminal group has been criminalised in Finland (Penal Code of Finland chapter 17 § 1 a) and Estonia (Penal Code of Estonia § 255).

# Methods

Two methods were used for this survey; interviews and analysis of court judgements and pre-trial investigations. News reports were also used for data collection and seminars were held.

## Interviews

The first method was to conduct interviews. In autumn 2007 and spring 2008, interviews were conducted in the three participating countries.

Table 3. Total number of interviews in the three countries.

<b>Informants*</b>	<b>Sweden</b>	<b>Finland</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>Total</b>
Criminals	3	1	0	4
Facilitators	6	3	1	10
Victims (women)	0	0	6**	6
NGOs and social services	3	3	2	8
Representatives of state authorities, in particular, law enforcement, police, border guards, prosecutors	10	7	4	21
Researchers	0	4	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>53</b>

\* According to the project plan, interviews were to be carried out with four categories: criminals, facilitators, NGOs and social services and representatives of state authorities, law enforcement in particular. Interviews of victims and researchers were not initially planned, but were added later.

\*\* One informant was the mother of a victim of trafficking, and one was a friend of a victim.

In Sweden, the data collection team conducted 22 interviews, of which 18 were recorded and transcribed. Nine interviews were held with police officers, analysts and researchers working for the Swedish Police; one with a prosecutor; one with a former airline employee working at an airport; three with people sentenced to imprisonment for procuring and trafficking; and two with representatives of the social services. Two taxi drivers and three hotel employees were interviewed. Finally, one interview was conducted with a representative of an NGO.

In Finland, 18 interviews were conducted, of which 11 were recorded and transcribed. The bulk of the interviews were with experts such as researchers, representatives of the police, border guard, other relevant governmental organisations and NGOs. Three hotel employees were also interviewed.

In Estonia, 13 interviews were conducted and 7 were recorded and transcribed. The interviews were held with law enforcement personnel, NGO representatives, one facilitator, women engaged in the sex



industry, and one relative and one friend of a woman engaged in the sex industry.

The interviews did not follow a specific interview guide but were conducted in accordance with the aforementioned analytical model, depending on the nature of the informant and the kind of information and knowledge the informant had about the trafficking process.

The anonymity of all study informants in all three countries was protected.

### **Difficulties finding informants**

There were difficulties finding informants in all three countries, especially perpetrators, facilitators and victims of trafficking, mainly due to the sensitive nature of the topic and the lack of identified victims and perpetrators. Since no one has been convicted of trafficking in Estonia, it was impossible to interview imprisoned criminals. Informants who had been involved in trafficking operations refused to allow the interview to be recorded.

In Sweden, contacts were made with the Swedish Prison and Probation Service and regional probation offices in order to locate informants who had been convicted of either trafficking or procuring.

## **Court verdicts and pre-trial investigations**

The second method used in the study was to analyse court verdicts and pre-trial investigations pertaining to trafficking and aggravated procuring in the 2000s.

Thirty cases were analysed in Sweden according to the analytical model. First, the researchers ordered all court verdicts in Sweden from the district courts, courts of appeal and the Supreme Court in which the charges were either human trafficking or aggravated procuring between 2002-2006. Thereafter, a sample of the relevant verdicts was selected for further exploration of pre-trial investigations. The selection was made on the following criteria:

- All verdicts on human trafficking were selected, as well as verdicts in which it was clear that detention or prosecution for human trafficking occurred.
- With respect to verdicts on procuring, the selection criteria were that some kind of transportation, either national or transnational (according to the Palermo Protocol) of the injured party (the victim of trafficking) had to be involved. The injured party had been subject to sexual exploitation.

All verdicts regarding local prostitution in which the perpetrator and victim were both local residents were disregarded, because no form of transportation had taken place.<sup>10</sup>

The relevant pre-trial investigations were then ordered and analysed. With regard to 2007, only the verdicts and pre-trial investigations of which the data collection team became aware in the interviews and via media reports were analysed.

In Finland, the researchers decided to limit analysed verdicts to judgments in the courts of appeal due to the large number of district courts and limited time for data collection and because verdicts in aggravated procuring and human trafficking cases often are tried in a court of appeal after the trial in the district court. However, some material was also collected from four district courts.

First, all judgments after 1 January 2000 regarding the following offences were identified by the courts: procuring, aggravated procuring, human trafficking, aggravated human trafficking, purchasing sexual services from a minor, and exploitation of a person who is a victim of the trade. Sexual abuse and deprivation of personal liberty were excluded.

After reading all verdicts, a second selection was made and relevant cases were chosen for further analysis. The criteria for this selection regarded the structure of the criminal organisation and extent of the criminal activity, whether the organisations used threats, force and violence and used debts to bind the women to the organisation. Cases that met some of the criteria of human trafficking were then selected. Case summaries were written and each case was analysed according to the analytical model.

In Estonia, court verdicts between 2000 and 2008 in cases of trafficking for sexual exploitation (including aiding prostitution) were analysed. A total of eleven judgments matching the criteria were found.

## Media reports

Media reports were also used in all three countries. In Finland, the online archive of the leading daily newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* was searched during September and October 2007, focusing on the years 2000–2007. The key words used in the search were “human trafficking” and “procuring.”

Media reports on trafficking for sexual exploitation from 2000 and onwards were used for data collection in Estonia. The three major daily and weekly newspapers were used in the Estonian analysis: *Eesti Päevaleht*, *Postimees* and *Eesti Ekspress*. Websites and advertising

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<sup>10</sup> A trial began in 2008 in Sweden in the first trafficking case involving a Swedish woman. A 19-year-old mentally disabled woman was used and sold by her 44-year-old husband. She was taken to various cities in Sweden and sold to men at hotels. (Aftonbladet 2008-05-16. Sålde sin fru som sexslav).

papers were also used in the Estonian data collection. No systematic media search was performed in Sweden, although media reports were used to some extent, particularly in cases where there were no other sources available.

## Seminars

Finally, seminars were held. The first seminar was attended by only the project partners from Sweden, Estonia and Finland and was aimed at further developing the analytical model. Significant professional actors from the three countries were also invited to the second seminar, where the results of the survey were presented and discussed from the perspective of crime prevention. The aim of the third seminar is to present the final report in a national context and will for that reason be held in the three countries.

## Selection mechanisms

In the Swedish survey, data collection was dependant on material and selections made by the police observations of criminality and criminals, since human trafficking is a crime very rarely reported to the police, but is observed by the police when surveying crime. Many aspects may factor into who is put under police surveillance (Korsell 2003) and the targets may often be known criminals, rather than people who do not have police records. Discrimination may also come into play, since the police may be more prone to notice certain minorities in connection with crime, and miss others (Brottsförebyggande rådet 2008).

A study aimed at examining how the Swedish Police observe the crime of trafficking showed that the police observed the crime in different ways (Nilsen 2008). The study also showed that one of the strongest signals trafficking operations may send was the physical place where the prostitution was occurring, but information to potential sex buyers could reach the police and be an important signal. The study also found that the criminals most commonly try to conceal the operation by making it appear as if the women are working independently.

A young woman was tempted with a job in Sweden. The traffickers said they would get her a job in a pizzeria, so she talked to her family and they gave her permission. They supported her leaving. She needed money because she had a daughter. It was not until she was in Sweden that the trafficker suggested she would become a prostitute to earn her living. In the police interrogation, she said this came as a real shock to her.

Based on a citation from an interview with a Swedish prosecutor. He called this real case a "textbook example" of recruitment.

# Recruitment

This is the first chapter of four presenting the results of the surveys in Sweden, Finland and Estonia. The presentation of the empirical findings has been divided into recruitment, transport, procuring and, finally, organisation. This chapter describes the recruitment of women.

In most cases, women are recruited in their countries of origin, which may also be defined as source countries. How trafficking networks and organisations recruit women varies from country to country, and sometimes even from case to case. The stories told by women trafficked for sexual exploitation are as unique as the women themselves.

## Summary

- The majority of women and girls recruited to Sweden, Finland and Estonia come from nearby countries such as Russia and the Baltic countries.
- The majority are in their twenties.
- There are few reports of children in the survey.
- There are no reports of men or boys.
- It is not unusual for recruited women and girls to have a history of prostitution in their home countries.

Estonia is one of the main source countries for the recruitment of women to the Swedish and Finnish sex industries, along with the Russian cities of St Petersburg and Murmansk, the hometowns of many of the women working in the Finnish sex industry (Lehti 2003, Rikskriminalpolisen 2006). Estonia is also defined as a destination country, especially for Russian women (Lehti 2003, UNODC 2006). According to the Swedish police, the reported source countries for which Sweden is the destination vary from year to year (Rikskriminalpolisen 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004). In the latest report from the National Criminal Investigation Department (Rikskriminalpolisen 2007), Kenya and Nigeria are also mentioned as source countries for a few of the trafficking victims in 2006.

## The survey

Since Estonia is regarded mainly as a source country for recruitment, the situation there differs from Sweden and Finland. According to the Estonian survey, the countries mentioned to which Estonian women are trafficked are nearby countries like Finland, Sweden and Norway. Other countries mentioned in the interviews are Denmark, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands and Portu-

gal. Active recruitment to the sex industry can be seen for countries where the sex industry is legalised, such as Germany and the Netherlands.

The majority of women trafficked abroad are identified as being from Tallinn, but other regions mentioned in interviews were Pärnu, Ida-Virumaa and southern Estonia. There is no evidence that the traffickers target more villages than towns.

There are also reports of women coming to Estonia from Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine to work in the sex industry.

Almost all the Swedish cases show that women trafficked to Sweden were recruited in other countries. Only a few recruitments have taken place in Sweden. The majority of cases involved recruitment of women mainly from the Balkans, the Baltic countries, CIS countries such as Russia and Ukraine and eastern European countries like Poland, Romania and Slovakia. Only two of the 30-odd court cases analysed involved women from countries outside Europe. In those cases, the women had been trafficked from Thailand and the Philippines.

The majority of women are from Estonia and Poland, as several of the large-scale cases in which many women had been trafficked had to do with those two countries.

However, there are few women trafficked to Sweden from Ukraine and Moldova. Only a couple of the analysed cases involved women from those two countries, even though from the global perspective they are regarded as two of the main (and frequently cited) source countries.

The situation in Finland is similar. The countries mentioned in the Finnish survey were Russia, Estonia and other Baltic countries, but women were also found being trafficked from Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. The largest groups of foreign prostitutes come from Russia and Estonia. Thailand is also emerging as a source country in one of the cases mentioned in the Finnish survey. The case involved Thai massage parlours investigated by Finnish journalists in 2007, but it is unclear whether any trafficking or procuring was involved.

### **Who is recruited?**

The survey shows that the majority of women and girls recruited to the sex industry in Sweden, Finland and Estonia are from poor circumstances and the lowest social strata in their home countries. The trafficked women and foreign women in prostitution are often members of an ethnic minority. They are very vulnerable and often have little civic knowledge. However, information in the survey in the three countries indicates that some women want to go abroad and earn money and for that reason actively seek opportunities for recruitment to the sex industry.

The majority are in their twenties. There were many girls under 18

found in the analysed cases in the Swedish survey. Girls under 18 were involved in almost half the cases. One case involved a girl under 15.

Some local prostitutes work part-time and many working week-ends to earn extra money. Some are students or have day jobs. The Swedish survey found some girls under 18 years of age who had been sex workers in their home countries, in a few cases when they were younger than 15.

One of the younger girls in the Swedish survey was 16 when she came to Sweden from Estonia. She was brought up with her single mother in a shabby residential hotel, also home to drug addicts and other people living on the fringes of society. When her parents divorced her grandmother brought her up. Her father was an alcoholic and used to beat her. When she was 15, she began working for a pimp as a prostitute at a hotel in her home city. Her best friend from the same city came from a similar background, reared by grandparents after her parents divorced.

An informant representing the Swedish police said:

*No, I think that if you scratch beneath the surface, you will find that everyone has a tragic background. No one is a sort of a girl-next-door. That is absolutely my view.*

One social worker said in an interview that he had seen similarities between women of Swedish background and trafficked women. He also found that there had been a change in the kind of women brought into these activities. Many of the women were already involved in the sex industry in their home countries and have not been coerced to same extent as before. Now the average age was 22–23; according to the informant this may also be because the punishment for trafficking is harsher when the trafficking victims are minors.

#### Traffickers' awareness

In the most large-scale organisation the organisers were fully aware of the harsher punishment for trafficking of minors, mainly because they had previously been punished for the offence. In the third case involving this organisation, the organisers made their preparations based on previous experience. An example of this was expressed in a text message to the recruiters where the main organisers asked the recruiters to avoid sending minors to Sweden:

*“I do not know what will happen in two weeks. It is needed immediately. The flat is empty. The ad will be online in three days. Not under eighteen. The pictures have to be sent.”*

One informant, a Swedish social worker, described how the women and girls adapt to their situation:

*The first time I meet them, they appear very much like amateurs; they don't wear such clothes, they don't wear fancy clothes. We have had girls or a girl from Slovakia who looked almost like schoolgirls. But when she returns six months later, she is a full-fledged professional; she gets her hair done, nails, the makeup, she puts on her makeup differently, more expensive clothes, more expensive perfumes, a completely different attitude, so they are moulded very quickly...*

### Exceptions

However, there are some cases that may be seen as exceptions. A few of the Swedish cases include reports of highly educated women from better circumstances. These cases may involve something that might be regarded as “high-class” prostitution in which traffickers operate from the source countries and the women work more or less independently and keep in touch with traffickers over the Internet or mobile phone. These cases involve women from three countries in eastern Europe. A police officer stated in an interview that these women are often very skilled at languages. In a police interrogation, one of these women said she was a university student and financed her studies in this way, by earning money working in the sex industry. There is evidence in the Finnish survey of Estonian and Russian women with a quite high level of education, and some who are students.

### Single mothers

Quite a number of the women trafficked to Sweden are single mothers, and similar cases were found in the Finnish survey. An interviewed Finnish procurer said that many women are in debt in Estonia and that there also are single mothers in financial trouble. In addition, the Finnish procurer said that some of the women are restless, young and looking for adventure.

Many of the Thai women involved in the Thai massage parlours initially came to Finland to marry Finnish men, and working in prostitution was not their primary aim. These women were either ordered to work in the massage parlours or ended up working there after a divorce. The Thai women might, according to the Finnish survey, have been working in the sex industry before, but then in Thailand. The Thai women working in the massage parlours are usually permanent residents of Finland.

### Minors

There are some reports in the survey of the involvement of minors in the three countries. In Finland there are no reports at all of children involved in the sex industry. The Estonian survey reports cases of underage girls involved in local and transnational trafficking, which also applies to Sweden, where girls under 18 were found in the survey.



Regarding younger children, according to the National Criminal Investigation Department's latest annual report, there were no reports of children under 12 years of age in 2006 involved in trafficking or procuring activities, and the majority of the children involved were 15 to 17 years of age (Rikskriminalpolisen 2007:13). The Swedish police also report that children from eastern Europe are being trafficked for the purpose of begging or stealing. There has been extensive coverage in Sweden of Chinese children who arrive, apply for asylum and then disappear after a couple of days. The purposes for which these children have been trafficked are unclear; several have been reported, such as to work in the Italian textile industry or at restaurants.

## **Men**

There are no reports of men having been trafficked to the sex industry in Sweden, Finland and Estonia.

The Swedish survey addresses several reasons for this pattern. One informant from the Swedish police said in the interview that the Swedish police and social services are biased towards seeing women as victims and for that reason overlook evidence of trafficking of men for sexual exploitation.

*We may have that bias as well, that if you see young girls with older men we might see that as a basic scenario (...) It may actually be that we assume the heterosexual pattern, with men as the buyers and young women the victims, but we know there are surely many young boys who may be victims, but it is not as obvious.*

Another explanation mentioned was that male-to-male prostitution (homosexual prostitution) takes place in forums not visible to the police or social services. Another was that of not viewing male prostitutes as victims, as opposed to the view on women in prostitution.<sup>11</sup>

However, young men between 17-27 years of age have been observed among people engaged in street prostitution in Norway (*Manlige prostituerte på rundtur i Europa. Dagsavisen* 24 October 2007). The observed male trafficking victims are from African countries, including Nigeria. The men are reported to have been forced into prostitution and trafficked in the same way as many of the Nigerian women have been.

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<sup>11</sup> See also the discussion regarding lack of knowledge about male prostitution in Sweden in the National Board of Health and Welfare's latest report "Prostitution in Sweden 2007" (Socialstyrelsen 2007: 36-37).

## Explanatory factors

As mentioned in the background, there are several explanatory factors behind trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation in Sweden, Finland and Estonia. The main push factors found in the survey and among the women's explanations of their motives for going along with it include poverty and unemployment as well as gender and/or ethnic discrimination. The majority of victims are from very poor circumstances. Other factors found in the survey were family problems and conflicts or other threats to the women, e.g. for having testified in trafficking cases.

## Structural factors

Discrimination is one of the major structural factors found in the survey. In Finland the situation for the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia was brought up as an aspect reflected in the Finnish prostitution scene, since it is difficult for people in this group to secure employment in Estonia.

The situation in Russia is also mentioned as being difficult for women, due to the instability and insecurity, lack of social safety nets and poor opportunities to earn a living. According to one informant, a procurer in Finland, one of the pull factors is the possibility of earning more money working as a prostitute in Finland than by working in a full-time job with much longer hours in the source country. Many of the women belong to minority groups in their countries of origin. The study material found several women belonging to the Russian-speaking minority in the Baltic countries, and many women from the Roma minority in eastern European countries are found in the Swedish survey. In one of the Swedish pre-trial investigations, gender discrimination was mentioned as a factor for women from Romania. A Romanian policeman explained that it is hard for women in Romania to secure ordinary jobs, which he asserted was a manifestation of gender discrimination. That was his explanation for why prostitution is common; women are well aware of the possibility of earning a living by prostitution.

## A changing world

However, some aspects that may lead to improvements were addressed in the survey. Several aspects were mentioned in the Finnish survey, such as the improvements in the standard of living and the economy that have occurred in the Baltic countries and Russia. Business opportunities have increased and people are not forced to emigrate to the same extent in order to earn a living. Furthermore, unemployment has gone down in Estonia and the country has joined the EU, which will eventually lead to an improved economic situation in Estonia. There are already fewer Estonian prostitutes working in Finland than

before. Income disparities between Finland, Estonia and Russia will eventually diminish.

### **Individual factors**

One of the central reasons on the individual level we have seen in the surveys in all three countries is that people generally want to improve their standard of living and for that reason are prepared to emigrate and take the risks that may entail.

Common individual factors mentioned in the survey in the three countries:

- Financial need
- Lack of proper education/school dropouts
- Social problems, such as youth delinquency or substance abuse
- Naïveté – the women are easily persuaded
- Need to escape from domestic violence, such as abusive men, or other family conflicts
- Glorification of the Western world/desire to see the world.

According to the Swedish survey, the majority of the women say in police interrogations that they were forced to emigrate due to financial distress or in order to earn a living. One informant convicted of procuring mentioned earning money as the main reason for wanting to go abroad and work as a prostitute (according to her, the majority of women from her country are in the business voluntarily). The second reason was a wish to find a husband. According to this informant, a person needed several jobs to earn a living in her home city and men also had to go abroad to find work. About the people in her country of origin, she said:

*“Things are not like they are in Sweden in my country. There are no social services that can help, people have to do everything themselves. Maybe that’s why people in my country are very angry, very aggressive. They have to work, work, work for money so they can live a little bit better. That is why many try to work two, three jobs and in another country; it’s the same for the men in many families, who go to another country and try to work there illegally.”*

She also said that prostitution was not considered criminal as it is in Sweden or regarded as a dirty business. The Thai women in one of the cases also cited finding husbands as a reason for coming to Sweden.

### Few improve their lives

However, the results from the Swedish survey show that earnings do not seem to be spent on improving their lives. Representatives of the Swedish police said in interviews that they had only seen that the women used the money they had earned from prostitution to consume luxury goods. They only knew of one exception, in a case where a woman had spent her earnings to get a driving licence.

Other reasons for emigrating found in the survey in all three countries were glorification of the Western world and a desire to try something new.

As mentioned, there are reports of social problems involved in the stories of the women recruited for sexual exploitation. Alcoholism, violence and other problems related to broken homes are mentioned.

In the Estonian survey, individual factors such as the women's vulnerability to the recruiters and their strategies also are mentioned. Most informants in the Estonian survey say there are social and economic factors, which are exploited by the recruiters. Specifically mentioned in the Estonian situation is that the women do not know either the local language (Estonian) or foreign languages – many of the locally recruited women belong to the Russian-speaking minority in for instance the Ida-Virumaa region. Another factor found in the Estonian data collection is that the women have been conditioned to be helpless and highly dependent on others.

### **Factors important for the trade**

There are also factors found in the recruitment phase that may be important for the traffickers regarding the trade. Examples were found in the larger organisations in the Swedish survey.

### Various skills and traits important

For the highly organised networks, it is extremely important to be able to meet market demands, so traffickers want the women they recruit to have various traits and skills. Examples of this were found in several cases. For instance, traffickers have expressed that they are looking for submissive women because they are more attractive in the market. Evidence of this was found in the case of one of the major trafficking organisations, where the traffickers were heard, in a wire-tapped conversation, discussing the women's submissiveness as an important factor when recruiting. In this case, they were discussing how likely the women were to pay the daily fee. This was thought to decrease the traffickers' active and visible involvement and labour, since they would not have to control the women as much as they would if the women were less docile.

In addition, the clients might not be interested in buying sexual services from women whom they believe were trafficked, and submis-

sive women might not give off those signals (Hagstedt, Korsell and Skagerö 2008).

Another important piece of knowledge found in the survey is that traffickers are interested in women who are skilled in languages, which they consider important for communicating with sex buyers (see also Hagstedt, Korsell and Skagerö 2008).

They also want the women to be attractive, and even hair colour is important in some cases. According to a phone conversation between a female trafficker and a recruiter in the country of origin, she wanted a “blonde girl this time” who was well-kept. The trafficker then complained about a girl the recruiter had previously sent her. This is an excerpt from the wire-tapped conversation between the recruiter and the trafficker, in which the recruiter replied that the trafficker could return the girl if she was disappointed:

*Trafficker: No, she is ok, more or less. Why should I send her back? She still makes some money.*

*Recruiter: Yes.*

*T: I cannot be totally without money.*

*R: I understand. (...)*

*T: But now everyone is waiting for a blonde girl.*

*R: Are you?*

*T: Yes, for once we need a blonde girl. You only send me dark girls. What good are they to me?*

#### Factors related to planning and logistics

Other factors were identified in the recruitment phase, such as those that might disrupt and ruin the organisers’ logistical planning. Factors like these can be found in the large-scale organisations. In one case, this was exemplified with the need to coordinate activities, for example to get photographs in time to be able to post ads on websites before the women arrived. The women would then be able work immediately after arrival. We also found evidence of how the traffickers’ planning and organising are disrupted by women who back out at the last minute. In this case, the traffickers had rent to pay for housing and an ad soon to be published, but there was no woman coming and they could not find a substitute at such short notice.

Another planning and logistical factor had to do with timing of recruitments. In one case, the trafficker made strategic plans for when to recruit women to the business. She knew that she could not recruit women during the summer because the sex buyers were on holiday then. In a phone call to her sister (acting as an intermediary) the trafficker asked her to inform a second person (the recruiter) to wait to recruit someone after summer.

### Age an advantage and disadvantage

Age may also be seen as a market factor, and can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. One clearly disadvantageous example was, according to an informant working for the social services in Sweden, that the penalties for trafficking underage girls were too high. For that reason, he had observed that the average age was older, more likely around 22-23. In another case, a girl's youth, age 17 when she was recruited, was seen as an advantage. In the police interrogation when the police wanted to know whether the trafficker was aware of her age, her friend said that when the trafficker had discovered the girl's age he had said that the younger she was, the more clients she would have.

## Money

The significance of money in the recruitment phase will be further described in this section. Three tracks are found in the material regarding how money may be used in this phase. The first is about financing travel for newly recruited women. The second track is money transfers related to recruiting. The third and final example is how money can be used in re-recruitments, that is, when the victim already has been recruited in the source country but is sold in the country of destination.

### **Paying for travel**

Economic control may be found in both the recruitment and destination phases, but there are several examples in the survey of debt for travel expenses being used as a kind of control mechanism.

Several cases in the Swedish survey involve money for tickets to the destination countries. In most cases, the women have no money when they arrive in the destination countries and the recruiter has bought their ticket, often only one-way. In many cases, the women do not have to pay any expenses related to transport and recruitment.

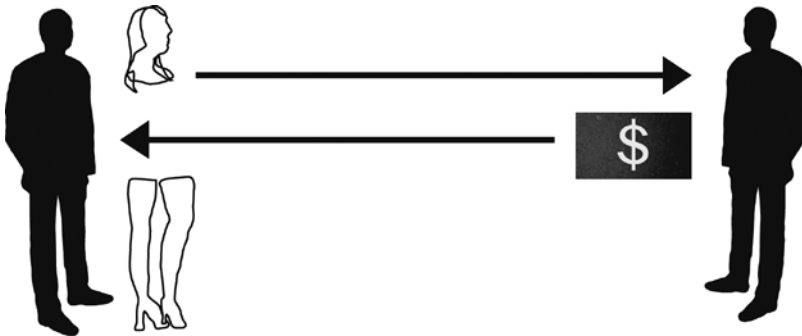
In one case, several women reported how they became indebted to the recruiter, not for the recruitment itself, but for a general reason. The trafficker then exploited the debt to force the girls into prostitution. The behaviour may in this case be seen as a strategic method: first lend the women the money, after which they are hooked and forced to work for trafficker.

Some evidence was found in the Finnish survey that traffickers forced the women to work to repay "expenses incurred" for travel. In one case the women did not have the money needed to acquire a visa, they gave the traffickers their passport to get them one. This cost was then to be paid back when the women had started to work. In some cases, traffickers have threatened to "fine" the women if they did not repay the debt.

## Recruitment involving money transfers

The results of the survey show that recruitment sometimes involves money transfers. In the Swedish survey, this is evident in a few cases (regarding recruiting women from Estonia and Romania) where there is a recruitment fee that the trafficker in the destination country or the recruiter pays to a brothel for buying a woman. The sum covers more than the trip. In one of the medium-scale cases involving Estonian women, both the women and the trafficker in Sweden were in debt to the recruiters working at a brothel. In the police interrogation, the trafficker said she knew people in her home country were earning money on the women's prostitution. According to the police interrogation with the women involved, there was no fixed charge for being recruited to Sweden. One of them reported that her friend had had to pay SEK 2,000 (approx. EUR 200) per week to the recruiter to get to Sweden. Other reports mentioned weekly sums of SEK 1,000–2,000 (approx. EUR 100–200) to be paid to the recruiters and a lump sum of SEK 5,000 (approx. EUR 500) for being allowed to initially work at the brothel. This could also be an example of how trafficker's use debt bondage in the recruitment phase.

Figure 2. The organisers are sometimes recruiting women by buying them from a recruitment agent or a brothel.



### Money as a reward

Money may also be involved as a reward to the recruiter. In one case where a female friend acted as intermediary and recruited a girl, the recruited girl believed that her friend had been rewarded in some way for this. This was also confirmed by the findings in the Finnish and Estonian surveys. According to the Finnish procurer informant, women who recruited their friends took “a little something” for every recruitment. In Estonia, the sums mentioned as being paid to female recruiters for each recruit varied from EEK 500 to EEK 4,000 (approx. EUR 30–260).

In one Swedish case, recruiting was personal and mainly took place

within the circle of acquaintances, but there was some kind of reward for every girl recruited, although the extent to which recruiting had been organised was not evident. The following excerpt recounts a phone conversation between the trafficker in Sweden and the recruiter in the source country about recruiting a new woman to the business:

*Trafficker: If you talk to her, put it well, talk beautifully, well, you know how to talk to girls. Say that it is going to be fucking good if the girls come here. It is going to be brilliant if they come here, they will get clothes (...) And can A (other recruiter) send prostitutes, I'll send you money. (...) For every girl, you'll get 50 dollars ...*

But in this case the contact person in the source country said: “*I will gladly send you girls but when it comes to prostitution, you'll have to work yourself.*” That seemed to be the end of that recruitment.

Sometimes the women were not aware of the fee that the traffickers in the destination countries pay the recruiters. In one of the more large-scale organisations, the organisers told the women that they were paying an extra daily fee for administration on the Internet, but in reality the fee was paid to the recruiters in the source country.

The procurer informant in the Finnish study said that in the early 2000s, procurers sometimes paid Estonians when they recruited women for the Finnish sex industry. The sums amounted to EUR 10-20 per woman.

### **Re-recruitment**

Re-recruitment, referring to women who are sold more than once, occurs rather frequently. In a study on trafficking victims in Bosnia Herzegovina, 46.3 per cent of the respondents had been sold once, 30 per cent had been sold twice and 23.7 per cent had been sold three or more times (Maljevic 2005:285).

The Swedish survey includes a couple of cases of re-recruitment. Most often, money changes hands between the traffickers for this kind of recruitment.

In one of these cases, the traffickers operating in Sweden sold a woman to traffickers operating in Norway for EUR 2,000. A woman recruited the trafficked woman informally in the source country (Romania). They knew each other from before but met again on a chat forum on the Internet. After a while, the trafficker began persuading the woman to come to Sweden to work as a housemaid. The trafficker promised her a job working for an elderly couple. After some persuasion, she arrived in Sweden and she and the trafficker began looking for a job for her without success. After a couple of days, the trafficker said that she could not allow her to stay at the same place because the



police checked on foreign nationals. She said the woman was going to stay with a couple from another country. The trafficked woman thought this was very strange. After a few days, the couple said they would take her to Stockholm by train, but when they arrived she discovered she had been taken to Oslo, where she finally found out she had been sold to the couple for EUR 2,000.

A second re-recruitment case involved a girl who was transported to one city in Sweden where the recruiting traffickers sold her to a second trafficker for EUR 800 for one month. The next day the trafficker drove her to a second city and sold her for the second time, for nearly the same amount, but this time only for two weeks. She was sexually exploited in the second city.

In another case, there was certain information that the main trafficker was to assume control over other trafficked women, re-recruited from another trafficker. According to a phone conversation between a facilitator for the main trafficker and a male recruiter in the source country:

*Man 1: Hello, I am xxx from Sweden. I got your phone number from xxx about the girls.*

*Man 2: Well, we could start something, since I already have girls working in Sweden, but please give me some time to arrange things.*

*Man 1: Good.*

*Man 2: I have some who have worked there, and I do not know where to park them.*

There are no reports of how this ended.

## Methods and places of recruitment

### Results in brief

- The majority are knowingly and initially voluntarily recruited.
- There are few reports of violence or threats in the three countries.
- Women and girls are often deceived about the nature of work, the pay, or are promised other kinds of jobs.
- Women are often informally recruited at brothels and strip clubs, while formal recruitments mainly take place via ads in newspapers or magazines.
- It is not unusual for recruiters to be women, either friends or co-workers of the victims.
- Friends or acquaintances personally or informally recruited the majority of the women and girls in the surveys in all three countries.
- In some cases, the traffickers have initiated a more intimate relationship with the girl or woman.

### Methods

Several methods are used to control and psychologically pressure the trafficked women. Alexis Aronowitz discusses methods of recruitment in terms of different levels of “victimisation” (2001:166). Aronowitz says there are several levels of deceit, of which the first is complete coercion and the victim is abducted. The second level Aronowitz refers to is when victims are deceived and promised jobs in the legal economy, but are ultimately forced to work in the sex industry. The third level occurs when the victims are deceived by half-truths to work as strippers or dancers. The fourth involves women who were aware before departure of what kind of job they were going to do, but were unaware of the conditions with regard to intimidation, indebtedness, control and exploitation.

The methods employed by traffickers seem to vary among ethnically based criminal networks and from country to country. The Balkan networks that traffic women are said to use the worst methods, whereas the networks operating in central and eastern Europe use less violent methods. In Estonia, for example, recruitment seems to take place without coercion or false promises. Victims from central and eastern Europe are also, on average, more highly educated and come from better social backgrounds (Lehti and Aromaa 2006:162, Lehti 2003:11).

## Violence and threats of violence

In the relationship between traffickers and trafficking victims, violence in some form seems to be a rather common means of controlling and subduing victims. Complete coercion is, according to Aronowitz, the highest level of deceit. An example of complete coercion is abduction. Women are abducted internationally; in Europe there have been reports of abductions of women from Kosovo and Albania. There are also reports of families selling their children (as in the case of Nigeria). There are reports of rape. Forced addiction to drugs has also been reported as a means of control (Lehti 2003).

### Complete coercion

In the surveys in the three countries this level of victimisation is not very common, although there are some examples. In the Finnish and Estonian surveys there were no reports of abduction in the known cases. In the Swedish survey, there is one case of abduction, where one woman reported in the police interrogation that she had been kidnapped and forced into prostitution by violence. In one Finnish case, a woman was threatened when she expressed reluctance about going to Finland. However, according to an informant in the Finnish survey, abducted women are a risk to the organisation, mainly because they will presumably try to escape. For that reason, organisations have become more cautious in recruitment and try to avoid problems and risks. This development is also seen in Sweden.

There are also a few examples of other kinds of complete coercion, such as rape. In the Swedish survey, one woman reported being drugged and raped. The rape was filmed and the traffickers used the film to threaten her into working for them; otherwise they would contact the woman's parents and show them the film. However, the court did not believe her story. There are also reports found in a few other cases in the Swedish survey of rape used as a means of coercion in the recruitment phase, but it was not found to be a common method.

### Majority knowingly and initially voluntarily recruited

According to Siegel and Yezilgoz, who have studied women trafficked to Turkey, the trafficking procedure contains both voluntary and involuntary elements. The women they interviewed said that when they were first recruited, they saw their traffickers more as agents or employers, who often made travel arrangements via ordinary travel agencies. To that point, the arrangements were made in a voluntary way, but once in Turkey the women noticed more of the organised crime dimension, as the demands on the women were increased and it became more difficult for the women to repay the debt (Siegel and Yesilgoz 2003:80–81).

This is also evident in the survey, as the majority of the women in Estonia, Finland and Sweden were knowingly recruited into the sex

industry. In the Swedish cases analysed for the study, the women generally stated that they knew what kind of business they were being recruited to but had been deceived about the conditions. That which also emerges in the Swedish survey is that the majority of trafficking victims initially say in police interrogations that they were voluntarily recruited, but there are several reports of how women's stories about their recruitment change later in the interrogation. Some of the women who said in police questioning that they initially were voluntarily recruited also said they would never have gone if they knew what would happen. Some had been knowingly recruited. In some cases, the journeys seemed to be somewhat spur-of-the-moment and hasty.

A Swedish informant representing the Swedish police said:

*As far as I can recall, I have not experienced very many that were directly forced – in the sense that they were directly forced and taken to Sweden, as in the case of “Lilja Forever.”<sup>12</sup> The situation seems somewhat less clear-cut, since they do not need to bring victims like that.*

Another comment on this was made by one of the informants in the Swedish survey who had been convicted of procuring:

*No, there is a lot of media attention and some are negative, they write in the papers and show things on TV. A few years ago they showed this film about Russian girls working in Stockholm in prostitution, it was Lilja Forever, but I do not know, it is not like that, no.*

Several of the informants who have been professionally involved in trafficking cases, such as police and social services staff, state that the victims they have met in many cases are very naïve, especially about the conditions awaiting them. In that sense, they are very easily deceived. One of the examples of control found in the survey is for the trafficker to pay their travel expenses, but the girls do not question this or realise that the trafficker would expect anything of them in return.

Voluntary or involuntary – difficult to determine

One issue raised in the Finnish survey was the difficulties related to talking about aspects of voluntariness or involuntariness with regard to trafficking and prostitution. One of the informants suggested that the questions should instead be about what have they consented to. The aspects of voluntariness should be about whether or not the

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<sup>12</sup> “Lilja Forever” is a film by Swedish director Lukas Moodysson based on a true trafficking case.

woman can quit the job, rather than her initial consent. The focus should instead be on the actual conditions the women are living under and whether the conditions are acceptable.

### Deception

Aronowitz states in her research that the second and third levels of victimisation are the most commonly found. This is also evident in the survey, where many examples are found of recruiters deceiving the women who are to be recruited. This occurs in several ways: either the recruiters have told untruthful “facts” about the job offered, the nature of work, the earnings or the working conditions, which is most common in the Finnish survey. In the Swedish survey, deception mainly involved promises of other kinds of work. In other cases, the recruited women understood what kind of job they were being offered even though it was not explicitly told to them. Other examples were that the women could reject clients, that they could choose themselves, and that they could work more as companions to men, which did not have to involve sexual services.

In Finland’s only trafficking case, two of the women were deceived and offered other kinds of jobs; one was promised a job as a babysitter and one as a social companion in an escort service.

In some cases, the recruiter has had to prepare the girl to come. In one Swedish case, there were reports of phone contact over a period of six months before the girl decided she would accept the proposal and emigrate. In this case, she was promised another type of job, in a restaurant or as a housemaid.

A general problem found in the Swedish survey when reviewing the police interview material with trafficked women is that their stories change throughout the interviews, which makes it difficult to determine what really happened. This is also the case for the professional groups, such as police and social workers, who work with these cases. Thus, the truth about methods used, such as deception and debt bondage, may not always be conveyed.

### Methods to get the women interested

According to some records from the Swedish survey, such as interviews with the police and social services, there is no need for major strategies to get the women interested in leaving their countries and in many cases the women are knowingly recruited to the sex industry. It seems relatively easy to get women. In several of the analysed cases, there seems to be a large supply of women in the source countries who want to go abroad and work as prostitutes.

One study informant convicted of procuring said:

*If they work voluntarily, they would rather come here to work.  
They earn more money here.*

Later in the interview, he gave an example of the difference in income from prostitution, in this case between the two countries. Sexual services would cost the equivalent of SEK 200 (approx. EUR 20) in the country of origin compared to SEK 1,500 (approx. EUR 150) in Sweden.

In another Swedish case involving a large-scale organisation, the traffickers seemed to find the supply of women too large and had to turn down the recruiters. In another example, a text message sent by a recruiter to a trafficker said: “*Name a number and how many you need and they will come.*” Still in this organisation, when they had a dropout, a woman who had changed her mind and was not coming, traffickers had a hard time finding a replacement.

In most of the analysed Swedish cases, the women seem very eager to go and little time elapses between the proposition and departure. In some cases, the opposite was true.

## **Places**

A number of specific places are used for recruiting women to the sex industry. Examples of places used for this are magazines (ads), employment agencies, the Internet, brothels and sex clubs. Some women are already engaged in prostitution, in brothels for instance, in their home countries. This may be the case for women trafficked from central and eastern Europe who are engaged in prostitution in Europe (Aronowitz 2003:87). This kind of prostitution may be more voluntary than forced and involuntary (see also Siegel and Yesilgoz 2003).

The women are recruited through advertisements in newspapers or on the Internet or through front-offices that offer both legal and illegal employment as maids, nannies, au-pairs, waitresses, striptease dancers or cleaners (Lehti 2003:32). In the Baltic cases, recruitment is more often personal than via advertisements (Lehti 2003:11).

### **Informal recruitment most common**

The survey also shows that the majority of the women were informally recruited by people with whom they have some kind of personal relationship in their home countries: as friends, family or acquaintances. Sometimes the contact is made by phone, by the trafficker or someone acting as a recruiter, or face-to-face by the trafficker, recruiter or an intermediary. The Swedish survey found that small-scale networks that operate more spontaneously frequently use this type of recruitment. It also often involves deception, such as offering the women other kinds of jobs as housemaids, cleaners or farm workers.

The Estonian survey includes examples of women recruited and trafficked to another country with the assistance of their mothers. In one case, the mother was working in the sex industry as a call centre receptionist.

### Recruitment at brothels or strip clubs

In both Finland and Sweden informal recruitment takes place at brothels, bars and strip clubs in the source countries. This category of place is the second most common found in the Swedish survey regarding informal recruitment. Women working at brothels, bars and strip clubs are usually recruited by professional recruiters, but it is not unusual for women working at brothels to be recruited by female friends or co-workers. This type of recruitment is usually aboveboard; the recruited women understand the purpose, but they may be deceived about the conditions.

In the Swedish survey, one trafficked girl said in the police interrogation that a female friend and/or co-worker at the same brothel had recruited her. The female friend had promised her that she would only go to Sweden and work, and the job offered would only require sitting and drinking with men and talking to them, for which she would be paid. She stated in the police interrogation:

*I knew that it was absolutely true that if I did not want to sleep with a man, I would not have to.*

In another Swedish case, the majority of the women and girls were found to have been recruited from a specific brothel in Tallinn, Estonia. But there was little information about the brothel and the women seemed afraid of talking about it and their recruitment. In this case, the police made a reconnaissance to this brothel without getting more information other than that the brothel was very closed to the outside world and the women lived there. Specific taxi drivers picked up the visiting sex buyers in the city.

In one Finnish case, the recruiter owned a shop in St Petersburg and used it as a base for recruitment. One of the prostitutes in this case related that she believed there was a kind of agency spotting women on the streets or in shops and that this was how they were recruited to the Finnish sex industry.

### Recruitment via the Internet

In a couple of Swedish cases, women were informally recruited via the Internet. In one case, they got to know each other through a personal ad. In a couple of cases, the recruiter and the woman made contact by chatting on the Internet (Estonia, Russia and Romania). In one case, the woman got in touch with a man in an Internet chat forum who was a facilitator to the main trafficker in Sweden. He was from her home city and she was working as an au pair. After a while they met and he eventually persuaded her and recruited her to the sex industry.

### Formal recruitments

Several examples of formal recruitment were found in Sweden and Finland. The women, mostly from Estonia, were mainly recruited via job advertisements. Very few examples of employment agencies involved in the recruitment phase were found in the survey.

The examples of how job ads are written show that they are explicit in some cases, but not all.

One Swedish example of an explicitly worded advertisement published in Estonia's equivalent of the Yellow Magazine ("Kuldne Börse") was:

*Erotic job immediately in Sweden: For girls between 17-25 years of age. Salary EEK 100,000 [Estonian crowns] per month, no agent's commission. Discretion and security guaranteed. Casting in Tallinn on xxx. (e-mail and telephone).*

When the women responded, the main trafficker booked an appointment with them in a hotel in Tallinn, where she informed the women about the work. This was carried out like a job interview.

In Finland, there is also evidence found of advertising in the Estonian "Yellow Magazine." In these cases, advertising also explicitly offered intimate work in Finland.

Other examples of advertisements were not as explicitly worded. One ad purported to be offering jobs as showgirls in Sweden, Finland and Denmark. After the women responded, they were given an appointment with the main trafficker. A couple of the women recruited in this case said in police interrogations that the purpose was not revealed until they were in Sweden and installed at the main trafficker's place. Others said that they had been truthfully informed about the work before arriving.

A second example from the Finnish survey involved a woman who answered an advertisement in the local newspaper in St Petersburg. She called the number in the ad and arranged a meeting with the recruiter, a young woman, at a café in St Petersburg. The recruiter truthfully informed her about the daily expenses, the pay and what kind of job she would perform. She gave the recruiter her passport and the recruiter promised to arrange a visa for the woman, since she could not afford the expense. The debt was to be repaid through future earnings.

Only one of the analysed cases in Sweden involved an employment agency with respect to recruitment of a girl from Moldavia. Eventually the employment agent revealed the true purpose and that the job involved sexual services.



## Recruitment summary

The majority of recruitments of women take place in nearby countries. When Sweden and Finland are the destination countries, the majority of the women come from Russia, the Baltic countries and, in the case of Sweden, Poland. Women are also trafficked from the Balkans and eastern European countries to Sweden. There are reports of Thai women in both Sweden and Finland, many working at Thai massage parlours in Finland. Otherwise, there are few reports of women trafficked from non-European countries to Sweden and Finland.

Estonia, on the other hand, is mainly a source country, since many Estonian women are recruited to the sex industry abroad. The most common destination countries mentioned in the survey are Sweden, Finland and Norway. There are also reports of women being recruited to the sex industry in Estonia from countries such as Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine.

The majority of trafficking victims in all three countries have been adult women, most of whom were in their twenties when recruited. However, there are reports of underage girls, especially in the Swedish survey, in which girls under 18 were found in nearly half the cases analysed, but also in the Estonian survey. There is only one Swedish case involving a girl under 15.

There are very few reports of men trafficked for sexual exploitation in any of the three countries that participated in the survey.

The majority of the women come from very poor circumstances. Many of them found in the cases are single mothers, unemployed, and of minority background, e.g., part of the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia. Many want to go abroad to improve their standard of living and have no other alternatives. On the individual level, there are reports of women and girls who were victims of domestic abuse, addicts, poorly educated, and were naïve and easily led into destructive behaviour. However, the survey also contains reports of highly educated women coming from better living conditions, although they seem to be an exception.

The survey shows that the most common way of recruiting women in Sweden, Finland and Estonia is informal and takes place within personal networks. Many of the recruiters are female friends.

There are very few reports of women being forced into prostitution. The Finnish survey contains no reported abductions, but there was one case in the Swedish survey. The majority of the women state in police interrogations that they were voluntarily and knowingly recruited to the sex industry, although there are several reports of women being deceived either about conditions or the earnings. However, some women were offered other jobs, as farm workers, housemaids, babysitters etc.

Many of the women were already working in the sex industry be-

fore coming to the destination country. Informal recruitment at brothels is relatively common and involves either recruitment agents or female friends or co-workers at the brothel acting as recruiters. The formal recruitment found in the cases studied is mainly via explicit advertising in newspapers or magazines in Estonia and Russia. The women respond to an advertisement and book an appointment with the recruiter.

**Trafficker: ...I am going in a submarine**

**Woman: Why?**

**Trafficker: I don't really know! I am so tired of all these borders! I can't do it any more.**

**As soon as I approach a border I get stressed and shaky in the whole body.**

One of the most expressive examples of how difficult crossing borders can be was found in a phone conversation between the trafficker and a woman that was wiretapped by the Swedish police.

# Transport

Aspects of transport will be described in this chapter. The arrangements and organisations found in the surveys in Sweden, Finland and Estonia will be reported.

The chapter will begin with a description of the geographical routes organisations and networks may use when trafficking human beings for sexual exploitation to the destination country.

## Results in brief

- Most trafficking to Sweden, Finland and Estonia takes place within Europe.
- The major geographical route identified in the survey is the Russian-Baltic route by bus or ferry to Finland or Sweden.
- Of all countries in the survey, Finland is the most frequently used as a transit country, e.g., when transporting women to Sweden.
- Transits are also made to avoid costs, e.g. by using low-cost airlines.
- In most cases, there is no need for organising and travel arrangements are often very simple and cheap.
- The Swedish survey found that the main organisers purchase tickets.
- In Finland, most women buy their own tickets.

## Geographical trafficking routes

Many routes are used for trafficking women around the world. Most trafficking for sexual exploitation is regional and takes place over short distances (Lehti and Aromaa 2006). In most areas of the world, including Europe, trafficking takes place inside the region. People are trafficked for sexual exploitation from rural areas and economically poor regions to cities and rich regions. Most victims are trafficked in and between third world countries and only 15 per cent of the estimated global trafficking has the industrialised world as a destination (Lehti and Aromaa 2006).

In northern Europe as well, trafficking is largely regional. The destination areas in northern Europe are the Nordic countries and the source countries in most cases are the Baltic countries and Russia (Lehti and Aromaa 2006). Mainly Russian and Estonian criminal networks control the Finnish sex market. Trafficking operations target the Finnish market from Tallinn or Russia (Leskinen 2003).

The northern route is used for trafficking Russian women from the Murmansk region in northern Russia, who are trafficked across the

border from Russia to Finland, Sweden and Norway (Socialstyrelsen 2004, Leskinen, 2003). Regional patterns within a country may vary slightly due to various geographical routes and proximity to different countries. It has been reported that men travel from some cities in northern Sweden in the opposite direction and cross the border as “sex tourists” to Finland, Norway and Russia to buy sexual services in those countries, as well as to the Baltic countries, Stockholm and Thailand.<sup>13</sup> According to a study on prostitution in Estonia, approximately 25 per cent of purchasers of sexual services in 2006 were tourists, mainly from Finland (Pettai et al. 2006). There are Swedish reports of men living in the southern regions travelling to Denmark to buy sexual services (Socialstyrelsen 2007).

Transports are dependant on the route the trafficker chooses. The organisation of transports of trafficked women also varies depending on costs, immigration regulations in destination countries and available modes of transport.

Trafficking takes place by land, sea or air (Schloenhardt 2001: 223–224). Trafficking by land using buses, trains or lorries may be seen as the easiest way. Transport ranges from the simplest means of walking women over borders to more sophisticated ways of arranging transport by land, e.g., by train. One of the more brutal examples of transporting trafficking victims refers to the sex industry in Israel, where due to more stringent passport controls the Bedouins guide large groups of women accompanying them through the Sinai desert on foot (Monzini 2005:111). A less brutal but nearly as easily arranged Nordic example of trafficking by land is that of women trafficked from Murmansk in Russia to northern Finland, who cross the Finnish-Russian border by car, driven by one or two Russian men (Leskinen 2003).

Trafficking by sea (boat) has many advantages. First, the risks for being detained and arrested are lower than for either trafficking by air or land (Schloenhardt 2001:223–224). Second, it is easier to transport many people and the logistics are not as sophisticated as trafficking by air. For example, there is no need for travel documents or bribing officials (this may not be the case regarding ferry traffic between northern European countries, see further below).

Trafficking by air requires more sophisticated planning and is the fastest-growing mode of transport, due to weak border controls and expansion of international air traffic (Schloenhardt 2001:223–224).

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<sup>13</sup> In a study of single men living in rural northern Sweden, Swedish social anthropologist Lissa Nordin (2007) follows some of the men's travels across borders to Russia to meet women, who are described as prostitutes. However, Nordin does not problematise this phenomenon as sex tourism; instead, she mainly describes it from the perspective of their lives as single men in rural Sweden and mainly as an expression of these men's search for a woman to share their lives with. In some of the cases described, the Swedish man and the Russian woman form a relationship and she visits him in Sweden.

One of the disadvantages is that it is difficult to transport large numbers compared to boat transport. In addition, if the trafficked persons are illegal migrants, the transport must be carefully planned.

### **Routes identified in the survey**

Several routes emerged in the empirical findings in all three countries. The study shows that proximity is one of the major factors that determine what geographical routes the traffickers choose. This study also confirms that trafficking involving Sweden, Finland and Estonia mainly takes place regionally inside of Europe.

#### **Russian and Baltic route by ferry**

Russia (or Estonia) – Finland – Sweden is one of the main routes found in the survey, since the majority of women working in the Swedish and Finnish sex industry are from either Russia or Estonia.

When Sweden is the destination, Finland is often used as a transit country on the way from both source countries, Russia and Estonia. An informant in the Swedish survey who was convicted of procuring gave an example of how travelling this route may be organised in the easiest way, which was to book a ticket on a charter tour from the major cities in Russia to Sweden. The charter tour included going by bus through Russia and Finland and then taking the ferry to Sweden. Officially, there was only a one-day stop in Stockholm, but the women would leave the tour in Sweden and stay illegally without a visa. Ferry is the most frequently used mode of transport for this route. The Estonian survey also confirms that Estonian women mainly take the ferry to Scandinavian countries. However, taking the ferry in northern Europe may have the opposite effect to the abovementioned argument that going by sea does not require as much organisation as other routes may require, since there are borders to be passed.

In some cases, trafficked women have been smuggled by lorry drivers from Estonia and Russia to Sweden.

The interviews and pre-trial investigations in Sweden provided no confirmation regarding the northern route, but there are reports that it may be more common for men in northern Sweden to travel as sex tourists to cities in Russia (Nordin 2007, Socialstyrelsen 2007).

There is evidence in the Finnish survey of three major routes over which women are transported from Estonia and Russia to work in the Finnish sex industry. The first applies to women from Estonia, who travel by ferry from Tallinn to Helsinki. There are two routes from Russia: either by bus or train from the St Petersburg and Vyborg areas to eastern and southern Finland, or by car or bus from the Murmansk area to northern Finland. There is one large Finnish case involving women from the Murmansk area in the 1990s and early 2000s when regular drivers in organised mini-bus tours drove women to northern Finland (and occasionally to Norway and Sweden). There is also evi-

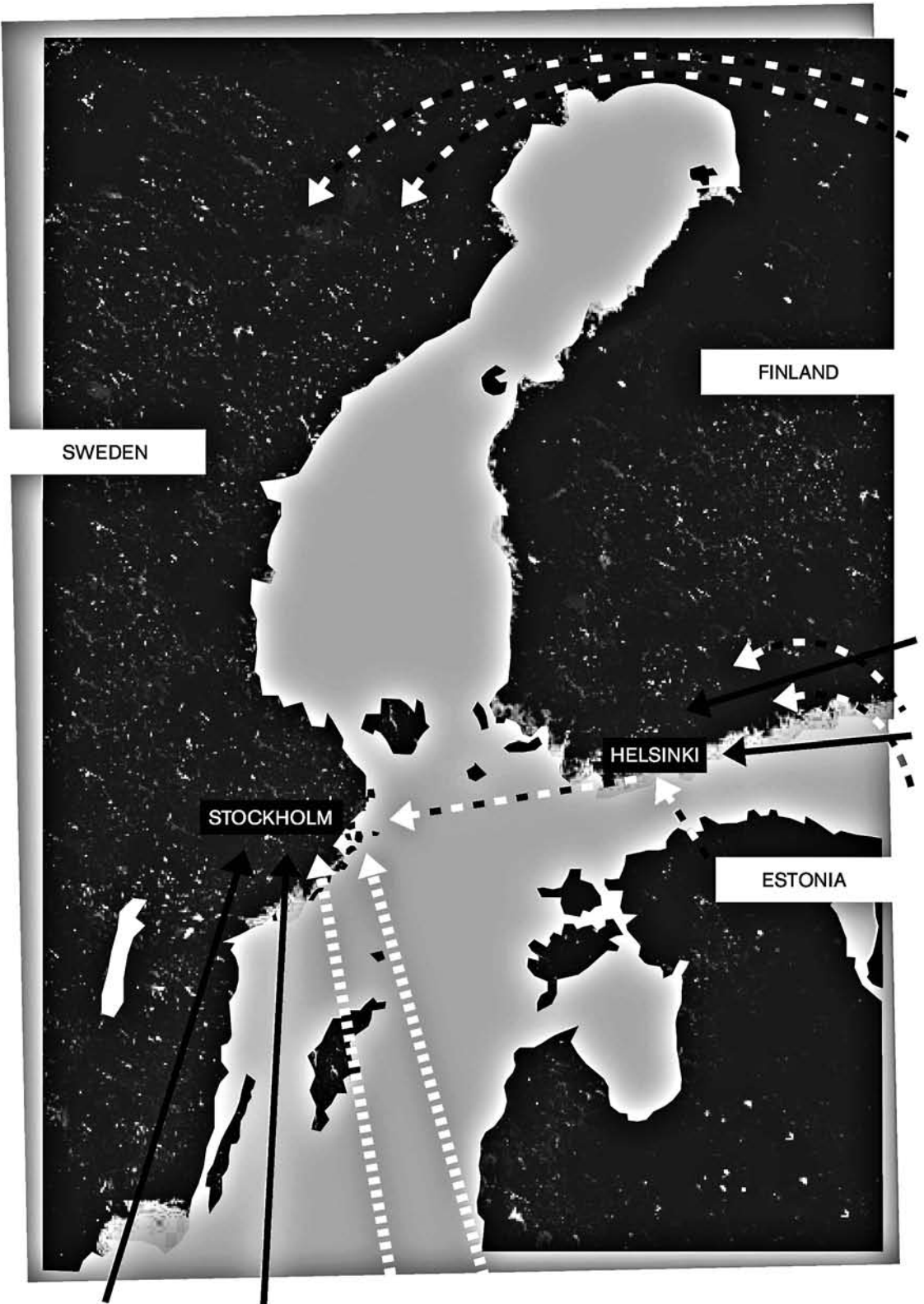
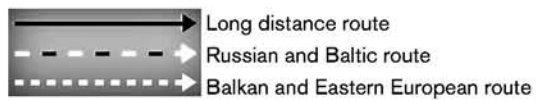


Figure 3. Routes found in the survey.



dence in the Finnish survey of women transported from Latvia and Lithuania and through Estonia to Finland.

#### The Balkan and eastern European routes

The route from the Balkan or eastern European countries appears only in the Swedish survey. There is no evidence of women from eastern Europe being trafficked to Finland or Estonia. The route goes through the countries of eastern Europe, through Poland or Germany and Denmark, and then by ferry to Sweden, the destination. Regarding this route, the Swedish survey shows that the journeys in most cases are easily organised and arranged by car (either a driver or a trafficker driving the women), or the use of cheap bus tours (Romania) with budget bus companies. There is a Swedish bus company arranging these cheap trips between Romania and Sweden. There are also some reports of women going by train as well.

Women from these countries travel by air in only a few cases, which involved the more organised sex businesses operating from source countries (such as the Czech Republic).

#### Long distance routes

Since the majority of women come from countries within the region, modes of transport are often very simple. Buses, ferries and trains are the most commonly used modes of transport but women who travel longer distances from non-European countries need to travel by air, which may require more planning and organisation. The survey shows that air travel is involved mainly in cases involving women from non-European countries such as Thailand and Nigeria. The Swedish border police also report that there is evidence that Chinese migrant children have travelled by air, as was the case in a few cases involving people trafficked from India. The situation is the same in Finland, which seems in many cases to be a transit country for long distance trafficking of people from India and China for forced labour exploitation.

## Transit

The traffickers use transit countries for some routes and for several reasons. Finland is the only country in the survey that may be regarded as a genuine transit country. There are some reports in Sweden that confirm this, while Estonia seems to be the least used as a transit country.

#### Finland as a transit country

The Swedish survey shows that Finland is in several cases used as a transit country for trafficking and transporting women from Russia and Estonia to Sweden. According to the interviews and pre-trial investigations, the reason for this is that it is much easier for Russian



nationals to obtain visas to Finland than to Sweden, which was also confirmed by a civil servant in Finland. The official called the Finnish consulate in St Petersburg a “visa factory” because approximately 1,500 visas a day – 400,000 a year – are issued there.

This was also expressed in an interview with an informant convicted of procuring:

*Informant (I): For example, they can only get visas to Finland, not Sweden, but no visa is required to travel from Finland to Sweden. At the border, they show their passport in Finland and stay there, or from Finland they can get to Germany or Denmark.*

Interviewer (I): Is it common to get a visa for Finland?

I: Hmm.

I: Is it easier than to get one to Sweden?

Ip: Yes.

Later in the interview the procurer said it was very difficult to get a visa to any of the Scandinavian countries. She knew of women who went to other countries, such as Turkey, because no visa was required. She also said that Spain and Italy were easier.

An informant representing the Swedish police confirmed that many avoided travelling directly to Sweden and therefore chose to go through Finland from Estonia, since there have been no controls at the ports where ferries from Finland arrive. On 21 December 2007, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia entered the Schengen Agreement, which has eliminated systematic border controls also between Sweden and those countries.

### Long-distance transits

The survey findings also indicate that expanding air traffic from Asia to Finland may become a pull factor in the future. Finland has become a transit country for trafficking people from China heading to other parts of Europe like the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Germany. Italy also emerges in the Finnish survey as a destination in some cases.

Sweden is transited on long-distance travels. One of the more frequent uses of Sweden as a transit country is for trafficking Nigerian women (through Skavsta Airport) to Oslo. There are reports of women entering one of the smaller airports where a low-price airline is operating. This is believed to be mainly due to the cheap flights. There are reports of people meeting the women at the airports and accompanying them to Norway, where they are destined. These women are reported to be very frank about the purpose of their journeys. The border police have also noticed other persons transiting at the airports, most likely trafficked for other purposes than sexual exploita-

tion. An informant representing the Swedish border police expressed it as follows:

*For instance, we had a major case with Indians last year, where trafficking could be suspected but for other purposes, such as forced labour [exploitation]. The same thing may be happening to the Chinese children disappearing into Italy.*

According to informants, Finland may currently be more interesting as a transit country than a destination country. Due to the distant location, cold climate and small size, Finland is not an attractive destination country to human traffickers. Another reason mentioned was the lack of an ethnic community.

#### Sweden as a transit country

There are only a few reports of Sweden being used as a transit country because in most cases the trips were arranged directly from source to destination, which only has entailed passing other countries on the way.

A second example of transit, also called the transit case by the police, involved a woman who was recruited by her main traffickers in her home city in Romania by offering her work as a housemaid in Sweden. She was sold to traffickers in Sweden, a male/female couple, who then took her to Oslo.

Transit can also be seen in a couple of cases where women have been somewhere before and from there have continued their journey to Sweden. An example of one such transit is described in a case where a woman reported in the police interrogation that her traffickers had transported her through several transit countries. She started her trip in her home country in eastern Europe and travelled on her own to a neighbouring country, where two men met her and where she stayed for a month. At first she was in the country legally, since she had a visa, but it expired. In the police interrogation she described her situation as uncertain; first because she did not know what would happen and second because she was in the country illegally. After a month another man drove her to a third country, where he took her to a photographer and helped her get a fake passport. From the third country she was driven into the EU and Austria, where the main traffickers took her in hand and drove her by car directly to Sweden.

There are also examples of less complicated transits in cases where the women had previously been engaged in prostitution in other countries. There are reports of women coming out of prostitution in Finland, Denmark and Germany. In cases where Finland was the second country, it seems that women vary their destination countries, going to both Finland and Sweden from time to time. This was seen especially in cases involving Estonian women.

In cases where the main organisation operates from the source country and sends women alone to the destination countries, the on-line advertisements show that these women tour from city to city and this kind of trafficking is sometimes called “city tours.” In other, similar cases the police only suspect arrangements of this kind.

## Places and methods

The survey shows that in most cases travel arrangements are very simple. No major arrangements are made. The Swedish survey shows that in the majority of cases the main trafficker who buys the ticket, either from Sweden or from the source country. Sometimes the women buy their own tickets. In a few cases the recruiters arrange or organise the trips, for instance regarding Estonia. In Finland, it is the opposite; the women mainly make their own travel arrangements. In the Estonian survey, both examples are equally common.

The Finnish survey shows that most Russian women working in the Finnish sex industry acquire their visas independently or through small travel agencies, at their own expense, although in some cases travel was arranged and paid for by others, making the women indebted. In one Finnish case, two Estonian women arranged the journey. They bought the ferry tickets and transported the women to the ferry terminal in Tallinn. One of the trafficked women in this case, a mentally disabled person, was picked up at the terminal in Helsinki and taken to an apartment.

In the Estonian survey, there are both cases of women travelling by themselves at their own expense and cases of women who were escorted and whose travel expenses were paid for them. In some known cases where women have been transported to Japan and Portugal, the tickets were paid for on behalf of the women. In cases where the tickets were paid for by others, the women were obliged to repay the debt after a certain period of time, usually three months.

### Travel agencies

The study shows that travel agencies may be used to some extent to organise travel, particularly to Finland. As stated, Russian women may use Russian travel agencies to obtain visas to Finland. In another Finnish case, the main organisers owned a shop in St Petersburg, which possibly also housed a small travel agency that arranged visas for the women. The women had to pay for these services out of their future earnings.

There is only one case in the Swedish survey in which a travel agency was used to organise travel. The travel agency helped with travel documents such as certificates, visas and passports for travelling abroad. In a telephone call between the trafficker in Sweden and a recruiter in the source country, the trafficker provided information about the agency. The recruiter would then instruct a woman, who

had recruited a friend, to go to the agency and fill out forms for a passport and visa and informed the recruiter that the process would go faster if they paid extra. The trafficker in Sweden advised the recruiter that to avoid problems, the woman should omit any information about her children and previous marriages.

In the Swedish survey, a bus company appears in many of the analysed cases where people have been transported from Romania to Sweden. The bus company is a Swedish-registered charter bus company operating only between Romania and Sweden. According to the pre-trial investigation they drive a minibus regularly between the two countries. In one case, there seemed to be some cooperation between the bus driver and the trafficker, since the bus driver initially had continuous telephone contact with the trafficker. The trafficked girl said in police interrogations that the bus driver collected passports, birth certificates and other identification documents, which the driver said were needed to fill out a form. The girl believed it was for obtaining an invitation to Sweden. Before arriving at national borders, the driver returned the documents to the passengers, but collected them after the crossing, once they had shown their passports to border control. In this case, he kept the girl's passport until they arrived in Sweden and handed it over to the trafficker. There was also information found that the bus driver lent EUR 500 to people who had no money or invitation to the EU to show border control at the outer border to the EU. According to Swedish police, there were also indications that women paid the bus driver with sexual services.

### **Preparations for entering the country**

There are some indications in the survey of preparations to enable entry to the destination or transit country.

#### **Visas**

In cases where women needed visas to enter Sweden, traffickers have had to use reference persons.<sup>14</sup> This was shown in cases involving women from Estonia, Russia and Thailand. Most often the traffickers or their facilitators (people with Swedish residence permits or Swedish citizenship) are used as reference persons. Border police at the Swedish border check references and verify that people have a return ticket and money to support them during the stay.

According to one informant who works for the Swedish border police, the Swedish police can check a person in the Schengen Information System (SIS), mainly with regard to traffickers or procurers. In the same interview, the informant stated that the Swedish police

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<sup>14</sup> If a visa applicant is not applying for reasons of employment or studies in Sweden, the applicant must have an invitation to Sweden, in which case the reference person is the person who invited the applicant.

have begun preparing what they call compensatory measures due to the expansion of the Schengen Agreement, which entails the elimination of border controls. One such measure is that the police have been trained to carry out general controls of foreign citizens, since they have the right to do this at any time, for instance during routine traffic controls.

According to the Finnish survey, prostitutes who come to Finland a few times a year use regular tourist visas, which are valid for three months. In some cases procurers have invited women to Finland. Some women had received invitations several times.

#### Coming from non-Schengen countries

In many Swedish cases, evidence was found that traffickers had instructed women on what to say when they entered Sweden, especially citizens of non-Schengen countries. In some cases, the women were instructed to pretend that they were relatives of the traffickers. In one case, the girl was told to say she was the trafficker's daughter, and if asked about her identity when crossing the Swedish border, she was told to state the daughter's name and birth date.

According to one informant who works for the Swedish border police the explanations for the visits are often simple:

*The explanations are often very simple...that they are going to visit a boyfriend, a relative, someone's friend or sister who lives in Stockholm. They do not need to say much more. I mean, if they have money and they manage and have this story... anyone has then the right to stay in the country...*

In one Swedish case, women told border control issues that "an uncle" (the trafficker) was picking them up at the ferry terminal. When he did not arrive, another "relative" (the second trafficker in the case) turned up and said that the women were going to stay with him instead. The women were finally allowed to enter the country.

It also happens at border control stations that the women say that they are going to do something else in Sweden. One border police officer interviewed related that there are a couple of cases when the police have had suspicions. Mainly the women and girls have mentioned cleaning:

*We had a couple here, with very young girls, well I think one was seventeen, the other twenty, and their appearance did not fit with their explanation that they were going to work with cleaning. They did not at all look like that.(...)One of the girls had a sister who already lived in the country with a Swede, and that Swede had actually been convicted twice of purchasing sexual services. He was convicted of that charge in 2002, so in this case*

*the indications were rather clear, so to speak, and he had no cleaning business...*

The Estonian survey showed that traffickers instructed women to dress modestly and not wear any makeup when they were travelling and crossing borders.

As mentioned, another preparation found before entering Sweden was lending money to the women so they could show border control that they were able to support themselves during their stay. There are several examples of this found in the Swedish cases; sometimes the trafficker was the one who lent money to the women, sometimes a facilitator. In one case, the trafficker instructed the woman by phone to borrow money from the guide on the bus or a fellow passenger. He also prepared her to say another name if someone asked her name, and forbade her to party on the ferry.

There is evidence in some cases of women dropping out from the return trip on cruises between Finland and Sweden and Estonia and Sweden. According to one study informant, a procurer, this was considered an easy way to enter Sweden when the women had no visas. A trafficker in another case also used this strategy, and once when she did not have a return ticket, she lied and said she would buy the ticket on her way back. She was allowed to cross the border.

### **Company of others?**

The study shows that the majority of the women either travel alone or in the company of other women, two or three at a time. In cases where the main traffickers recruited women in the source country, they often took women themselves by car or another cheap mode of transport. In some cases, the women were escorted by someone who only took them to the destination country, where they were handed over to the main trafficker.

One Swedish informant said that the practice of having specific persons escort trafficked women used to be more common and that more women travel on their own now. According to this informant, it was sometimes difficult to detect whether there were any escorts on the airplanes, but it was frequently suspected that there was someone onboard with this role.

Another informant representing the Swedish police had once seen clear indications that a man was escorting girls. He had let the girls go ashore on foot, probably to avoid attention. The man, either a trafficker or facilitator, had driven the car, but he forgot to give the girls their passports:

*There was a guy who came in his car [to the border control], and the girls came on foot. Then it turned out the guy had the girls'*

*passports and had forgot them, well, he had forgot to give them the passports when he left, so the girls had no passports...*

In this case, both girls and the escort were allowed to enter the country. According to the border police informant, the police reacted too late.

In another case, there was a male escort accompanying women on the ferry to Sweden. He stayed in a cabin next to the women's. According to the pre-trial investigation, the man was to some extent monitoring the women when they were outside the cabin, when they had dinner or went dancing. He also lent the women money to show at the border.

## Factors

The empirical findings show that several factors affect transports, which vary depending on the points of departure and destination of traffickers and their victims. It is easier to travel within the EU and Schengen countries than non-EU/Schengen countries because the practical aspects crossing borders may present an impediment. Constantly changing immigration regulations, mainly in connection with new countries joining the EU or the Schengen Agreement, are a general problem in relation to the survey.

### Results in brief

- The majority of women travel legally, using their own documents, especially for transports within the EU and the Schengen Zone.
- Regarding non-EU and non-Schengen citizens, traffickers have to be more creative and adapt to different circumstances, e.g., where to apply for visas and where to cross the border.
- There are very few cases of irregular migration found in the survey. Only a few Swedish cases also involve human smuggling.

## Pragmatic solutions

Information gathering is an important link in the trafficking chain. It is also crucial to the criminal activities and there is a connection between information gathering and the failure or success of the operation. The purpose is to find weaknesses in systems, such as legal loopholes in immigration rules, how to obtain visas for example, and identify weaknesses in border controls, etc (Salt and Stein 1997:478).

This is also confirmed by the survey. The Swedish part of the study contains several findings showing that traffickers use several methods to adapt to emerging factors and often solve problems rather pragmatically. The process sometimes seems a bit like trial and error. One example was found in a case where the trafficked women were refused entry by border control and finally returned to their country of origin. Thereafter, they tried another route and successfully entered Sweden by transiting other countries, such as Finland.

In a similar case, a wiretap revealed that traffickers had advised two women to vary the border stations where entering the country. The women in this particular case had already been in Sweden and had been caught by the police. As a precautionary measure, the trafficker wanted to change the route for the journey. Another girl in the case was advised to apply for a Finnish visa in order to vary travel routes.

In a second case, the main trafficker tried to arrange transport of a woman from Germany to Sweden. First, she had tried transiting Denmark but failed when the Danish border police refused entry into the country. The main trafficker tried different solutions, and finally decided that she and an escort would take the ferry from Germany directly to Sweden. This is exemplified in a wiretapped phone conversation from the pre-trial investigation between the escort and the main organiser about the controls on board the ferry:

*Accompanier (A): You don't think there's a control with the boat then?*

*Main organiser (M): No, I (...) don't think so (...) a friend came over on it yesterday... with two families...*

*A: Yes?*

*M: ...and...he said so. Do you understand?*

*A: Yes, I understand you. I do.*

It is also evident in several other cases how troublesome organisers may perceive border controls to be. One informant, a former employee at a Swedish airport, confirmed this to some extent when he described that he had seen how people do not behave normally at airports. He thought it had to do with the amount of information and that some people were afraid to fly. For a person who was about to do something illegal, such as smuggle, the informant thought there would be additional pressure, since the person might feel it was wrong, and would also be checked by various airport procedures.

In some cases involving women from countries within the EU, there is evidence of women going back and forth between Sweden and the source country. One study informant who works for the Swedish police believes this is due to immigration regulations that allow them to stay in the country for only three months at a time.



There are also more concrete examples of how to adapt and avoid border controls. In one case involving Lithuanian women, two of the trafficked women said in police interrogations that they were transported on a rubber raft by sea to avoid the border control between Lithuania and Latvia. They had also timed their crossing with the changing of border guards as a further precautionary measure.

### **Irregular migration**

When it is impossible for someone to migrate legally, for example non-Schengen or non-European citizens, traffickers have to use methods of irregular migration. According to the survey, most women cross the borders legally with legal travel documents, such as passports and visas, and the women have all the required documents and money. Thus, there is little evidence of irregular migration in the study.

### **Human smuggling**

However, a few Swedish cases involve human smuggling. One example is a network that has used lorry drivers to smuggle women. Since many of these women belonged to the Russian-speaking minority in Estonia, they only had alien's passports, which require a visa to go to Sweden. Lorry drivers were hired to smuggle the women hidden in the lorry when passing border controls. There was also evidence of some drivers smuggling drugs for the same criminal network that was paying them. In one case, a lorry driver smuggled both a woman and drugs at the same time.

A second example of human smuggling also involved non-EU citizens. A girl from Kosovo was transported in a car from Kosovo to Sweden with a human smuggler, who also smuggled asylum-seekers to Sweden. In the police interrogation several of the people questioned stated that the smuggler charged SEK 20,000 (EUR 2,000) per person. According to the smuggled girl, she was taken by car, escorted by the smuggler's wife. When crossing borders on the way to Sweden, the human smuggler bribed border and customs officials. There was also evidence that the human smuggler used fake passports during the journeys, which had been bought from a third person.

### **Seeking asylum**

In one Swedish case, the trafficked women and some of the traffickers involved were systematically applying for asylum in Sweden. In this case, both traffickers and the trafficked women were Russian nationals and did not have Swedish visas; some seemed to have visas to Finland. They also used fake passports. One of the women had been detained by border control when travelling with a fake, invalid Lithuanian passport. When they arrived in Sweden and sought asylum, they were registered under their false identities. In one of the trafficker's homes the police found notes containing stories of how

transports into the country had been made. The notes also contained stories about what people had experienced in their countries of origin and detailed information specifying names and places. These may have been stories to be used when applying for asylum.

However, according to one informant who works for the Swedish border police, it is unusual for people to attempt to enter Sweden with a fake passport. At Arlanda (Sweden's main airport), the border police have about 400 cases a year involving fake passports or people travelling on other people's genuine passports. The majority of these cases have involved asylum seekers who admitted that the documents were counterfeit.

## Transport summary

The survey in the three countries shows that most trafficking of women for sexual exploitation takes place within the region. The most common mode of transport is ferry for Estonian women going to Sweden and Finland, which are common destinations for trafficking women from Estonia. Bus and train are common modes of transport for women from Russia, eastern Europe and the Balkans. Smaller organisations tend to transport their victims by car.

Cost is the key factor in determining how transport is arranged and most evidence found in the study indicates that traffickers choose the cheapest ways to transport the women. Few cases of women transported by air were found in the material, with the exception of women trafficked from the Czech Republic. We may also find parallels between the cost of transport and where in the prostitution market the women are intended to work. In the low price market, small-scale traffickers or drivers take them by car or bus, which is often the case regarding trafficking victims transported from eastern Europe or the Balkans to Sweden.

There is evidence that Finland is being used as a transit country for people coming from China and India. This also applies to Sweden, but the majority of transits seem to involve Nigerian women destined for the Norwegian sex industry. In addition, expanding air traffic may be seen as a pull factor regarding Finland as a transit country.

Most women travel with legal documents and many travel at their own expense, but there are several cases showing that traffickers and facilitators organise and arrange transport, and in so doing make the women indebted to them. They arrange references and invitation letters and in some cases also help obtain visas or instruct the women what to do, and in some cases lend money. There is also evidence of women being guided and prepared for crossing the border.

In the case of problems arising during transport, study results show that traffickers adapt to external factors and are very pragmatic about solving them. They take precautionary measures to some extent, such as varying travel routes and planning to avoid border guards. They

plan according to various scenarios, but do not always behave accordingly.

As border controls are eliminated when new countries join the EU and the Schengen Agreement, it facilitates the crossing of borders. This is confirmed in the Finnish and Swedish surveys, since it has made it more difficult for the police and border guards to follow up and observe trafficking victims. The Swedish police have to some extent compensated for this by training officers to perform checks of foreign nationals inside the country.

The survey also shows that it is not easy to observe trafficking victims at the borders, especially with regard to citizens of Schengen states and EU countries. When women have legal documents and money and their stories are flawless, it may be difficult to pick up the signals, but even when there are indications it is usually difficult to do anything about it.

Informant procurer (IP): The john called me and said I want to see Maria at twelve, for example. I told him ok, they knew where to meet and the john came there and picked her up...they had sex in the car, or in his flat or at his office.

Interviewer: OK, and then he took her back to the same place?

Ip: Yes.

# Procuring

This chapter presents the study results related to the phase of procuring and sexual exploitation in destination countries, where it usually occurs. In this survey, that refers mainly to Sweden and Finland, but to some extent also Estonia.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first will present the results by describing methods, tools, arenas and other circumstances related to the market and aspects of marketing. The second section will describe the results related to tools, methods and trading factors.

## Destination countries

In most cases, there is evidence of only one destination country, where the women are sexually exploited, but in some cases, especially with regard to Sweden, there appear to be several destination countries. In some cases the traffickers have also have taken women to Norway from Sweden. In Sweden, some of the cases involving women from Estonia show that the traffickers use parallel destination countries, such as Finland (a couple of cases), Spain, Thailand and the UK, combined with Sweden. In the Estonian survey, there is some evidence of Estonia as the destination country for women from Latvia (mainly) and Lithuania.

The survey also includes reports of the reverse, with clients going to other countries for the purpose of purchasing sexual services, which is referred to as “sex tourism.” One example is Finnish men who travel to Estonia and Russia to use commercial sexual services.<sup>15</sup>

## Marketing and trading

Sex markets differ in many respects, particularly because there are many arenas for procuring operations found in the survey and the methods used for marketing differ in the various arenas. Some of the places used in the prostitution market are used for both marketing and trading.

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<sup>15</sup> The main countries Finnish sex tourists discuss are Russia, the Baltic countries and the Far East (Marttila 2004:26; 2006:34). Certain “Gentlemen’s Clubs” organise sex trips to Estonia, and the club members get discounts on sexual services in the brothels of Tallinn (Marttila 2004:30, 2005b:75; see also the discussion on Swedish sex tourists on page 59).

### Results in brief

- The Internet has become one of the most commonly used marketing methods and tools in all three countries. It is easy for organisers to use and reaches potential clients effectively.
- The main arenas for sexual services marketed online are escort services and apartment brothels.
- The sex trade also takes place among male acquaintances, which was particularly found in the Swedish survey.
- Street prostitution is not very common in the three countries, but there has been a certain resurgence in Sweden.
- In Finland, women from Russia and the Baltic countries are found working mainly in apartments, all over the country but concentrated to the southern and eastern regions.
- There are also women from Thailand in Finland, who work in massage parlours and sell sexual services.
- The sex industry in Estonia is mainly advertised as night-clubs and massage parlours.
- Estonia is the only country where advertising of sexual services still takes place largely in newspapers.

## Marketplaces

### The Internet

The Internet is currently the main marketplace where sellers and buyers meet and has for that reason become the main marketing tool as well. There are several categories of prostitution marketed on Internet: apartment brothels in flats and escort prostitution (both low and high price)<sup>16</sup>.

There are certain known websites where women advertise sexual services. One of the major Internet sites found in the survey is a Finnish product called the “Secretary Academy” ([www.silhteeriopisto.net](http://www.silhteeriopisto.net)). The site may be regarded as an Internet prostitution portal, since it collects and stores a great deal of information about prostitution and prostitutes (Månsson and Söderlind 2004:75–76). According to a survey of prostitution clients in southern Sweden, the Secretary Academy was the main Internet site until 2006, when it changed because the site administrators had purged old accounts and user identities (Malmö stad 2007). However, the site still seems to be significant, although it may seem that these kinds of activities also take place in

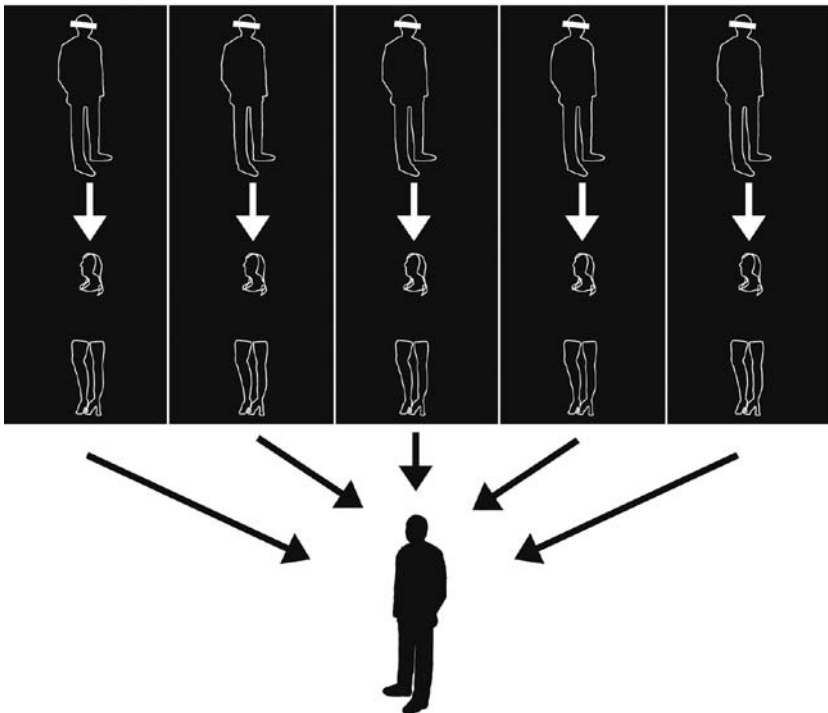
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<sup>16</sup> In the past, escort prostitution has mainly been used to describe high price prostitution, including call girl operations. It now seems that the definition has changed its meaning to include lower price prostitution, where you can book a date with a woman for companionship and/or sexual services (Månsson and Söderlind 2004).

other Internet forums, such as general communities and dating sites, but those are difficult to survey. A Swedish section has also been established in the major Danish prostitution forum. Buying sexual services is legal in Denmark, so Swedish clients from the southern regions go to Denmark or buy Danish escorts who come to them in southern Sweden. They also go over to Denmark to visit massage parlours and brothels.

According to the Swedish police, the purchase of sexual services via the Internet has changed in recent years. Bookings via the Internet are sometimes made through a booking centre in the country of origin of both the traffickers and victims. The tools are a computer and a mobile telephone. The purchase is transacted by text message via mobile phones (Rikskriminalpolisen 2006:20). Some actors believe that the Internet and mobile telephony are lowering thresholds for buying sexual services, although it remains unclear and difficult to estimate whether the Internet has increased the sale of sexual services (Socialstyrelsen 2007:28).

Figure 4. On the Internet the clients are anonymous and many times unaware of the organisation behind.



### The survey

The Internet is one of the major marketing channels in all three countries. In Sweden, the Internet was used in nearly half the analysed cases to market sexual services. Escort services and apartment brothels are the two prostitution categories marketed online; in some analysed cases the two categories were used in combination. The majority of cases involve escort prostitution. In Estonia, the ads mainly offer nightclubs, massage parlours and escort services.

The Internet is currently the most common tool for marketing sexual services in Finland, due to a ban on print ads. One study informant, a Finnish criminal procurer, said that these days people must have an Internet connection to be able to buy sexual services, and if they are married, they have to do it at work or in a public location. According to this informant, it has become more difficult to buy sexual services. It is also more expensive and sex buyers now have to plan their sex purchases, whereas in the past most things were advertised in newspapers and magazines in Finland:

*These days you cannot just buy the paper and look at the ads, if you suddenly feel an urge to have sex.*

However, other informants in the Finnish survey believe that the Internet has made the business easier and increased anonymity.

One result that emerged in the Swedish survey was that the majority of cases in which the Internet is used for marketing involve medium-scale to large-scale organisations, although there are some cases of rather small-scale organisations using the Internet too. The number of women involved in the online sex market is often higher than, for example, the number of women working for trafficking networks engaged in street prostitution. The organisations behind the online sex business are often concealed and invisible, compared to other types of procuring. This may partly be due to the traffickers' awareness that sex buyers are unwilling to buy sexual services from trafficked women.

In most of the Swedish cases, the contacts between clients and organisers or the woman or girl take place when the clients send e-mail or call a phone number in the ad. The parties then discuss the arrangements and prices and the purchase is transacted. The clients are then often directed to an address. When they arrive, they are given further directions to the apartment brothel. In Finland, according to informants in the Finnish survey, the ads were published on the Internet by Finnish and Estonian "field hands," or facilitators, and "secretaries." There is also evidence in Finland of advertising for sexual services on text television.



## Websites

In both the Finnish and Swedish cases, the “Secretary Academy” prostitution portal was found to be the most frequently used website. The analysed cases also include reports of other, smaller Swedish-operated websites being used, along with Finnish sites such as “*Seksitreffit* (sex date) and “*Kontakti*.” The interviewed criminal procurer thought there were only about 20 female, full-time sex workers advertising on the Secretary Academy portal. All others advertising there, he believed worked only part time; they included Finnish women, students or Russians or other foreigners living in Finland.

In one Swedish case, the sex trade took place in two periods, the first in the mid-1990s and second in early 2003. During the first period, the main organiser advertised in Swedish pornographic magazines like *Cat*. During the second period, the Internet was used and advertising was done on international sites like the Secretary Academy, but Swedish-operated sites were also used, such as [www.knullkontakt.com](http://www.knullkontakt.com), [www.knull.nu](http://www.knull.nu), [www.erotikpalatset.com](http://www.erotikpalatset.com) and [www.kontaktz-iten.com](http://www.kontaktz-iten.com). The ads on the Swedish sites were written in the first person in Swedish, while on the Secretary Academy the ads were written in both English and Swedish and included information about women’s appearance and rates for the sexual services offered. The ads on the Swedish sites were not as informative and they seem to have been slightly vague about the purpose, as in this example:

*Hello!*

*Can you come and put out my fire? I am a passionate redhead who loves sex. Get in touch soon! Hugs, [name]*

These ads seemed to have been confusing, as some of the men who responded tried to seduce the prostitute. In some cases, the men wrote long e-mails containing sex stories and ended by asking for a date. One of the responding men wrote:

*Hi, I’m afraid I need to pay to “fuck” you? Is that right? Kisses, [the name of the person]*

In one case, one woman had several ads on the Internet but used different working titles in an attempt to give the impression of a greater supply. In the police interrogation the main organiser in this case said that this was the way it worked; he was not the inventor, since all prostitutes were marketing in this way – regularly changing their names, ages and descriptions of their appearance. He said the same applied to prices.

In several cases in the Swedish survey, it is evident that traffickers do not always use the prostitute’s real photo and instead use someone else’s. In one case, the main trafficker sent an e-mail to the web-

site operator from a hotmail account or similar with scanned pictures said to portray the women who were going to perform the sexual services, but sometimes they were pictures of other women. In this specific case, the main trafficker claimed in the e-mail correspondence to be the woman in question. In cases where the main trafficker had contacted the operator to activate some ads and remove others, she claimed to be a co-worker of the women depicted in the ad.

In some cases, traffickers have stated a younger age than the real ages of the women involved, but they were over 18 years of age. The younger the woman, the better for the trade, as long as they are over 18. This was expressed in following wiretapped phone conversation between the trafficked woman and the main trafficker:

*Woman (W): ... did you write that I'm 20 on the Internet?*

*Trafficker (T): Yes. (...) ...but how old are you?*

*W: 24*

*T: Well, that's ok then. What? The younger the better? (...)*

*Advertising is good for business!*

#### Chat forums on Internet

The Internet is not only used for advertising; other types of information are also spread online (Hagstedt, Korsell and Skagerö 2008). A qualitative study of prostitution clients carried out in a sample of ten cities in the United States and the Internet showed that sex buyers extensively use the Internet for different kinds of information exchange (Holt and Blevins 2007:342). The information from chats on the web forums was analysed and, apart from exchanging information about various details about prostitutes, the sexual services provided and their sexual experiences, they advised each other on how to avoid attracting police attention. They also provided information by giving away phone numbers and other contact information to street prostitutes or escorts.

The use of chat forums among prostitution clients also appears in the Swedish survey. For the traffickers the publicity on these chat forums may be viewed both positively and negatively. One of the positive aspects is that the sex buyers are doing the marketing, since in some cases they spread numbers to each other. The sex buyers also know a lot about the prostitution scene. Here follows a citation from an interview with a person working for the Swedish police:

*...but they have an incredible knowledge (...) for instance we saw a comment on this Thai girl who was here, then someone had bought her, so they could write she was this and that, so you can buy her, it is worth the money, but then it was someone who wrote, yes, I met her and she was pretty and good but she*

*was a little tense, she seemed a bit tense and sad and so on, so he was not really content with her, because she did not act good enough. And then he sits and writes that instead of reacting and wondering what this is, here it is not good, she is not well, so he sits there and comments about her on the Internet to the other sex buyers...*

In one case the organisers perceived these chat forums in a negative way, since the sex buyers spread information about the quality of the sexual services provided. In another case the main organiser asked some of the clients by e-mail not to spread information about their visit to her apartment brothel:

*Please do NOT write anything about your visit in any of the chat forums/ mailing lists! Do not want any publicity.*

#### Pros and cons with Internet

There is evidence of both pros and cons to the Internet as a marketing tool. Among the advantages with the Internet are first that it is very easily accessible to purchasers of sexual services. Regarding the difficulties of finding sex buyers on the Internet, an informant convicted of aggravated procuring remarked:

*No, the phone started ringing the first day the ad was published.*

He also believed that demand for sexual services was very high in Sweden. Another advantage to using the Internet was, according to the criminal procurer that the websites are very easy to find and information about where to find prostitutes spreads quickly. He said:

*All you have to do is go online and search for the word sex... Page after page will pop up...*

It is also fairly easy to publish on these websites. It used to be free to publish an ad on the Secretary Academy website, but the site now charges EUR 15 per ad, according to a representative of the Swedish police. In some cases, the ads remain online as long as the organisers want, in others they must specify how long they want the ad to stay up.

Among the disadvantages, apart from the fact that the police monitor operations on the Internet, are that ads need to be followed up because the most recently published ad always is at the top of the list. For that reason, the organiser or facilitator must continuously update the ad to make it easy to spot. Another disadvantage may be that the

Internet requires more organising and planning. It takes three days to have an ad published. In one case, the main organisers sent a text message to recruiters reminding them that he needed the photos since it took three days to publish the pictures on the Internet.

Although it is easy to publish, there may also be a need for specific skills when using the Internet for marketing, such as photography, writing ads and web publishing, which make using it more difficult for smaller networks.

#### Case description: Estonian trafficking/procuring network

In one of the most organised networks in the Swedish survey, both the organisers and the trafficked women were from Estonia.<sup>17</sup> The organisation/network may be seen as a large-scale organisation reportedly coming out of Tallinn and St Petersburg. The network may be characterised by the high number of women involved, ten to twenty per case, with some women showing up repeatedly. It is also characterised by the organisation running everything from the recruitment of the women in Estonia to the procuring phase in the destination countries. The sexual services have been mainly advertised on the Internet and mainly involved escort service and apartment brothels. Hotels were also sometimes used as marketplaces. Several websites have been used, but mainly the Secretary Academy. Phone numbers were published on websites that allowed it and then the initial contact was by phone. In other cases, initial contact was by e-mail.<sup>18</sup> In one case, clients were given the address by text message. The women came down and opened the door to the ten-storey building where the apartment brothel was situated.

#### Case description: City tours

“City tours” have been observed as a relatively new method of organising the sex industry in Sweden. A couple of cases involving women from the Czech Republic, Latvia and Hungary have been found. In these cases the client makes an advance booking on a website. The booking is arranged by the organisers operating in the source country. The women working for these organisers move from place to place in Europe, living and operating from hotels. The prostitution categories include hotel prostitution and

<sup>17</sup> Three pre-trial investigation cases involve trafficking and procuring operations by this organisation. Some of the organisers have been convicted of trafficking.

<sup>18</sup> Two of the Swedish websites have not allowed telephone numbers, and according to the police interrogation with the main trafficker, the ad was taken down very quickly if it included a phone number. The main trafficker then had to publish it again and check several times a day to see if it was still there.

escort prostitution. This kind of prostitution may also be defined as “high-class” prostitution and the women have been sold as prostituted female companions, but also for shorter dates. The women work independently and stay in touch with traffickers by computer and mobile phone.

The sexual services provided by women working for these organisations have been advertised on the Secretary Academy, but also on two websites called *balticharmony.com* and *swedishharmony.com*. One informant from the Swedish police believed the latter website required some kind of membership to advertise. The advertising is not as blatant as on the Secretary Academy, according to the informant from the Swedish police:

*If you compare the ads. This is an ordinary “Secretary Academy” ad. It just baldly states the height, age, sex, what they provide, and then there are the pictures. In this ad..it is from balticharmony. This is the girl, no doubt about that, in the ad from the Secretary Academy. They fake the pictures to a great extent. Here on balticharmony, the prices are stated, four days, seven days. And this describes the girls in another way. Perfumes, food, what clothes she wears, what interests she has, hobbies...yes, it is a description of her...*

The sexual services provided are described in the ads using abbreviations. On this website, the sexual services were booked through an agent of the site and the agent forwarded the information to the women. Thus, the client would contact an agent and the “date” had to be booked 12 hours in advance. The client paid by credit card or cash via money transfer companies like Western Union.

### Magazines and newspapers

The survey shows that magazines and newspapers are mainly used for marketing sexual services in Estonia, where this is one of the main channels. Advertising takes place in newspapers like *Kuldne Börs* or *Refernt*, but also in newspapers and booklets aimed at tourists, like the *City Guide* or *Tallinn in Your Pocket*. The advertising refers to nightclubs and massage parlours.

In the Finnish survey, it was more common to advertise for sexual services in magazines and newspapers until 2004 when this kind of advertising was banned. The survey also shows that this method of marketing was the most common in Finland in the early 2000s. In one case, regular advertisements offering “daytime coffee breaks” were published in local newspapers. The main organiser and his assistants, who used false names when paying the bills, paid the cost for the advertisements. In this case, they had a phone centre that took calls from

clients and acted as an intermediary between clients and sex workers.

In other Finnish procuring cases, advertising has taken place in *Il-talehti*, one of the major national tabloids, and Finland's largest daily newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*. According to the interviewed procurer, it was easy in those days. There was also a wide range of women available and the prices of sexual services were cheaper.

There are only a few cases found in the Swedish survey where advertising has taken place in magazines.

## Marketplaces

### Massage parlours

In all three countries there is evidence of massage parlours used for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

There are several reports in the Finnish survey of Thai massage parlours providing sexual services.

#### Case description: Thai massage in Finland

In August 2007 the debate on Thai massage parlours was triggered in Finland by an article published in the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* about Thai massage parlours in Helsinki, and whether or not they also provided sexual services. A team of seven journalists tested 30 massage parlours and found that all offered sexual services (masturbation, fellatio, intercourse) for an extra charge. The newspaper also published another article that described the situation for Thai women in Finland. These two articles led to a stormy public debate. This also led to the initiation of a police investigation. The report was published in October 2007. Among the results were that there are approximately 200 Thai massage parlours in Finland, which are usually quite small and have only one or two employees. Most of the employees have permanent residence permits in Finland. They are also not held against their will and can move freely between different massage parlours. The women are, according to the report, aware that the work involves sexual services, and it is up to them if they agree to these terms. Some of the women did not get paid anything for the massage services, but only for the sexual services sold. The police suspect that there might be some cases of false accounting and tax fraud, as well as procuring.

In the Finnish survey, there was also another case of Thai massage parlours found to be involved in the sex industry. A Finnish man and a Thai woman ran two massage parlours and were accused of aggravated procuring and illegal use of foreign labour. The couple employed women who offered sexual services as an extra service for an

average of EUR 90 per customer. The two parlours had a total of 1,800 appointments and it was estimated that the owners had made profits of approximately EUR 150,000 from the business. The charges against the male owner were dismissed but the woman received a suspended sentence of five months for procuring. It was testified that the employees had offered sexual services independently and that they were allowed to keep the entire amount they earned from selling sexual services, since they did not earn anything on the massage work.

In Sweden, the Stockholm Police trafficking unit believes there is prostitution involved in the business around some Thai massage institutes, but they have yet to find any proof. An interviewed Swedish taxi driver also believes that massage parlours are used for selling sexual services:

*If you ask me, I think these Thai massage parlours, it says massage, and you can probably get a massage too, but I think you can get other things as well. And that is also what I have heard from others. It says Thai massage but... and it is the same thing there if you drive customers [clients], they are silent and so on...*

According to an interview study carried out with Thai women working in massage institutes in Norway, the informants related that they also sold sexual services (Kristvik 2005). However, the researcher in the Norwegian study found no evidence of trafficking in the project.

Apart from Thai massage parlours, there was only one massage parlour found among the Swedish cases that had been involved in the sex industry. The massage parlour was advertised in ordinary Swedish daily papers, such as *Dagens Nyheter* and *Metro*. The clients were received in an ordinary apartment advertised as a massage parlour. The activities had, according to the police investigation, been ongoing for five years.

#### Brothels and apartment brothels

Estonia is the only country of the three in the study where formal brothels exist. There is evidence of the use of apartment brothels in all three countries.

The Estonian survey found that sexual services are sold in two ways, either in the brothels called *majad* (“houses” in Estonian) or as escort services that function as apartment brothels. Since it is illegal to run a brothel in Estonia the brothels are usually registered as hostels or strip clubs. In a televised interview, the head of the Criminal Investigation Department of the North Police Prefecture, Erik Heilda, said that three or four years ago there were about 40 brothels (houses) (“Pealtnägija,” ETV, 20 September 2008), but police intervention had reduced the number to a handful by early 2008.

The organisation of procuring has also changed in Estonia. Nowa-

days, a hotel is often run in combination with a nightclub. The client pays an entrance fee to the nightclub. Inside the club, the client buys sex from women offering sexual services by paying the woman and for a room in the hotel. The procuring organisation behind the operation is invisible to the client and the contact is directly between the woman and the client.

The smaller apartment brothels in Estonia (usually 1–2 bedrooms) may provide three things: women serve clients at the apartment, a base for call-girls (escort services) and women may work on their own. A combination of apartment brothel and escort service is rather common. Calls are received and managed by a call centre receptionist. If they are locals, the women live at home, but most commonly they live in rented apartment provided by the sex-business owners, or live in their own rented apartment. Usually the business owners rent houses for running a brothel or for providing an escort service network. In cases where the women have no homes of their own they live in these apartments. There are also women who rent an apartment from the owner to live in when they are working as escorts. Women who work in the sex business hand out business cards to the sex buyers.

For some of the women involved in trafficking in Estonia, the brothels are also arenas for recruitment and sex tourism, which involves Finnish and Swedish men (see previous chapters on recruitment and transport). According to an interview study performed in Norway, some of the women mentioned that before they came to Norway they had been involved in Estonian sex tourism, since they had worked in brothels. Some of the brothels accepted only foreign men, tourists, and Estonian men were denied entry (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006). The Swedish survey contains evidence of women who worked in Estonian brothels before being recruited to the Swedish sex industry. In some cases the brothels were the place of recruitment.

In southern Finland in the 1990s and early 2000s, some women ended up working in brothels although these were illegal. These days, the term “brothel” usually refers to apartment brothels, as in Sweden.

Several women work at the same time in the apartment brothels found in the Swedish and Finnish surveys. In the majority of cases, the women both work and live in the apartments. In some cases the apartment brothels are used in combination with escort prostitution as categories of prostitution for which the Internet and sometimes magazines are used as marketing tools.

The apartment brothels found in the Swedish cases mainly involve large-scale or medium-scale organisations or networks, since they require planning and organisation.

In one of the Swedish examples of an apartment brothel, purchasers of sexual services were given a client number and besides marketing on the Internet, the sex buyers received information by text mes-



sage sent to their mobile phones or by e-mail, for instance when new women arrived. A phone number or e-mail address was included in the Internet ad. The sex buyers then phoned or e-mailed and were then given an address nearby. Once they arrived, they were instructed to phone and were finally given the exact address, to keep them apart from each other. This was also used as a precautionary measure to confuse the police.

In Finland, there is evidence that both Finnish and Estonian women provide sexual services in private apartments. The procuring organisations may operate in several apartments in the same time. In one case, the organisation used a total of 30 private apartments, but operated in 6-8 at the same time, with one or two prostitutes working in each apartment. In this case, the business was advertised in newspapers.

According to the criminal procurer interviewed in the Finnish survey there are specific places in the Helsinki area that are particularly good locations for sex businesses. The areas mentioned, such as Tapiola, Matinkylä, Leppävaara and Hakunila, were good because they were close to the motorways and junctions, making them easily accessible to people coming from a large area:

*After leaving work, you can go there, buy sex and then go home without your wife noticing anything suspicious.*

The same informant also said the best locations would be big apartment buildings with many floors and elevators, and that it was also good if there were a lot of people coming and going in the building so neighbours would not notice.

*It's best if the apartment buildings are not located in the best areas. In poorer neighbourhoods there are usually drunkards and other noise and disturbances, so the clients don't draw much attention and they feel safe. Also, the girls usually stay very quiet in the apartments, and the only noise is the door closing. It is quite possible that the neighbours have no idea what is going on next door.*

There is conflicting evidence in the Swedish survey that purchasers of sexual services do not want to go to apartment brothels located in similar, disadvantaged areas in Sweden. In some cases, the women had to move in order to acquire more clients.

### Street prostitution

Street prostitution is a marketplace, but may also be categorised as a marketing arena.

In Sweden, street prostitution may be regarded as a declining form

of prostitution, but according to a recurring survey carried out by the Swedish National Board for Health and Welfare, it has rebounded to a certain extent in the three major cities of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö after the major decline following the 1999 law against purchasing sexual services. As of 2007, street prostitution was back to approximately two thirds of its former scope compared to the situation before the law against purchasing sexual services was enacted (Socialstyrelsen 2007:32). There are some records of trafficked women engaged in street prostitution in Sweden (Rikskriminalpolisen 2006).

The analysed cases in the Swedish survey regarding the years from 2002 to 2007 include some involving street prostitution. The cases regarding street prostitution mainly involve small-scale networks, consisting of a few criminals. They often only involve a couple of women providing sexual services. There is one case where seven women were involved, but not at the same time. The activities surrounding the procuring are spontaneously organised and require neither much planning nor organisation. Another advantage is that it may be easier to establish operations on the streets than on the Internet for example. According to one informant convicted of aggravated procuring, it is not difficult to get started in street prostitution. One of the explanations she describes is finding the street:

*... it is not difficult if there is a street where girls can come and meet the guys, it is the same in Russia, but in Russia in every city there is a central street where they can stay and work...*

In three other cases, it is believed that the procuring operations were established initially on the street. In one of these, the phone number was spread initially on the street to establish a client base.

In some cases, women have begun to work almost immediately upon arrival. In one case, the women were not prepared, but were forced out onto the street to be able to afford the cost of living in cheap hotels. The sex buyers came and picked up the women in their cars. In one case, the traffickers arranged sex purchases at a pizzeria, where sexual services were sold to the owner and an employee and paid for partially in food - pizzas for the company, girls and traffickers. In this case, the girls also left their phone numbers with the clients, thus spreading the number. The youngest girl in this case, a 17-year-old, had clients almost constantly according to police surveillance. She only had to wait approximately ten to fifteen minutes on the corner for the next client to appear and pick her up. In this case the traffickers, two men, were out on the street to pick up the money she earned, which was used in particular for hotel expenses.

In the street prostitution cases there is evidence of women often being under surveillance by the organisers who were waiting nearby. In

one case, the main organiser was often together with the women on the street and in that way managed the business. In this case, the two women were sold on the streets in several cities in Sweden and in Copenhagen, Denmark.

In Sweden they had difficulties finding the street and several times the main organiser had to ask people, passers-by or taxi drivers, for directions to the main prostitution streets. In this case, the transaction was carried out between the client and the main organiser. Sex buyers stopped the car and discussed the price with the main organiser sitting in a car nearby and then took the women to parking lots, the woods, or their homes.

Street prostitution in Estonia differs to some extent and includes prostitutes offering their services in nightclubs and discos.<sup>19</sup> The Estonian police estimate that 50–60 women work at one club in central Tallinn. Street prostitution is not popular in Estonia, and there are no traditional main prostitution streets found. The estimates vary, with some researchers asserting that 10–15 per cent of all prostitutes work on the streets, while police estimates are lower.

Street prostitution has in recent years also decreased in Finland. Some years ago there were “known prostitution streets” in Helsinki. The street and restaurant prostitution are mainly in the hands of the Russians.

#### Taxi drivers' involvement

Taxi drivers have also been found to be involved in street prostitution in Sweden, because they may, as a service or for an extra tip, direct and drive clients to the main prostitution streets. This quotation is taken from an interrogation in a pre-trial investigation involving a young Swedish woman working as a street prostitute:

*During the relatively short period of time that F has been working as a prostitute in xxx [name of prostitution area] she has met several taxi drivers who wanted to have sex with her in exchange for getting her clients. Or else they wanted to be paid for getting her clients. Some of the taxi drivers have become her friend and they drive her sometimes without charging her, just to be kind.*

#### Hotel prostitution

There is evidence of hotel prostitution in all three countries, but the Swedish and Finnish surveys contain reports that hotels are aware of the problems and are trying in several ways to develop strategies to combat trafficking and prostitution at their hotels.

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<sup>19</sup> The data refer to general prostitution and not specifically women or girls who were victims of trafficking.

In the Finnish survey, one informant said that hotels had adopted various strategies regarding issues such as hotel security and surveillance. The big hotels may have sophisticated surveillance systems and protocols, while the small hotels rely more on their staff. Hotels have also adopted zero tolerance against prostitution mainly to protect their reputation. It is also a delicate matter as clients are entitled to their privacy and cannot be under surveillance 24 hours a day.

In the Estonian survey there were reports that in some cases hotel owners may cooperate with sex business owners. In general, hotel owners and other people facilitating the sex trade are aware of the illegal nature of what they are involved in. This was also reflected in the Swedish survey, where one Swedish informant who worked at a hotel mentioned a similar example. It had to do with a famous hotel that had one floor with no surveillance cameras and no cardkey system, which were found on all other floors at the hotel. According to the informant, this was a known fact by people at the hotel, and it was known among people involved with prostitution and procuring and the floor was used for that purpose. The informant stated that hotel management pretended not to know. It also had happened that hotel employees working at nights had found young women sitting in various parts of the hotel.

#### Hotels both a marketing and trading arena

Hotel prostitution is an arena that may be seen from both a marketing and a trading perspective. In several Swedish cases, the women received their clients in hotel rooms, where the transaction takes place. This occurs in many cases from the small-scale to the large-scale networks. There is little information in the Swedish survey about hotels as a marketplace for prostitution, where women pick up sex buyers in hotels, restaurants and bars. However, some informants confirm that foreign women, who may be victims of trafficking networks, provide sexual services in hotel, restaurants and bars. According to a social worker in one of Sweden's major cities, this represents a rapid development, since there was previously no prostitution found occurring in restaurants and bars in the centre of the city where he works. Nowadays, he believes it is found in nearly every bar:

*Sex is also sold directly by women who are in hotel bars. This also applied to women who have been trafficked, who may appear in both the smaller and larger hotels. In the smaller hotels they have rooms where they take the sex buyers.*

According to one informant working at a hotel, people, most likely procurers, have frequently phoned and said that they have previously had some business at the hotel and wonder if they could cooperate and

offer a commission for each client. The procurer did not at first introduce the business as prostitution, but it eventually became evident.

The informant also believed the business was organised, since the person seemed to know how the hotel business worked. The people who called always spoke Swedish.

Another hotel employee informant had observed certain patterns regarding hotel bookings for procured women. This has happened several times:

*...it has been same system then, that one person comes and checks in and it is always a man...who pays... There is no secretiveness about a girl being involved too...but then...we never see the man again...*

The man paid for the room, reserved in advance by phone, in cash. He was also seen escorting the woman to the room before he left the hotel. The women sometimes extended the stay on their own. The informant had also once seen two women without a male escort, but with one child each, and they took turns baby-sitting. The two women gradually extended the stay by paying in cash, probably earned by prostitution. The two women received their clients in the hotel lobby. There is also information about the “city tour” women who stay for about ten days before going to another city.

*“If the tour comes it comes to Stockholm as a destination and then I have had at most ten ladies staying here”*

The informant said that they often travel by twos and check into single rooms. They believe that the women use the hotel as a marketplace. They usually pay for the room in cash.

In Finland, sexual services may also be provided in erotic restaurants (Leskinen 2003). The Finnish survey found some evidence of hotel prostitution. In the case of a recently identified procuring organisation involved in hotel prostitution, some hotels did not inform the police about the prostitution but only asked the person to leave, and they put her belongings outside. According to representatives of the police and border control, there were many prostitutes and men coming and going, but the hotel staff did not notice or care. There are also small hotels with no reception staff, where you only need a code to enter.

The Finnish survey contains some evidence of apartment hotels used for procuring businesses. One informant stated that the staff in these places were aware of what was going on because they saw the same women come and go. But it is difficult to prove in court that the hotel may be guilty of procuring; in these cases the charges were either dismissed or those convicted were given short sentences.

#### Case description: The taxi case

As mentioned, taxi drivers are in many cases found to be involved in the sex industry. They are mainly involved as facilitators or sex buyers, but in some cases also appear as procurers or traffickers. In one Swedish case, there is evidence of procuring being organised and established around a taxi business consisting of four drivers. In this case, two women were sold. The circumstances surrounding their recruitment and involvement were unclear. One of the women maintained in the police interrogation that she had been forced into prostitution by being raped, filmed and threatened by the organisers, and the other woman said in the police interrogation that she and the taxi drivers had a business agreement, and she believed the other woman had a similar arrangement.

The procuring business in this taxi case was carried out as follows:

The taxi drivers waited for customers outside a strip club in the city. When the taxi picked up the men leaving the strip club, they asked if they wanted to buy sexual services and so they acted as intermediaries between clients and the woman. During a police investigation, the taxi drivers offered an undercover policeman to buy a good-looking woman. The marketing took place in the car and the taxi drivers also distributed business cards with their phone numbers, so the men could contact them at other times and book a sex purchase. When the taxi driver had a deal with a sex buyer, he phoned the woman and picked her up from her home or the location of another sex purchase. The sex buyer and the woman were then taken to a hotel or to his home, where the transaction took place. Several times, the client paid for the sex purchase and taxi trip by credit card in the car.

#### Case description: The casino

One Swedish case involves a casino as the marketplace for sex industry operations. In this case, an ad was also put in a local pornographic video store, and clients contacted a male organiser to book a prostitute. He then phoned the female main organiser, who was in charge, to check whether the women were available, since the women lived with the main organiser in the apartment. There were only one or two women at a time. In this case a motel was sometimes used as the place of the sex purchase. The guest registry of this motel was found to be poorly maintained; for example, if guests arrived very late, they could phone for an access code, which got them into the motel, where they had a key to the room. No records were kept of these late bookings. The case was uncovered through an anonymous tip to a Swedish TV crime programme. Afterwards, an investigative reporter arranged a sex purchase by

booking an appointment with the male organiser. When the article was published in the local paper, the female organiser booked a return ticket for the last woman working for her and drove her to the airport and the male organiser quickly burned the guest register and other evidence.

#### Sexual exploitation in personal networks

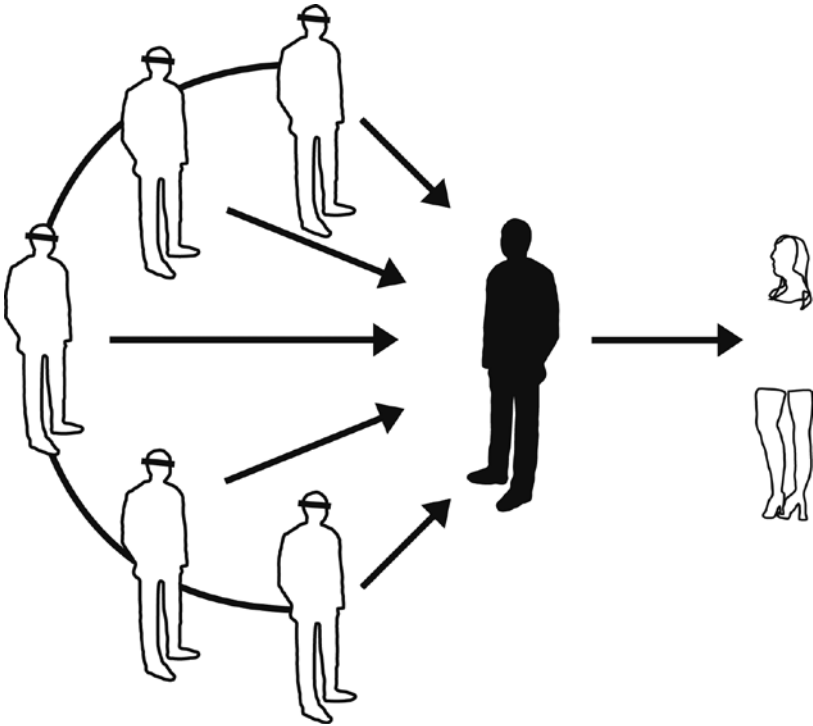
Sexual services are also marketed and traded within personal networks. Here, marketing is informal and takes place by word of mouth, usually between men.

This is found in all three countries. In Estonia, this is mentioned as one of the marketing methods. The Swedish survey found several cases in which the sex trade occurred within personal networks. The criminal networks are in these cases characterised by rather small-scale activities, often very spontaneously established among acquaintances or other closely connected groups. They may also be based on family ties. In some of these cases, victims, perpetrators and sex buyers move in the same circles. Thus, the relationships between the trafficker, the trafficked women and the clients may seem somewhat blurred, especially because from an outsider's perspective it may look like they are friends, sitting together in a café or restaurant, but the sale of sexual services is proceeding covertly. The small-scale networks operating in personal networks are often multi-criminal, although on a small-scale level. This more informal marketing may be seen as a way of getting started in the business. It is an easy way to start, since it does not need much planning.

It is evident in some cases that it is not always easy to find clients within a personal network. In one case, the trafficked woman stated in the police interrogation that her trafficker sometimes had difficulties in finding clients. She said he had tried to find several, but in the end she was mostly sold to one man. An excerpt from the police interrogation with this woman:

*They took me only to one man, they were probably afraid to look for other men too. I don't know any more how many times I have been with that man, but they wanted to take me to as many men as possible to get their money back.*

Figure 5. In the personal networks the selling of sexual services is directly handled by the organisers, who contact the women when there is a client ready.



### Restaurants and cafés

In this segment of the market, there is evidence that pizzerias, cafés and other types of restaurants are used as arenas for marketing prostitutes and prostitution. A pizzeria or café appears in nearly all of the Swedish cases.

In two cases, a restaurant or café is one of the main arenas for the sex trade. Both examples are also characterised by multi-criminality. In both cases the owners and managers of the establishments also supply things other than sexual services, mainly drugs, but also other smuggled goods. In one case, activities were rather limited, while the other was operating on a more organised level with medium-scale activities.

In the latter case, the traffickers worked in partnerships of two men and one woman and her boyfriend. The woman had previously worked as a prostitute in Sweden and used her established client base as targets for selling the women. For their part, they spread her telephone number among their friends and acquaintances. The trafficker marketed new women by sending coded text messages to her clients like: *“There are new flowers in the garden”* or *“There are new per-*



*fumes.*” As mentioned, this case also had a pizzeria as a base for the sex trade. The owner of the pizzeria knew the two male traffickers and contacted them when someone in his personal network wanted to buy sexual services.

In a third case, a pizzeria employee was facilitating the business by providing traffickers with sex buyers from among his acquaintances. This man was more knowledgeable about the sex business than the traffickers and helped them establish their sex trade. He also had contacts with a strip club, where he took the traffickers and the women to find sex buyers. There was also another pizzeria mentioned in this case, where one of the sex buyers worked.

The following is an excerpt of a conversation between the facilitating pizzeria worker and the trafficker, showing how he instructs the trafficker:

*Facilitator: Park the car at the pizzeria and stay in the car. Don't go out, a friend of mine will come. He will go with her for an hour. Say two thousand to him, okay?*

*Trafficker: How much?*

One social worker informant mentions the trade among certain personal networks:

*For example social clubs or gambling clubs, that they order, we want two girls (...) ...what I know is that I have worked with a girl and still work with a girl who has been driven to the different groups of people, where she was thrown into a room and she panicked, and was subjected to various things, and she knocked on the locked door and said please let me go because he [the sex buyer] is completely crazy, [the trafficker was outside waiting and saying] you have been paid, so stay in there until we open the door in twenty minutes, when people are standing outside waiting.*

This girl was sold within the personal network and the sex buyer violated and raped her in this room while her female trafficker was outside waiting and forcing the girl to endure the assault.

### Sex parties

Victims of trafficking are sometimes also forced to sell sex at arranged sex parties. In one case, there was a man, a former sex buyer, who was facilitating the sex business by lending his house in exchange for a minor fee per sex purchase. The main trafficker had taken his girls there and sold them to the facilitator's friends. The events were organised as sex parties and the police investigation produced evidence that the Swedish man had called his friends and invited them over at week-

ends. The trafficker then forced the girls to dance and strip in front of the men, which was followed by the girls providing the men with sexual services. Two girls were also sold to a restaurant owner and driven to a summer cottage in another county, where the restaurant owner in turn sold the girls to his friends. Another time, the girls were held for several days in a bedsit, where they provided at least ten men with sexual services.

Ordering women to attend parties is found in several cases in the Swedish survey. In one case, party arrangements seem to have involved trafficked women, since the main organiser involved a man who was an arranger of erotic entertainment. This man contacted the main organiser when he needed women for a party or for his friends and acquaintances. In this case, there was evidence that the women were used to pay off personal debts. One example of this was when one of the women did not get paid at all and the trafficker explained that the sex buyer was a friend of his, so he did not have to pay.

In another case the girls never knew how many clients they were supposed to receive. In the police interrogation, one of the girls said that the main organiser never told them. They might find two clients waiting for them or a whole gang of men. The girl said in the interrogation that she once got very shocked when she arrived at the location of the sex purchase and a gang of men was waiting for her, but only two of them intended to buy sex.

#### Arranged shows

Specific shows were found to be arranged to display the women available to the sex buyers, especially with regard to small-scale organisations or networks organising sex trade among personal networks. In one case, the trafficker arranged a show of the women at a parking lot outside a grocery store and the purchase took place after the show. On another occasion, the same trafficker wanted only one girl to be shown to the sex buyer and instructed the other girl to hide in the car. In another case, similar arrangements took place. The trafficker booked an appointment by phone with the sex buyers, who were shown the two women who were working for them. The sex buyers then chose a woman and took her to a hotel or to their homes.

The following statement from a trafficked woman refers to similar arrangements in another case:

*We sat in the car and were driven by xxx [the main trafficker] and stopped somewhere where there was a bar – we got out of the car, he [the sex buyer] looked at us, and he said yes, the little one.*

In many of these trafficking cases based on personal networks, the women are driven around by the organisers, who in some cases have drivers working for them. In one case where the women have been

driven around, the main trafficker received the booking and phoned the women to ask them to get ready. Then he or a facilitator picked them up and drove them to the sex buyers. In several cases, the women were transported miles away to other cities or even to other countries for sex purchases.

The traffickers' chauffeuring the women to clients may sometimes appear a bit time-consuming. First, because it takes time to drive around, but also because there are many gaps between sex purchases when the traffickers have nothing to do but wait. In the police interrogation, the driver in this case said that he and the trafficker he drove for had on several occasions waited nearby for the transaction to end and pick up the girl, often only a couple of blocks away from where the transaction took place.

In several cases, the women were also taken to the sex buyers by taxi. The sex buyer usually pays for the trip and some Internet ads specify that the client must pay for the taxi.

## Methods of organising accommodation

The organisation of accommodation may reflect the level of organisation of the criminal operation as a whole. The Swedish survey shows that housing the women becomes more carefully planned and organised as the level of organisation in a trafficking network goes up.

Several difficulties may arise when organising accommodation. First, renting is seen in many cases to require a great deal of organisation and planning. For that reason, evidence of renting apartments is found mainly in the medium-scale or large-scale Internet-based organisations or networks. It is mainly the organiser or facilitator who sub-leases the apartments. Sometimes they get help from friends or acquaintances. There is also evidence in the Swedish survey that organisers use both private landlords as well as housing agencies. In one case, they used a black-market agent to find apartments.

In one case, both the organisers and women working for them used "mailbox addresses," where they only were registered at the Swedish Migration Board as asylum seekers. They lived somewhere else but paid a certain sum every month to the provider of the mailbox address. In addition, a woman previously suspected of being a madam and human smuggler was letting her apartment illegally to one of the organisers, where one of the facilitating organisers lived with the women.

### **Difficulties in finding apartments**

According to one informant convicted of aggravated procuring in the Swedish survey, the main difficulty today when establishing a procuring business is to find an apartment. In particular, he found it difficult to explain to the landlord the purpose for which the apartment was to

be used. According to him, it was even more difficult for non-Swedish persons than for Swedes:

*One of the guys I was in custody with, he had problems. He was from Estonia, and when he wanted to rent a flat, he had to have a Finnish guy help him. But they had four, five flats.*

In several of the analysed cases the apartments are used as brothels where several women both live and receive sex buyers. This kind of arrangement may also cause problems. According to the informant convicted of aggravated procuring, the clients in particular can cause a lot of problem:

*But, it is not the girls who cause noise, it's often the clients, who are drunk or something. (...) if a sex buyer came and was drunk, then they [the girls working there] didn't open the door. Or if two clients were there at the same time. I mean they couldn't take an unlimited number of people. At the same time.*

The informant admitted in the interview that he had been involved in such a brothel. In that case, the building caretaker, who was also a client, told him that the neighbours had been complaining. The informant knew of another brothel, run by a friend of his, having the same problems.

#### Case description: Estonian trafficking network

In the most highly organised cases in the Swedish survey, involving the Estonian trafficking network, women lived and sold sex in many apartments. In the last case, 15 addresses were used where women both lived and worked, including two hotels. In most cases, the women had stayed only briefly in Sweden and lived only in one apartment at a time, but in cases where they have moved to another apartment, it had to be done to get more clients. Some of the women complained that the sex buyers did not want to go to certain areas, which was the reason for the shortage of clients. All the apartments were sub-leased. Sometimes the organisers used housing agencies and a black-market estate agent was also used. This man stated in the police interrogation that he had helped people of different nationalities, of whom many were criminals, to get sub-let apartments. He also said in the police interrogation that he knew of other estate agents who did the same thing. For a fee of SEK 1,000 he acted as the intermediary between the person letting the apartment or landlord and the sub-let tenant. In this case, the sub-let tenants had several times disappeared after the sub-lease expired. Sometimes the lessors have returned to find the apartment in shambles and have had to change the locks. The organisers or

facilitators, or sometimes the women working for them, had rented the apartments. In the second case, the main trafficker at least discussed allowing the women to rent, which would be a precautionary measure if they were caught. Many of those who rented apartments to the network were private persons acting in good faith.

### **Precautionary measures**

Precautionary measures are taken to avoid problems such as complaining neighbours. One example is found in several cases where organisers move frequently. Even in one case where the women only lived in the flat, they had to move due to risks of getting too much attention from neighbours. In another case, the women lived in the apartment sub-leased by the main organiser only for a couple of weeks or a month. Sometimes they moved with very short notice if the main organiser thought the police were after them. Another precautionary measure found in another case was that the organisers forbade the women to receive clients in the apartments they lived in to avoid attention from the neighbours.

On the other hand, finding rental apartments to house the women may be preferable to finding other housing, such as hotel accommodation. According to the informant convicted of procuring, this kind of housing brings stability and does not require as much other planning, which is needed for example when driving the women to and from sex buyers. In another case, they solved the dilemma by using a rendezvous near the women's homes where sex buyers could pick up the women.

The Finnish survey found several legal actors involved in housing, such as hotel and apartment owners. In some cases, they may gain from the profits made by renting to criminals. In one case, the hotel owner denied that he was aware of the large-scale operations taking place on his premises in Kotka (the place functioned as a brothel), but he was found guilty because he had profited from renting the hotel. Similarly, the owner of a holiday camp where a procuring operation had been ongoing for several years denied that he knew, but was still found guilty by the court. In both cases the procurement businesses were common knowledge in the area.

Similar to the Swedish survey, there are records in the Finnish survey that housing agencies have been used in some cases. The agencies are usually aware that their apartments are used for prostitution, because they charge higher rents (double) for prostitutes. They may also exclude the apartments rented to prostitutes from the formal accounts.

## Spontaneous arrangements

In the smaller and more unplanned trafficking cases analysed in the Swedish survey, arrangements for housing the women are more spontaneous than in the medium-scale to large-scale organisations. In small-scale organised activities the women often live with organisers, who often board with friends and family members in their homes. In the majority of these cases, one of the organisers resided in Sweden. One informant from the police provided an example from a small-scale case of the spontaneity of housing organisation and who might organise it:

*Yes, it seems to be the contact living in Sweden. Often they [the women] live together with someone, with one of the procurers. They have lived at hotels, then they lived together, well they shared a small cheap hotel room, sneaked into the room at night so all four slept in one room meant for one or two people, so the others sneaked in there too...*

In one case, the suspected traffickers rented land on which to park caravans. The landowner may be seen as a facilitator, although he denied knowing anything about the activities in the police interrogations.

In cases where women have been lodged with family or other acquaintances, it appears in several cases that the person providing lodging was unaware of the business activities. In some cases, the young girls were introduced as the organisers' girlfriends, and the person lodging them did not notice the selling going on. But in one case it did become clear. The acquaintance who was providing lodging to the traffickers, a couple, and two women, eventually understood and threw them out. He said in the police interrogation:

*Later, I noticed that they maybe were prostitutes. I thought it was strange when they were at my place. They were out all night and stayed home during the day. And that was why I threw them out, when I realised what they were doing.*

In the small-scale trafficking networks the organisers and women also live in cheap hotels and youth hostels, and in some cases there is evidence that they move from place to place more often. In medium-scale to large-scale organisations they also use hotels as accommodation, although the survey shows that the organisers choose this option mainly when establishing business activities or when they are between apartments, since in many cases it is clear that it requires a great deal of planning and sometimes may be rather difficult for the organisers to fill the gaps between two rental agreements.

In the presumably more well-organised city tour procuring opera-

tion the women stay at mid-range or even classier hotels, where they both receive clients and stay briefly, for a couple of days, before moving on to another city. The hotels are usually booked in advance from the source countries.

According to the informant convicted of procuring, it was less risky to use hotels to receive clients than it was for instance to organise the business in an apartment brothel, because it is easier for the police to monitor activities in an apartment brothel. Even though, he added, it may be more time-consuming because the organiser or facilitator has to drive the women to the hotel and then wait somewhere for the transaction to end.

*In an apartment they [the police] can sit outside, like they did with us. They sat in a car outside and watched. That means it must be an advantage for the procurers to go to hotels.*

In summary, it is apparent that the organisation of housing follows the organisation as a whole. The small-scale organised sex businesses are more spontaneous when arranging lodging and move frequently. The organisers and women often stay together in friends or acquaintances' houses or at cheap hotels or hostels. The medium-scale to large-scale organisers think more about risks and plan accordingly when looking for accommodation. They rent apartments to a higher extent, and use the existing housing market, which implies a convergence of the legal and illegal spheres. However, they also seem to act spontaneously at times, for instance by choosing to stay at hotels when no other housing is available. There are also parallels found in how they organise housing for the women and plan other logistics, such as transports to and from clients.

## Tools, methods and factors for trading

This section describes the significance of various tools, methods and factors in the trading of sexual services.

### **The telephone as a tool**

Like the Internet as a tool for marketing, the mobile telephone may be seen as a tool for trading. There are different aspects of this found in the survey.

There are several cases in the surveys in all three countries where trading takes place via a call centre. In the Estonian survey the sex trade is to some extent managed by call centre receptionists.

Two cases are found in the Swedish survey in which bookings were organised around a call centre through which sex purchases could be arranged. In both cases, the main organiser took the calls. In the first case, the main organiser offered this as a service to the women, who could not speak English and thus could not communicate with the cli-

ents. However, the majority of the women in this case took their own calls from the clients. There were expenses involved in providing the service, and the women paid a fee for it.

In the other case, all trading takes place via one person, the main organiser, who acts as a kind of call centre. Only one telephone was used and the main organiser, a woman, usually took calls from the sex buyers. In police interrogations, the sex purchasers related that a few times, a man took the call, presumably her husband, who was not as deeply involved in the trade as the woman. The female organiser then passed on the booking to another organiser who housed the women and instructed them to go to the rendezvous used in this case.

#### Giving directions to clients

Organisers also use the phone to give clients directions to the women. In the majority of the Swedish analysed cases, clients contact the organiser and book an appointment. In many cases, the clients are required to call the organisers back. The client is then continuously directed by phone until he is nearly at the rendezvous, often an apartment brothel. In some cases there seem to have been problems with logistics. The sex buyers either arrived too early to the appointment or did not show up. In a phone conversation between one of the women and the main organiser, the woman explains that it is stressful when clients are early and she wants to delay the appointment by twenty minutes. The main organiser advises her not to do that:

*Do not say that to him. If he phones, ask him to wait five minutes. When he calls again you ask him to wait another five minutes. Tell him you're taking a shower. That happens, do you get that? Sometimes it happens that three sex buyers turn up at the same time.*

There may be several reasons for this kind of behaviour. One might be that it is a method used to separate clients from each other, since sex buyers do not want to meet other sex buyers. In one of the Estonian organisations, the organisers wanted to avoid crowds of people to make their operations look small-scale and not as organised as they were. In one case, it was claimed the clients became hesitant when they have heard there were several women at the same address. This behaviour may thus be seen as taking precautionary measures.

As well, in cases where organisers drive the women to the client or to a rendezvous where the client can pick up the women, there are many telephone calls made. In one case the organiser phoned clients to make sure they were on the right road, but it is usually clients who phone the organisers for directions.



## Methods of control

Control is used in all cases but methods vary, as does the level of victimisation of the women. In a survey of trafficking victims in Bosnia and Herzegovina more than a third of the respondents had been victims of sexual or physical abuse by the traffickers: 25.4 per cent reported physical abuse; 9.0 per cent reported sexual abuse; and 17.9 per cent reported being threatened or blackmailed by the traffickers. In addition, 10.7 per cent reported that traffickers had restricted their freedom of movement, while 27.4 per cent reported that they had a good relationship with the traffickers and had been treated well (Maljevic 2006:284).

The results of the Swedish, Finnish and Estonian surveys may not be as alarming as in the Bosnian study, but the control mechanisms found to be used by traffickers and procurers still limit the women in several ways. As well, the women are exploited and abused to various extents in the sex industry in all three countries. Even in cases where the women state in police interrogations that they are free to move and have control over the clients and the services they perform, the organisers use control methods. However, in the majority of cases, control methods are subtle and involve no violence or threats.

### Some evidence of violence in Sweden

There is some evidence in the Swedish survey of direct control methods such as coercion by means of threat and/or violence. There is little evidence found of women being kept prisoner. In one case, the main organiser used a remote controlled lock and women were locked in at night. However, in this case the evidence was unclear as to whether the women were stopped if they wanted to go out. There were also reports of women being kept prisoner in another, older case.

#### Case description: Threatened by a hot iron

In one of the oldest analysed cases found in the Swedish survey, from early 2000, the main organiser confiscated the women's passports. They sneaked out to apply for new passports, but were afraid to return to the apartment. When they did, the main organiser was waiting for them in the apartment. The main organiser then threatened the women by putting a hot iron, a table knife and a rope in front of them and threatening to kill them. He eventually changed his mind and said that he would not kill them, but he would spoil their looks with the hot iron. He also threatened them with the knife. The women finally overpowered the main organiser and got help from neighbours to call the police.

There are a couple of reports found in the Swedish survey of women who have been subjected to sexual abuse or other kinds of violence, mainly by the traffickers, procurers or clients.

In one case, a female trafficker was allowing the sex buyer to abuse and rape a girl locked in a room. The girl was injured, bruised and shocked, but the female trafficker still forced her to work the next day.

Another girl stated in the police interrogation that initially she had been brutally abused by her trafficker. The trafficker beat her all over her body and choked her. She was abused during her first 24 hours in Sweden and he also threatened her. After the assault she was ill for two months, when she was forced into prostitution. The girl also stated that the trafficker had beaten other girls too.

There is evidence found in a few cases that organisers test the women by having sex with them, but whether this was voluntary or coerced was not shown in the pre-trial investigations. In one case, there was evidence of coercion, since all of the women involved said in the police interrogation that the main organiser or a friend of his had raped them initially. In this case, only two of the women involved reported being forced into prostitution.

In one case, it is unclear what exactly the girl had been subjected to by the trafficker, a man who bought her for one month and then only kept her for one night before selling her to two other men. In the police interrogation she never said exactly what she had been subjected to, presumably rape. She stated in the police interrogation that the trafficker had treated her very badly and ruined her life.

Varied threats are found in several cases. According to one informant, a social worker, traffickers have become more sophisticated in how they threaten. He gives an example:

*He [the trafficker] has a friend who phones and pushes the girls, pushes the girls into doing something with more subtle types of threats.*

In some cases, traffickers or facilitators have threatened women not to testify. One example was found in a case where the woman reported that she and her relatives in the country of origin had been threatened in various ways. This woman had to go to a third country to escape the threats. She still cooperated in the police investigation. In another case, the threatened woman was afraid to testify because she was afraid of what might happen in her home country, especially because the main organiser had connections there too.

### Organisers using force

There are several examples found in the survey of how organisers and traffickers force women into prostitution, keep them there, or force them to perform particular sex acts against their will.

The Finnish survey contains cases where the women were forced to stay and forced into prostitution. In northern Finland, the local police may have observed that some of the Russian women have been forced into prostitution, or at least had been controlled physically by the procurers. Some clients had also been controlled and had to pay for not being clients any longer (Skaffari and Uppari 2004).

In one Finnish case, a prostitute who wanted to quit was told her legs would be broken. She was then escorted back to Finland and Helsinki from Tallinn, where the main organiser picked her up and put her in an apartment in a suburb of Helsinki. He gave her a mobile phone and told her that she would be called when a client arrived. In this case, there were examples of extortion as well, and the criminals extorted independent prostitutes and forced them to pay a “fine” for having worked without their permission.

The Estonian survey also contains examples of women who were not free to choose to stop working in prostitution. In one case, a girl told the prosecutor that she could not stop working in prostitution, even if she wanted to: the traffickers would threaten to kill her. She told the prosecutor:

*They let me write a farewell letter, like I was going to commit suicide. They took the letter from me and kept it. If I refused to take clients, my body would never be found and the letter would disappear.*

In one Swedish case, women were forced to have sex with clients in front of an audience at sex parties. There are also cases in which women were forced to perform oral and anal sex against their will. In another case, the woman reported that she had unwillingly been filmed while having sex with clients.

#### Case description

In a wiretapped phone conversation, a client had called the main organiser. The client said the woman did not want to have sex with him and that he did not get what he had paid for. The woman was given the phone and said that the time the client had paid for was up and that she wanted to be picked up. The main organiser then instructed her to continue with the transaction.

There were also a few examples of women who were forced to work while they were menstruating and to sell sex without using condoms, a service the sex buyers had to pay extra for.

Many of the women stated in police interrogation that they can decide who to sell to and what kind of services they perform. In one case, the girl said in the interrogation that she had been allowed to refuse to perform certain sexual services, such as fellatio. Wiretapped phone conversations showed that a sex buyer had once phoned the main organisers in the case to complain about the sex purchase, that he did not get what they wanted from the girl. The organisers approved the cancellation of the purchase and picked the girl up without argument.

#### Case description

In a case involving an organisation operating in Norway, Sweden and Finland, there were reports of systematic sexual abuse and other humiliating treatment occurring in a house in the source country. Women in Norway were also reported to be victims of violence and recurring sexual abuse; the women were threatened with being sent back to the house in the source country if they did not comply. In the police interrogation, the women reported that men inside the organisation had pretended to have sex with them to make the organiser believe the women had been abused. There were no reports of violence or sexual abuse in Sweden, but it was reported in one case that the Swedish “local manager” had helped a girl escape when she was under surveillance by others involved. Another woman also escaped from the Swedish operation and the organisation maintained that she owed them USD 4,000.

Two girls were involved in one case in the Swedish survey. One was 17. The other was a couple of years older and was in a relationship with one of the organisers. The younger girl stated in the police interrogation that one of the traffickers hit her and her older friend, but that her friend was treated better because she had a relationship with him. The 17-year-old stated in the police interrogation that he had hit her daily when she returned from the street because she had earned too little. She stated that she had feared the other trafficker, although he had not threatened her verbally.

#### Robberies in the Finnish survey

As in the Swedish survey, there were few indications of “prison-like” conditions in the Finnish survey, i.e., women subject to total control, but the procurers and organisers use different means of control. In several cases there were reports of procurers and organisers having threatened the women. However, according to one informant in the Finnish survey, prostitutes are subjected to violence and put up with a great deal before seeking help. In general, foreign prostitutes experience more violence than Finnish women engaged in the sex industry but they avoid contacting the police when they are assaulted or

robbed. According to the informant, this is mainly due to the Aliens Act and their fear of being deported to their home countries if there is evidence they have provided sexual services. According to Leskinen, the methods of coercion follow certain patterns; independent prostitutes are pressured to leave the area or start working for the procurer and if necessary the prostitute must be kidnapped or transported to another city (Leskinen 2003).

#### Case description:

In the only trafficking case in Finland, the women were threatened with force if they did not obey the rules, or the traffickers suspected that the women did not give them a full account of the money earned, or the traffickers were dissatisfied with the number of clients. At least one woman was threatened, a mentally disabled woman who had been threatened over the phone by the trafficker who ran the organisation from prison. She was so scared to leave that it took a while before she got up the courage to ask for help.

There are also several cases in which independent prostitutes were robbed and extorted for not working for the organisers. Similar to a Swedish case, Russian procuring networks in Finland that had spotted unorganised Russian prostitutes called and booked a meeting with them, then threatened the women to force them to pay protection money. As in the Swedish case, they also robbed and assaulted two prostitutes by gaining access to their apartment by pretending they were clients. One woman was forced to pay the organisation FIM 200 (approx EUR 34) a day. She paid a total of more than FIM 34,000 (EUR 5,700) to the organisation.

#### Some reports of violence in Estonia

The Estonian survey contains reports of violence and threats, but the violence was usually not very extreme. Owners of the sex businesses strictly controlled the prostitutes' earnings and payments. In one case, there was a 17-year-old girl who was trafficked to Sweden. The two traffickers in Estonia blackmailed the girl's boyfriend and demanded SEK 15,000 (approx. EUR 1,500) from him, while the girl was kept in an apartment in Stockholm against her will. The traffickers took her keys and mobile phone for a few days. Only when the phone was returned did she manage to contact her boyfriend in Estonia, escape and contact the police.

#### Monitoring transactions as a control mechanism

Monitoring transactions was another method of direct control found in the Swedish survey. Organisers use various monitoring strategies. The aim is to verify the number of clients and the women's profits. This kind of control behaviour on the part of traffickers applies to

all categories, from the “kind and gentle” traffickers to the crueller ones.

In one case in which the woman had been resold to new traffickers, she phoned the former ones to describe her situation:

*Former traffickers: Why can't you get out?*

*Woman (W): They won't even let me go to the shops.*

*(...) ...they aren't nasty to me, you know, the only thing is that they watch me all the time.*

In a few cases, the main organisers of apartment brothels monitored transactions by being in the apartment or nearby. In one case the main organiser was reportedly watching the business constantly in the beginning. Even when clients were there, the main organiser monitored sex transactions by hiding in the kitchen. After a while, he stopped being there all the time and only dropped by now and then. A woman said in the police interrogation that she thought the reason was that the organisers did not trust them and believed the women were going to cheat them of money. In another case involving an apartment brothel, the main organiser not only monitored the business from inside the apartment, she and her boyfriend were also seen spying from outside.

A similar way to control women found in the cases, but considered subtler, is to live with them. In many of the Swedish cases, trafficked women live with organisers or facilitators or friends or relatives of the organiser. In some cases, traffickers, their facilitators or their friends always surround the women. They are very seldom left alone. The monitoring may not be seen as equally controlling compared to when organisers hide nearby during sex purchases, and the purpose may not actually be control, but may still be perceived as such by the women. This is not the case in Finland, where traffickers or procurers have their own apartments or rent one for the women, but do not live there themselves.

In the few street prostitution cases found in the Swedish survey, there is evidence of traffickers monitoring transactions from nearby, sometimes from a shop or a café. In one case, the main organiser was in her car near the street and every sex purchase was arranged between the trafficker and the sex buyer. In one case in Copenhagen, the organiser also used specific guards to monitor the girls on the street.

In one case the women were required to account for the sex purchases in writing. One of the women in this case was fined for not keeping complete records of her sales of sexual services. A procurer in another case also wanted the women to keep written records of transactions. One woman was chosen to fill in a form designed by the procurer for the purpose. The required records were: who had received the client, how long the client stayed and how much he had paid. At

least once, the main procurer checked that the women were not cheating by sending a man pretending to be a sex buyer.

The phone has in many cases been used as a monitoring or control tool. There are several examples found in the cases where women are in almost constant contact with the organiser during a sex purchase, reporting on the stages of the purchase, about money, and when the transaction is complete. The women are in many cases also given instructions. In one case, the main organiser phoned a girl and said: *“It’s time for you to get ready, the working day has begun.”*

There were no cases found in the Finnish survey of women being locked up, but there have been a couple of cases in which women were inside a fenced area and had limited freedom of movement. In one case involving a holiday camp, the camp was fenced and there was a gate. The aim was to prevent clients from coming in during the night and causing disturbances. According to the accused men and other male witnesses, the women were free to come and go as they liked, but there were no statements from the prostitutes about this. Clients usually took the women to their homes over a weekend or sometimes even longer periods of time. The women were thus at least free to leave the area with clients.

In another Finnish case, the women were forbidden to leave the apartment during the daytime to prevent any noise and unnecessary attention.

### Passports

Another direct control mechanism found was that of traffickers holding the passports of their victims. This was not a very common method in the Swedish survey; in the majority of the analysed cases the women stated that they had access to their own passports. In a few cases, mainly in small-scale networks, traffickers held the women’s passports.

In one case, a woman’s passport was taken, which she did not notice at first. When she did, she asked the organisers about it. At first they denied taking it, but finally admitted it and told her they had done it so she could not run away before her debt had been paid.

In another case in which a trafficker sold a girl, the first trafficker handed over her passport to the new traffickers. This was repeated when she was sold a second time and the traffickers always had control of her passport.

In a third case, the main organiser also confiscated the women’s passports. One woman said in a police interrogation:

*It’s a bad feeling being abroad and having no passport.*

After a short while the passports were returned to the women.

In another example found in the Swedish cases, the main organisers

had confiscated passports and when the women returned after sneaking out to go to the embassy to apply for new ones, their lives were threatened (see the section on coercion by threats and violence).

In one case, the girl had her passport but on one occasion when the girl had fallen asleep at a client's home, the main organiser threatened to kill her and tear her passport into pieces so she would not be able to go back home.

There was no evidence in the Finnish and the Estonian surveys that women's passports had been taken from them.

### Economic control

Economic control is a relatively common way to subdue victims of trafficking. It is found in the cases as debt bondage or other means of economic control practiced by the organisers.

Debt bondage may be seen as deceit used to control. This systematic method of enslaving the victim is central to trafficking and is an aspect that is different from other kinds of irregular migration, e.g. human smuggling (Aronowitz 2001). There are various kinds of debt bondage. Women trafficked to Europe (mainly Italy and Norway) from Nigeria for prostitution are bound to the traffickers with an oath influenced by voodoo.<sup>20</sup> This magical practice may be seen as either an oath or a threat. According to the belief system, both the disobedient persons and their families may be victimised (Monzini 2005, Prina 2003, Carling 2006).

The survey provides evidence of various kinds of economic control in addition to debt bondage. In Finland the daily fees and percentage fees may be so high that the women are unable to pay if they do not have enough clients. Women in some cases also have to pay for travel expenses and hotel bills. And if a woman wants to quit selling sex for the organisation she may have to pay compensation for the loss of income. The victim's family may be a guarantee for the debt.

The Estonian survey showed that it is common to make women indebted for travel expenses, especially when the destination country is far away from Estonia, like Japan and Portugal, but sometimes even to Sweden or Finland. The debt for travel expenses must be repaid to the organiser, usually within three months.

The Swedish survey contains several examples of debt bondage situations in the destination phase. The method is mainly used in the more organised large-scale and medium-scale organisations. The easiest way is to make women indebted by lending them minor sums of money for travel or other expenses. This may be regarded as a relatively common method, as it is found in many of the Swedish cases, including in less organised networks. In one such case, the woman

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<sup>20</sup> The Swedish police report that there are also Nigerian women involved in prostitution in Sweden (Rikskriminalpolisen 2007).



was forced into prostitution on the second day of her stay in Sweden to pay off her travel expenses.

The more sophisticated systems for making women indebted are found in highly organised networks. The most telling example may be found in the Estonian network described earlier, which includes examples of various kinds of fees the women have to pay to the organisers.

#### Case description: Daily fees

In the first case involving the Estonian trafficking network, the women were required to give enforcers working for the organisation 50 per cent of their earnings every day. In some cases, women reported an additional daily fee. In the first case, some women owed a general debt to a man involved in the network in Estonia and the women chose to work for the organisation in Sweden to pay it off.

In the other two cases involving this network, the daily fee paid by the women to the traffickers varied between SEK 1,500 and SEK 2,000 (approx. EUR 150-200). According to the pre-trial investigation the amount was meant to cover housing, advertising and mobile phone service. Some women were required to pay an additional fee purportedly for online advertising, but the fee was actually commission paid to the recruiters. Even on days the women had no clients, they were required to pay the daily fee. There are reports in some cases that the women earned nothing due to the system and some chose to go home because of the bad conditions.

One woman working for this network had to delay her trip home because she needed a visa, so she had to be smuggled out of the country by a lorry driver. Her debt grew while she was waiting for transportation home and she became hysterical.

In another case, the women had to earn SEK 3,000 (approx. EUR 300) every week, which was sent to the recruiters in Estonia in addition to the weekly fee of SEK 500 (approx. EUR 50) for housing, which went to the organisers in the destination country.

There may be several reasons behind this economic control. First, the organisers do not trust the women to give them their share of the profits. It is also a way to keep the women in the destination country: they stay because they have to pay, which puts the organisers in control – the woman will not leave as long as they have a debt.

In large-scale organisations the jobs seem to function somewhat like businesses and organisations in legal sectors with fees paid for housing, other than that no taxes are paid; instead, that portion of earnings goes to the organisers.

### Women who earn nothing

There is evidence in the Swedish survey of other economic control strategies found in small-scale and medium-scale organisations. First, the findings show that organisers economically control sex transactions by being the sole contact and not allowing the sex buyers any direct contact with the women. This is accomplished mainly by forbidding the women to give clients their phone numbers, but in some cases also by using only one phone to book dates. Another strategy used by organisers is that the financial transactions never go through the women – the transaction is always between the buyers and the organisers.

Economic control in small-scale networks is exemplified mainly by the women getting no money at all. All earnings go to the organisers. In most of these cases, the sex purchase is arranged between the main organiser or facilitators and the client. Payment for sexual services goes directly to the traffickers and the women are given only food, lodging and pocket money to buy other necessities. In these cases, they have little or no money of their own. In one case, the girl stated that she dared not ask the traffickers for money.

One informant, a public prosecutor, said the methods of control are very clever:

*Yes, they [women] are very dependant [on traffickers]. First you have the threat hanging over you that if you go to the police you can get caught, and they [the women] don't know where to get help. They have to earn a living; they need food, they need accommodation, and the traffickers provide it. They are quite kind, and give the women pocket money for cigarettes and other things, and then they [the traffickers] are even more kind, and in that way they stay in control. It is rather sophisticated (...) if they [traffickers] kept them locked up, then they [the women] would want to run away screaming into the streets, which is more dramatic and also human trafficking, but procurers do not fight like that, they don't want those kinds of victims, of course. They want submissive, docile women.*

This pattern is mainly seen in small-scale cases in which women are sold within a limited group of friends and acquaintances and in small-scale networks that organise street prostitution.

In the Finnish survey a clear example of this was found in a case with a trafficked mentally disabled woman, who did not get any of the profits.

### Other methods of direct control

There are other examples of how the women are directly controlled by traffickers. In one case, the main organiser gives the women drugs,

cocaine and benzodiazepines to keep them submissive. The Estonian survey also found that criminals may use women's addiction to drugs and alcohol to make them vulnerable and dependent on them, by exploiting their dependency and naïveté. But one informant in the Finnish survey, a convicted procurer, reported that procurers frown on drugs and alcohol and consider addicts bad employees because their addictions cause many problems. In addition, addicts do not work as hard and long as prostitutes with no substance abuse problems.

In very few cases, the women either have no access to phones or do not use their phones other than for calls to and from the organisers. In most cases, the women bring their mobile phones with them from home.

#### Indirect control methods

As mentioned, the majority of cases involve no violence or explicit threats used as control mechanisms. One of the main principles in the relationships and activities surrounding human trafficking seems to be establishing a sense of trust between organisers and women. In this sense, it may be important to use indirect control methods to establish a relationship of dependency between victims and traffickers and the control mechanisms may be subtle. The most important factors often stated by women in police interrogations are that they are strangers and do not know their way around or know the local language and/or English in some cases. In one case, a woman stated in the police interrogation that the main organiser had never threatened the women physically, but he was dominant and she felt vulnerable to him:

*You could say you were constantly reminded of how big he was and how small we were.*

Another indirect control method found in the Swedish survey, according to the informant convicted of aggravated procuring, is the need for pimps/traffickers to organise practical things like housing and other types of logistics.

*They cannot get set up without help, they need help to start. I cannot imagine an eastern European woman coming here and establishing a brothel... if she can't speak Swedish. All of them spoke English.*

In many cases, the women are constantly available and their phones are always switched on. The women are almost always prepared to receive sex buyers. Organisers may phone them at any time, even in the middle of the night, waking them up to tell them someone who wants to see them. If the women do not answer, they organisers threaten her once they get in touch. In one small-scale street prostitution case, a

girl was working the street on her own, but was constantly instructed and controlled by the main organiser by phone while he was in another city. The girl worked full-time, taking clients almost non-stop. The organiser phoned her to check how many clients she had had and how much money she had earned.

According to one informant working for a Swedish NGO, there has been a development in recent years and this kind of control is much more common today than explicit violence and abuse, which used to be more common: “*Nowadays we never hear those kind of stories.*” The informant’s examples of current control methods were constant availability by mobile phone and never walking further than past the tube station or a few blocks away. The informant also said the relationship between the trafficker and trafficked woman or girl resembles the alliance formed in a relationship between a victim and an abuser. A similar result was found in the Estonian survey, where it was evident that girls often felt affection for the procurer. The procurer wins trust and can manipulate women by being kind to them and flirting with them. An Estonian informant said:

*You see, the psychology is quite interesting. Prostitutes are often in love with their procurers, because they are kind to them. What is said behind the girl’s back is another story, but face to face they flirt with her. And the girl decides that the procurer likes her and she trusts him.*

It was clearly shown in the Swedish survey that organisers who treat their women well were the most popular among the women, who often recommended them to their friends. Still, there are cases in which young girls recruited their friends and recommended unkind organisers.

In the Finnish survey, an informant representing a Finnish NGO stated that perpetrators are skilled at exploiting the vulnerability of the victims and that the victims must obey the rules or face punishment.

## **Factors**

### **Profits**

One important factor in the sex industry is that it is considered profitable. According to Phil Williams (1999), there are several reasons for this. First, it is lucrative because the commodity (the women) can be consumed repeatedly and is replaceable. Second, overheads are low and the women are paid very little, which also makes it easy for the organisers to profit. Third, the women can ultimately be sold to other sex business owners (Williams 1999:153).

Profits made in the sex industry vary for several reasons found in

the survey. First, there are national and regional variations in the cost of sexual services and organisers' earnings. Second, the variations may depend on for how long the police have had an operation under surveillance and for how long they have had evidence of the activities. In other cases, the organisers may themselves have estimated the profits. Another factor in the variations is the time factor, since the analysed cases were from 2000–2007, which means prices may have changed. Regarding international variations, comparisons may be even more difficult due to national and regional variations.

#### Profits from the sex industry<sup>21</sup>

In the Swedish survey, the largest estimated profit was found in the three cases involving the large-scale Estonian trafficking network. In one case, it was reported to be SEK 1 million (approx. EUR 100,000). In the second, the estimated profit was nearly SEK 500,000 (EUR 50,000) for 212 days of work for the women involved.

In another case involving several women in a medium-scale network the estimated turnover was more than SEK 2 million (EUR 200,000) for three years. There are no figures available for how much the main organiser earned, apart from evidence of bank deposits in the amount of SEK 1.5 million (EUR 150,000) over three years of operation.

The police estimated in another case that the business generated SEK 800,000 (EUR 80,000) with several women working for a year, out of which an estimated SEK 240,000 (EUR 24,000 euro) believed to be paid to the women.

In a case where a sentence for aggravated procuring was pronounced in 2007, the network, according to a verdict in the court of appeal, had generated SEK 190,000 (EUR 19,000) for one year of operations involving four women and more than 250 sex purchases.

#### The cost of sexual services in the three countries

In the Swedish survey, the cost of sexual services varies from a minimum of SEK 700 (EUR 70) for half an hour or an hour (in one case) to SEK 1,500 (EUR 150) per night for less expensive prostitutes. Some organisers charge SEK 3,500 (EUR 350) per night. The women involved in high-class “city tour” prostitution charged up to SEK 15,000 (EUR 1,500) for 24 hours.

In another case, the main organiser received many calls from clients and for some time had no women working, which clients said in police interrogations was often the case. Finally, when there was no one working and the main organiser told the client to wait a couple of

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<sup>21</sup> Information about the profits of various organisations was taken from pre-trial investigations and court verdicts in the Swedish survey.

weeks, one of the sex buyers was so disappointed that he exclaimed: “*Oh my God, do we have to wait another two weeks?*”

In some cases, clients pay varied rates for sexual services, such as SEK 500–600 (EUR 50–60) for fellatio, SEK 700–800 (EUR 70–80) for intercourse and SEK 1,500–2,000 (EUR 150–200) for taking the girl home for an hour (example taken from a street prostitution case).

Although prices tend to vary widely between the various arenas for prostitution, it appears certain prices have been established for some years, especially with regard to the sex trade marketed online. The standard rates here are SEK 1,500 (EUR 150) for half an hour to SEK 2,500 (EUR 250) for two hours. There are also reports of organisers checking the Internet before agreeing a price in order to avoid competition.

The lowest prices are found among the small-scale organisers involved in street prostitution and especially those who organise a sex business among their acquaintances. In one case, the main organiser’s wife did not want her husband to sell to his friends, since they did not profit very much on that. In another case, the main organiser advised the women to “never drop the prices.” In this sense, it seems that the sex industry is a seller’s market and there seems to be a demand for sexual services in Sweden. This is also shown in the taxi case described previously in this chapter, where the organisers benefited from men coming out of a strip club. It was late at night and the men had probably drunk alcohol. The prices for sexual services varied in this case from SEK 1,500 to SEK 3,000 according to one of the women involved. The sex buyer also had to pay the taxi fare. One of the clients in this case was swindled.

#### Variations in the cost of sexual services in Finland

The cost of sexual services and the percentages the women get to keep also vary widely in Finland. In most Finnish cases, the women pay a daily fee to the main organisers. In some cases, the women also have to pay an additional protection fee. According to one informant, the women are also often fined for various reasons; for instance if the women are robbed since it causes extra costs to the organisation.

In one case involving a hotel that operated as a brothel, the women charged FIM 300 (EUR 50) for sex and paid a daily fee of FIM 1,000 (approx. EUR 170) to cover their accommodation, which was much higher than the price of a standard room in the area. Several women went into debt because they did not have enough clients. In this case, sex buyers also had to pay a fee of FIM 5–30 (EUR 1–5) to the doorman to gain access to the hotel. In another case, the access fee was EUR 20.

In a third case, the prostitutes charged FIM 400 (approx. EUR 67) for half an hour and the women had to pay a daily fee of FIM 700.

Some women also paid a protection fee, which varied from woman to woman.

The prices of sexual services in Finland have increased since the early 2000s.

In one case, the rate was EUR 80 for half an hour and EUR 120–140 for an hour for intercourse. The rate was higher for anal intercourse, at EUR 120 for half an hour and EUR 200 for an hour. The rate was EUR 500 for group services. The women had to pay half their earnings to the traffickers plus EUR 200 per week. For one woman, the weekly fee was raised to EUR 500. A woman who was mentally disabled in this case took 3–15 clients a day and was not allowed to keep any of her earnings. Every evening the “field hands” came and collected the money.

The interview material also shows variations based on ethnicity. At present, Finnish women charge EUR 100 for a half hour while Estonian and Russian women charge less, approximately EUR 80 for half an hour. The daily fee to the organisation varies between EUR 300 and EUR 500 and the operating fee between EUR 10 and EUR 15 per client.

According to Mika Junninen, the women work 12 hours a day and take a maximum of 15 clients a day but usually 5–10 (Junninen 2006:80) According to the interviewed criminal procurer, if you have an apartment set up with one prostitute, the income from the first three clients cover the daily expenses, the fourth makes you a little profit, and you cannot make any real profit unless there are 6–8 clients a day.

The working hours are normally in the daytime and early evening (Junninen 2006:81).

#### Prices in Estonia are higher for tourists

In Estonia, the cost of sexual services advertised online varies between EEK 500–700 EEK (EUR 32–45).

One result that emerged in the Estonian survey is that rates for sexual services are cheaper for local Estonians than for tourists, since Estonia is also a destination for sex tourists. For instance, different rates are quoted on one prostitute’s website for locals and tourists. Estonians in Tallinn are charged EEK 500 (EUR 32) for half an hour and EEK 700 (EUR 45) for one hour. Tourists are charged EEK 800 (EUR 55) for half an hour and EEK 1,200 (EUR 80) for an hour. The same woman offers sexual services in Helsinki for EUR 80 per half hour.

According to the experts, the prostitutes must share their earnings with a call centre receptionist, taxi drivers, bartenders and sex business owners. The women working at the larger nightclub-type brothels are the best paid and earn EEK 700–1,300 (EUR 45–83) per hour. Women working in apartment brothels earn EEK 600–850 (EUR

38–54) per hour. The lowest fees are paid to women engaged in street prostitution in Estonia.

#### What happens to the money?

Evidence was found in both Finland and Sweden that money is sent to the source country. In Finland especially, the money is sent to the main organisers in Russia and Estonia. There was only one case in Sweden where the police found evidence of money being sent back to the source country. This applied to the large-scale Estonian network mentioned earlier, where 10 percent of the gross income was sent to a person, “the roof”, involved in the organisation in Estonia. One police officer said in the interview that each woman earns SEK 20,000 (EUR 2,000) per month that goes to the network. There was also evidence found in the Estonian survey of the involvement of such actors in the Estonian sex industry (further described under “Actors” in the chapter on organisation, see p. 143 )

There is no evidence in the Swedish survey of money laundering. In one case, the money earned in the sex business was invested in a business in Thailand. Expert informants in Estonia are convinced that money laundering occurs in this business, but there is no clear proof.

There are several examples showing that the money is used for consumption. In police interrogations, women have stated that do not save the money, that they spend it on expensive things like clothes, perfume, etc.

According to one informant representing the Swedish police, both parties spend the money they earn from the sex trade.

*They earn a great deal of money on this, but they also spend a lot. You can see that while they are involved in these activities, they live a very expensive life. They rent cars, they go by taxi... (...) well, they live... the impression I get is that they lead a hand-to-mouth existence when they are involved, before everything goes wrong. I do not think anyone.... These people are not sophisticated enough to build up a real fortune.*

Exceptions have been found in cases where the women are single mothers, whose money goes to their children, who are often being cared for by grandparents in their countries of origin, according to an informant working at the Swedish police.

Women and organisers also use the money to buy drugs. In one case, a 17-year-old girl earned money to support the main organiser and his girlfriend’s daily drug habit. The girl stated in the police interrogation that when she worked entire nights she earned SEK 4,000–6,000 (EUR 400–600) per night. She had to send the bulk of her earnings to the couple, who lived in another city.

In many of the analysed cases both organisers and women use



money transfer companies like Western Union, Tavex, Forex, etc, to send money to their families or friends. In some cases, both organisers and women have sent money to recruiters in the source countries. The Estonian survey showed that some of the money was sent by courier. The courier was either someone in the organiser's network or a prostitute who returned to the source country.

#### Variations in the percentages women keep

There are major variations in how much of the profits the women are allowed to keep. The percentage varies in the analysed cases from 0-70 per cent of the profit. There are several cases in which the women keep 30-50 per cent. In some cases, the women also have to pay daily fees to the organisers. There are also variations related to that there may be several organisers working in partnership, and rates vary between the partnerships. The women may also have different deals with different organisers, which seems to be the case in the more organised medium-scale to large-scale networks. The deals may also be individual and based on the woman's relationship to the organisers. In one case, the women got to keep less at first, but were given a higher percentage after they had worked for a while.

In one of the medium-scale networks of traffickers working in partnership, one woman worked for two of them and said in the police interrogation that she had earned a lot of money, SEK 160,000–180,000 (EUR 16,000–18,000), working for them. She earned SEK 1,000 (EUR 100) per purchase and the procurer got SEK 300 (EUR 30). In the interrogation, the woman said that she had spent most of the money on expensive consumer goods in Sweden.

In several of the small-scale networks involved in street prostitution or prostitution among personal networks, the women are not allowed to keep any of the profit. The trafficker makes sure the girl has some kind of accommodation, food and cigarettes. The following excerpt is from a police interrogation with one of the trafficked young women:

*In Gothenburg everything was taken care of, everything was organised. We had the use of everything, we had what we needed, we had somewhere to sleep, eat, drink.*

The woman also said in the interrogation that the organiser had sent money home to her family, where she had a child waiting for her. The organiser sent SEK 3,000 (EUR 300) to her family on three occasions.

#### Factors that influence the trade

Several factors were found in the analysed Swedish cases that may have influence on the trade. Most of these factors involve demand, cli-

ent preferences in particular. Other significant factors were legislative measures and police methods.

#### Client preferences

Client preferences are perhaps the most recurrent theme. They are very important to the procurers, who seem to at least try to fulfil their requests.

One of the most recurring requests is sex buyers who want new girls, they want “young fresh girls,” as one police officer informant said:

*Yes, yes they want new fresh girls, because there was someone calling in the case [a procuring case], there was something there, different girls came and many had been clients for several years (...) and then new girls arrived, so there was someone calling and asking “has anyone new arrived?”, and she [the procurer] said no, no, no, and he asked who is it now then? Is it Anna, ok, is it her (...) but ok, then I’ll wait another week. She is not as exciting or good enough, so he wanted someone new to arrive.*

The sex buyers also have more specific demands. They want the women to wear certain clothes. They want blondes and young girls. Some sex buyers want two girls at the same time or to switch girls between them.

The sex buyers seem to give the directions for the trade and the organisers have to deal with and accept their requests. There was one exception, in a case where the client wanted the girl to wear black stockings and a short skirt. The main organiser denied the request and the client said he was going to buy these things for the girl himself. He repeated the request and the second time the main organiser accepted it. When booking the sex purchase on the phone, clients often also want to know the girl’s age. Age seems to be important, but the reasons are not explained and there were no cases in which a client rejected the girl because of her age. And organisers may not tell clients the girl’s real age.

In one case, the main organiser cared more about the clients than the women, according to one of the women working for her:

*She cared more for her clients than the girls and she trusted the clients more.*

In another case, the main organiser also was found to treat the clients very well, giving them extra services such as advising them about good hotels and hostels in the area. She also let the clients switch women during the purchase, but for an additional fee.

Organisers are also seen to instruct the women to treat clients well.

One trafficker said to the girl “Be nice to them, laugh with them all the time and be good to them,” and the girl said, “Yes, I will. Then he said: “They have a lot of money, do you understand?”

The instructions from the organisers also regard the strategies the women should use to protect their clients from being detected by the police. In one of the very organised cases, the organiser instructed one woman to code clients’ phone numbers or to delete them.

### Racialised sex industry

Discussion of the racialisation of the sex industry has begun among researchers. According to Paola Monzini, this may be due to a change in demand for particular ethnicities among prostitutes or trafficked women, which has created hierarchies in the sex industry where non-EU women, African, Asian, and Balkan women work in the lowest paid sectors and white European women work the highest paid sectors of the sex industry (Monzini 2005).

There are other kinds of ethnic perspectives as well, such as establishing ethnic niches among clients, for example in the United States, where there are particular places for customers of Chinese origin, as well as in Australia for Vietnamese and Chinese clients (Monzini 2005). There are also markets in the United States for Russian-speaking and Spanish-speaking clients. Women who are recruited and trafficked often belong to the same racial and ethnic group as the clients (Hughes 2005:24).

This may be the case for Sweden as well, especially since many women engaged in prostitution in Sweden seem to avoid selling sex to immigrant men, especially men from the Middle East (Malmö stad 2007, Hagstedt, Korsell and Skagerö 2008).

This was partially confirmed in the Swedish survey in an interview with a social worker, who had noticed that Swedish prostitutes avoided clients of certain backgrounds. According to this informant, this was also one of the major differences between being trafficked and not being trafficked: victims of trafficking had no choice about their clients. The Finnish survey shows that the situation for the Russian and Estonian women working in the sex industry is worse than for local women. Russian and Estonian women also charged lower prices for sexual services.

In a Swedish study of the behaviour of purchasers of sexual services, it was shown that some men found foreign women alluring because they were of other cultural backgrounds, which added to the excitement (Hagstedt, Korsell and Skagerö 2008). In the Swedish survey of trafficking cases, it is difficult to find racist and discriminatory tendencies among clients because there are no cases of Swedish women in the study for comparison. One informant working for the Swedish police said that he had observed ethnically niched prostitution in which men import women from their own country to be sold within

their own ethnic group in exile, but that it was very difficult to obtain any information about these ethnic trafficking organisations or other exclusive groups that may be involved in similar businesses, such as motorcycle gangs.

#### Moving from place to place in the “carousel system”

One way for traffickers to earn more money is to switch the women between different places, whether countries or cities. This kind of rotation of prostitutes is called the “carousel system” (Monzini 2005:82). The aim is to increase profits, since clients want new and fresh women all the time. In some cases, the same networks rotate the women, while in others, there are different criminal gangs who sell women to other networks operating in other places. For the women, this may mean new debts to the new “owners,” which means they will never be able to repay the new debt, since the new debt includes the price the new buyer paid for her. This is common among traffickers in Europe, the United States and Japan (Monzini 2005). This trade factor was seen in all three countries in the survey.

One example of this in the Swedish survey has to do with the case in which women were found to have been touring the country, staying for a couple of days in one city before moving on to another (see “City tours”). A similar example is found in the Finnish survey in a big hotel procuring case, where the women also were touring between different cities. They stayed only for a couple of days in each city, in an attempt to deceive the authorities. Telephone connections were also changed constantly. Another informant confirmed this and added that women were often rotated between different EU countries.

In other cases, we see that the women are rotated either to new areas, to new organisers or to new client groups. In one Swedish case, the main organisers lent women to other organisers for an additional fee because the latter had clients but no women to perform the sexual services. The women are also often found circulating between source countries and destination countries. In this way, new women are constantly and systematically arriving and replacing the former ones who go home. The pattern is found in the more organised networks involved in the sex industry.

However, in most Swedish cases the women have been stationed in one city. In one case they were rotated between two cities but lived in one. In several cases they travelled a long way to meet clients, which may be more common in the smaller, more spontaneously organised networks. In a few cases they also made short trips to other countries.

In one Finnish case, the women were switched regularly, staying for a couple of weeks before going back home. The telephone operator estimated that 10-100 women had been involved in this case and that some came back two or three times to work. In a second case

the women stayed for only four or five days at a time. In a third case, some of the women alternated between Helsinki and southern Finland for a period, and switched apartments in Helsinki.

The Estonian survey also shows that women working in the sex industry may circulate among different types of sex businesses and of their own volition if so.

### Obstacles to the trade

The Swedish law against purchasing sexual services has had an impact on the market. Several traffickers talk about and mention the law as a barrier to trade. According to one informant convicted of aggravated procuring, the police are the only problem, since the sex buyers in Sweden are nice:

*They are always nice (...) no, they are not angry, aggressive, they aren't, they aren't irritated, maybe because the girls are from other countries, that's why it's easy to sell your body (...) maybe, the only problem here in Sweden is the police, they can be stopped by the police.*

Later in the interview the informant said that the best thing would be to legalise the purchase of sexual services: the police could control the trade, they would find out when new women arrived and could meet and talk to them, and perhaps give them information. That would be the best, according to the informant, because if a girl wants to sell her body she will do it, regardless of whether or not it is legal.

In another Swedish case the organisers talked about going to Spain where things are better, since prostitution is legal there: *...Spain is the optimal alternative, everything is legal, do you understand?* In this case, the major reason was that the criminals had begun to notice the police and that the police were following them everywhere, watching them, which made it impossible for them to run the business.

Other procurers mentioned countries in southern Europe because it is easier to travel there than to the Scandinavian countries and visas are not required as often.

In another interview with a procurer, the informant said it is not the law that matters, but police methods. Some traffickers believe that sex purchasers do not think that the police have the resources they have.

The Finnish police have raided operations and shut down more than a hundred apartment brothels in the Helsinki area. According to a representative of the police and border control, the Finnish police successfully eliminated much of the procuring business and procuring networks. As a result, Finland is no longer a good place for procuring organisations due to effective police work. It is easier to get caught in Finland than in Sweden or Norway. Although the authorities admit

that as soon as one group is eliminated, another replaces it. The situation has changed a great deal since the early 2000s.

In some Swedish cases, traffickers have told the women that it is illegal to sell sexual services and use this as a control method. In other cases, they tell them it is legal. The police and social services are not always looked upon with gratitude because the women may compare them to how similar authorities work at home. According to one social worker informant, the women are often fearful when the police and social services come to their rescue during a raid and that when social workers take care of the women, “no one hugs you.” The women’s greatest fear, according to the social worker informant, is that people at home, relatives or neighbours, will find out what they have experienced abroad or that they have been working as prostitutes. They say that would be worse than being hunted down by the organiser.

### Migration

It emerged in the Swedish survey that being in the country illegally puts additional stress on the organisers and the women. The organiser in one case put it this way:

*It might be another rejection [of an asylum application]. This unbelievable migration shit (...) to live here illegally is so stressful, damn. You see cops a kilometre away, they don't do anything, but you still feel bad, damn.*

There are also certain services, such as medical care, that the women and organisers are not entitled to because they are in the country illegally. In one case, a relative of the main trafficker took a girl to a hospital for an abortion. He told them she was living with him and that they were migrants waiting for a residence permit, which they were not. But the lie seemed to work.

### Strategies to continue the trade

There is evidence that criminal networks in Estonia develop strategies so they will be able to continue their operations. Some run real estate companies, and there has been one case where the operator ran a hotel. Some sex business owners establish their operations as a regular nightclub and run an undercover procuring business. There are also reports of prostitutes trying to legalise their business by registering themselves as sole proprietors. Another strategy found in the Estonian survey is operating Internet sites from abroad. It is easy to run the Internet sites and register them in a country where prostitution is legal, such as the Netherlands or Germany. There has also been a case with a site registered in Russia.

## Procuring summary

In summary, marketing takes place between men to a great extent, whether sex buyers chatting on Internet forums, taxi drivers distributing business cards or facilitating the procuring, or by word of mouth among male acquaintances. The findings from Sweden, Finland and Estonia agree in this respect, although there are greater similarities between Sweden and Finland than between Estonia and the others. This is mainly because Estonia cannot be regarded as a destination country to the same extent as Sweden and Finland.

Demand was found to drive marketing and the trade and to impact all aspects of planning and organisation of the sex industry. It determines how marketing, trade and housing are organised. Evidence of this is found in both the Swedish and Finnish surveys with regard to how organisers decide where to put e.g. apartment brothels. Client preferences and tastes also drive the trade and the study found that organisers comply with their demands and provide extra services, and that organisers instruct the women to take care of the clients and shield them from police surveillance and other obstacles to trade. The law is seen as a barrier to trade, but in most cases it seems not to be regarded as insurmountable.

The scale of the network also effects how they organise and plan their activities. It has impact on everything from choosing the marketing method, marketplace and housing to the kinds of methods used to control the women.

In all three countries, marketing sexual services online was one of the most commonly used methods found in the survey. The Internet attracts the more organised networks because it requires more planning and certain skills. Organisers need to prepare for web publishing and need certain skills, for instance to take pictures of the women, write the ads in different languages and so on. Seen from the demand side, using the Internet increases availability for the sex buyers, especially in a country like Sweden, where purchasing sexual services is illegal. However, it is used just as often in Finland, where buying sexual services is illegal only if the woman is a victim of trafficking or is being procured. Until 2004 advertising in magazines and newspapers was the most common way to market sexual services in Finland.

The Internet is very advantageous to sex buyers because it makes them more anonymous and purchases of sexual services are more covert than they are on the street.

From an organisational perspective, the Internet also facilitates operations for larger networks because it makes it easier to market several women at the same time, compared to marketing by word-of-mouth among acquaintances, for instance. This may make it easier for larger organisations to expand.

Organisations that use online marketing put more planning into housing, according to the Swedish survey, mainly because they largely

market apartment brothels, in addition to escort services. The higher the level, the more sophisticated the methods. In the highest-level organisations found in the Swedish survey, organisers use skilled facilitator groups like black market estate agents and housing organisations, which was also found in the Finnish survey. In all three countries, but particularly in Finland and Sweden, informal apartment brothels are commonly used as marketplaces. The sex buyers may not realize this, however, since organisers try to conceal this aspect of the business.

The small-scale networks were found to be involved in categories that are simpler in terms of planning, such as street prostitution and prostitution within personal networks. Street prostitution and selling sexual services in personal networks may also be seen as a good way for newcomers to get started, since one of the easiest way to find prostitutes in Sweden is still to go to central prostitution streets. Nor does it require logistics to the same extent as when organisers have to drive and pick up the women after the sex purchase. The disadvantage to organising street prostitution is that activities are not covert and are obvious to the police and social services who may be watching. The procuring of sexual services in personal networks, on the other hand, is more covert and organisers are freer in that respect. Activities are more spontaneous in both categories. This is also how they plan lodging, by staying in cheap hotels, hostels, or rent-free in relatives' homes, and they move more frequently.

Even though procuring of sexual services in personal networks to a great extent requires a solid customer base, this client category is often used together with the more vulnerable Internet-marketed procuring operations aimed at a broader group, mainly because prostitution clients reached via the Internet may not buy sexual services on weekends and holidays, particularly when they are family men. It does not usually seem very difficult to find sex buyers within personal networks and creative solutions were found among organisers targeting these groups, such as using pizzerias or cafés as a base of operations or arranging sex parties.

Among trade methods, control is presumably the one about which there is the most information, which was also found in the cases. This is true also because it is highly relevant from the legal perspective for the outcome judgments. This is also the most difficult to prove in court and a sensitive matter for the women to testify about in court or in police interrogations.

However, in summary, the surveys in all three countries show that the majority of women have not reportedly been subjected to violence. There are reports, particularly in the Swedish data collection, of women who were subjected to violence and threats. The Finnish survey found that organisers threaten and rob prostitutes as a means of taking control. The Swedish survey showed that women are more exposed to violence and threats in small-scale organisations than in



medium-scale or large-scale networks. It may be that organisers in the latter category think more before they act, as a precautionary measure. This may also be seen as a development found in the survey. There are reports from Finland and Sweden that violence has declined in recent years. Organisers may be learning how they need to behave in order to avoid the harshest punishments if they are apprehended. Nor are there many reports of women having their passports confiscated by organisers.

The most common method to control and subdue women found in the survey is economic. Economic control is found in most cases and in various forms, either by making the women indebted or not allowing her to keep any of her earnings. In the Swedish survey, the more sophisticated methods are found in the highly organised networks and sometimes in medium-scale organisations and involve women having to pay daily fees to the organisers. In small-scale organisations there are more examples found of women not getting any money at all. But even in debt bondage cases, the women are sometimes denied any part of the profits, especially when there has been a shortage of sex buyers.

The women are in many respects still controlled. The Swedish survey shows that the women's freedom of movement may be restricted, partly because there are organisers or facilitators with them all the time, but in most cases they do not know the language or the surroundings. They also depend on the organisers to help them with logistics, such as housing and driving or publishing ads on the Internet. These control mechanisms are subtle and sophisticated but very effectively used to create relationships of dependency between organisers and women.

The amount of money involved co-varies with the organisational level of the networks. The more organised, the more money is involved, and the higher the prices to the sex buyers. There seem to be established prices in all three countries, especially with regard to the sex trade marketed online. The lowest prices are found in small-scale networks that are either involved in street prostitution or in providing sexual services in personal networks.

They are skilled though, they are entrepreneurs, they follow and change the structure according to how Swedish society works, then we [professionals working with the procuring] have a chance to be efficient and follow the development, unconventional methods may be needed, since not very many end up at the central prostitution street even though the last case we initiated was from there.

# Organisations

This chapter presents the results of the surveys in Sweden, Finland and Estonia and will take the reader on an odyssey of facts about the organisations and networks involved in trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation. The chapter covers various aspects of the organisations and networks found in the study, such as organisational structures and levels, the actors involved, internal and external relationships and business activities. Some parts of this chapter are based only on findings in the Swedish survey.

## The organisation of trafficking networks

Several ways to categorise criminal organisations have been presented by researchers. One is Andreas Schloenhardt, who has studied human smuggling in particular (Schloenhardt 1999, 2003). Schloenhardt has found three types of organisations involved in human smuggling that may also be useful in the study of trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation. The first is amateur smugglers, who smuggle people only occasionally and provide isolated services to migrants. The next level of organisation involved in smuggling is the small groups of organised smugglers. According to Schloenhardt, this group shows a higher level of specialisation and is more sophisticated. They also operate more permanently than amateurs. At the highest level of organisation are the international migrant smuggling networks that operate with the entire chain of smuggling migrants and can thus provide services every step of the way. These organisations are complex and multinational.

The three levels found by Italian researchers to characterise the illicit sex industry in Italy are similar to Schloenhardt's typologisation (cited in Aronowitz 2001:173). The first applies to small-scale businesses in which individual entrepreneurs, for example, run brothels on a local level. The second type is trafficking organisations that both import women and control them in the operations. The third, most organised and sophisticated level is that of foreign large-scale criminal organisations working in cooperation with domestic criminal organisations.

Mika Junninen has studied criminal organisations involved in the procuring business in Finland and found that the organisation of Finnish procuring is often rather simple and small-scale and run by one or two people (Junninen 2006). The procurer manages everything. According to Junninen, the advantages of small-scale organisations are smaller risks and larger incomes. Very little initial capital is required, which makes it rather easy to start a procurement business.

### Results in brief

- The organisations and networks involved in trafficking and procuring in the three countries vary in size, duration, structure and professionalism.
- Most operations are small-scale. There are few large-scale organisations involved.
- The majority are not long-term, do not involve many criminals or women, and do not generate high profits.
- They are categorised by spontaneity and little or no planning. In many cases, trafficked women and traffickers are in intimate relationships.
- Trafficking networks are often made up of friends/acquaintances/family.

### Levels of organisation

The scale and level of organisation of networks varies. They differ in most ways, mainly because the networks are constituted of and formed by individuals.

The surveys found three categories of criminal networks with regard to the scale of operations: small-scale organisations operating on a spontaneous basis; medium-scale networks that may involve more people and are characterised by a higher level of organisation; and large-scale organisations and networks at the highest level of organisation.

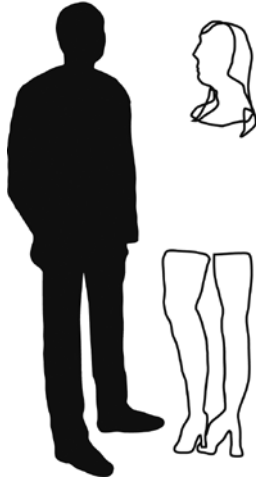
#### Small-scale networks

These networks or groups of criminals operate on a spontaneous basis and act randomly in many aspects of the business. Organisers are seen mainly managing recruitment personally, although in a few cases other people have been involved, such as recruiters or brothel owners. The entire organisation and arrangements are based on one person - the main organiser. Family, friends and acquaintances are used as facilitators. There are few women involved in these networks, usually only one or two. The women are often recruited from among the organiser's acquaintances and in many cases are sold within personal networks in the destination country. Relationships are often close and intimately formed between organisers, facilitators and women and sometimes the sex buyers. Recruitment of women is sometimes initiated in a very personal manner: the trafficker initially forms a relationship with the woman in the source country. The Swedish survey shows that once in the destination country, the women often live with the organisers.

The criminals are not very specialised in small-scale organisations and the main organiser usually deals with everything from recruit-

ment to procuring. However, there is one major role in addition to the main organiser, which is the driver. In nearly all Swedish cases, a driver was involved. The driver's main role is to chauffeur the women to the sex buyers. Another characteristic of this type of network is that organisers in most cases do not work full time. Housing arrangements are also found to be very spontaneous in small-scale networks; there often seems to be no organisation or planning at all. In several Swedish cases, the criminals and the women lodge with friends or relatives in their homes or they stay at cheap hotels or hostels.

Figure 6. The small-scale networks – only few are involved.



The categories of prostitution involved are mainly the easier, more established ones, such as selling sexual services among personal networks or street prostitution. Many people may be involved, but there is no planning or organisation involved in business activities.

The criminal organisations in the Finnish survey are generally small, which implies that the members are not specialised but are responsible for several tasks simultaneously. There is a group of people acting to achieve a certain goal. Leadership status and other roles evolve within the group, and profits are divided depending on the status in the organisation. Field operators are needed to recruit and transport the women, to organise and run daily operations, to acquire the apartments and hotel rooms, to recruit and supply sex buyers, security, supplies and other services for the women and to collect money and transport it to the main organisers. All of this sometimes takes place in a more stabilised organisation, sometimes less rigidly formed. In the Finnish survey, the duration of criminal activities also varied from case to case, but in most cases lasted only a few months, although there are reports of operations of several years' duration.

In the Estonian small-scale cases, even when women are essentially

working on their own, organisers look after them by providing “services” to enable them to serve the sex buyers. If women are in trouble, the organisers help them for a certain fee, which makes the women further indebted to the organisers.

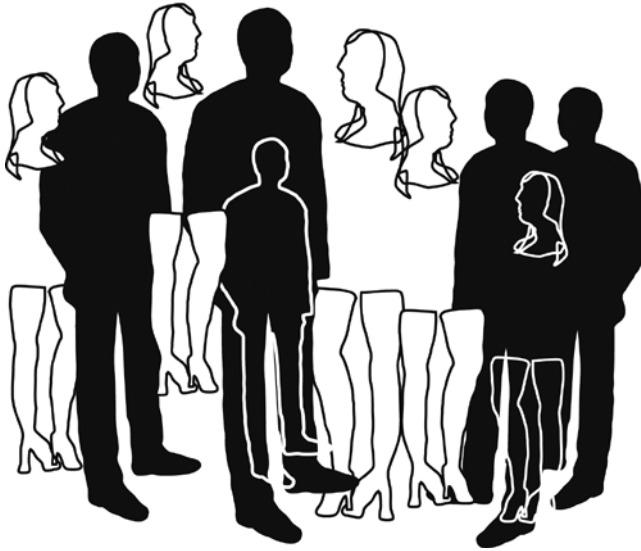
#### Case description: Small-scale network

This is an example of a network operating on a small-scale basis. However, seven women were involved and the operation may have been ongoing for several years, since there are records showing that some of the women had been in Sweden several times. Among the organisers, there were approximately seven people involved in the criminal activities. The network was run by a main organiser who personally recruited the women in the source country by forming intimate relationships with the women or recruiting them from among his acquaintances. He was a Swedish citizen, but was originally from the same country as the women. The women were taken to Sweden on cheap bus trips, either travelling alone, with the main organiser or in pairs. In Sweden, the women lived in apartments rented by the organiser, and he sometimes lived with them. In Sweden, the women were sold to men in the organiser’s personal network. According to one informant, the main organiser was widely known as a procurer in the region. He used a driver who took the women to the clients. The drivers were recruited almost in the same fashion as the women, from among the organiser’s acquaintances in the source country. The main organiser also used a former sex buyer who facilitated by organising sex parties to which this man’s friends were invited. He cooperated with other procurers and traffickers. There were reports of violence and threats in this network; in particular, the main organiser reportedly forced the women to do various things.

#### Medium-scale networks

Medium-scale networks are those somewhere in between the small-scale, more spontaneous networks and the high-level organisations. These networks operate over a longer period of time and involve several women working at the same time. There are several organisers and they are more diversified in their roles. The organisations are characterised by a higher level of organisation and professionalism. Recruitment at this level of organisation is either personal, from among acquaintances, or takes place through recruiting agents such as brothel owners. Thus, they use semi-systematic recruitment methods. The medium-scale networks market sexual services over the Internet and within personal networks. The main prostitution category is escort prostitution. In several of the Swedish cases the trafficked women live with the organisers.

Figure 7. The medium-scale networks – women and organisers are several.



In the Finnish procuring cases, there is generally a need for planning, as the women usually stay for shorter periods of time and then are moved to other places or replaced. This requires that the organisers plan and schedule their comings and goings. In one case involving a hotel that was operated as a brothel, there was an average of fourteen women per day staying at the hotel, and their arrivals were highly organised. In a Finnish case involving a holiday camp, as many as 70 women stayed in the camp. According to the Finnish media, quoting the Swedish police, the organisers were part of a highly organised Russian crime syndicate and were supplying and recruiting women from Murmansk to northern Finland, Sweden and Norway.

#### Case description: Medium-scale network

In one medium-scale organisation found in the Swedish survey, the majority of the women were recruited by one of the main organisers from a brothel in Tallinn. The main organisers were working in partnerships of two. One was a couple, a female organiser was operating with her boyfriend, and the woman was of the same nationality as most of the women. She had established her own business initially by working as a prostitute. She cooperated with two men, one of whom may be regarded as the main procurer and the other as the driver. Both lived in Sweden and one was a Swedish citizen. According to the pre-trial investigation, the female organiser was the one mainly involved in the recruitment and she cooperated with agents at the brothel in Tallinn. In this case, both the women and the main organiser were indebted to the recruiting agents.

Seven women were involved in the pre-trial investigation, although more names appeared in the police records in the case. Several had been staying with all three organisers and moved among them, while a few other women only stayed with one of them. The male organisers cooperated with a pizzeria owner and the women were mainly sold as escorts to acquaintances of either the pizzeria owner or the two male organisers. Since the female organiser was a former prostitute, the women were sold as escorts to her former clients. Living arrangements were that the female organiser sublet from friends and acquaintances, and she and the women lived together in the apartments. The women who worked for the male organisers lived with them in their apartments. The man who was a Swedish citizen owned his apartment. There were also reports of the male organisers having intimate relationships with the women. The two couples in the partnership may be seen as working individually and the profit went to the couple who were organising the business and housing at the time. In one case, one of the male organisers had a client but not a woman and phoned the female organiser. She was hesitant to let one of the women work for them, but agreed after having been promised money.

### Large-scale networks

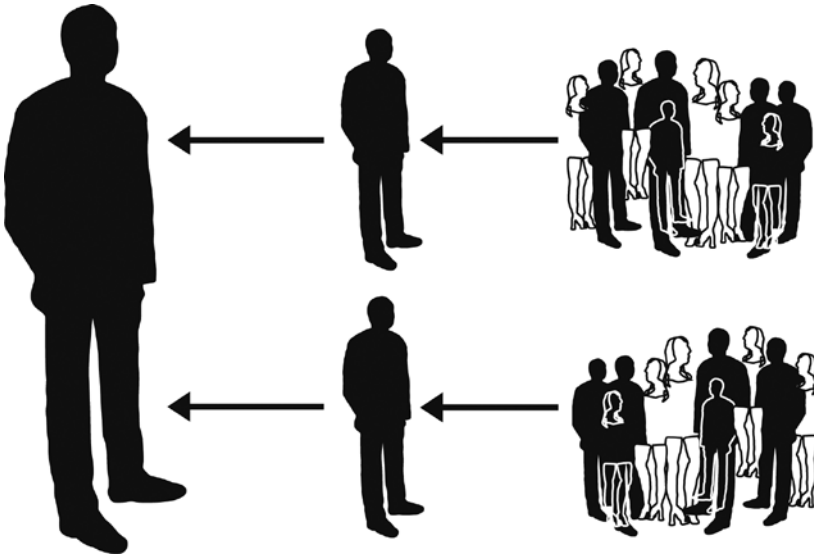
The large-scale networks are characterised by a high level of organisation and professionalism. There are many people involved in procuring and trafficking and there are many more women exploited than in lower-level organisations. Recruitment is systematic and functions more like a pipeline. These high-level organisations use intermediaries for various tasks. Recruiting agents, such as brothel owners, are often involved in the recruitment phase. Intermediaries such as lorry drivers are also used in the transport and procuring phases. The division of labour is more distinct among the various people in the network in these larger cases.

In the most large-scale cases in Finland, the main procurers are professional criminals belonging to organised criminal networks in Russia or Estonia. According to interviews in the Finnish survey, ethnicity plays an important part. As in the Swedish survey, the organisers are of same ethnicity and nationality as the women involved in the business. Quite often the main organiser remains in the source country, while “regional managers” run the business in Finland. The regional managers may have permanent residence permits. The organisation may also hire field hands (further explained in the section on actors).

In one large-scale Estonian case from 2007, a couple was accused of operating six apartment brothels between 2004 and 2007. The couple hired drivers and telephone operators. A total of 17 people have been charged with belonging to this network.



Figure 8. The large-scale networks – there are many involved at various stages.



#### Case description: Large-scale network

In the only large-scale networks found operating in Sweden according to the survey, the main organisers changed. The networks were found to consist of a core group of a few people. The network might have been relatively loose and consisted of many people who came and went. But the criminals were found to have been working in different constellations previously and several of the criminals and facilitators involved had been engaged in varying roles. The base of operations was Estonia and the women were recruited from there. The organisation had operated like a factory. The recruitment was carried out systematically and the women arrived continuously. The criminals and facilitators were diversified in their roles. For instance, the organisers used intermediaries in the recruitment process, such as recruiters, but it is not clear to what extent they worked for the organisation or operated independently. They also used people to help them in the procuring phase, with advertising and debt collection, for instance. The Internet was used for marketing the sexual services and the women either received clients in apartment brothels or worked as escorts.

In this case, paid intermediaries were also used to arrange housing, which could be analysed as sophisticated, compared to the small-scale and medium-scale organisations. They used black market agents and were found to sublease from housing agencies. There are many women involved at the same time; 10-20 women were involved in each case according to the pre-trial investigations.

The women lived alone in the apartments, which also functioning as brothels where they received clients. The criminals in this organisation had a rather advanced sense of security, which may be seen as a development, since they have learned what they can do and cannot do, then developed new strategies to avoid the police (this will be described further in the section on adaptation to the outside world).

According to the interviews with the Swedish police, the criminals in this organisation are involved in a criminal network with connections to St Petersburg and Tallinn. They have operated sex businesses in both Finland and Sweden. Two study informants representing the Swedish police questioned some of the facts about this organisation. They believed the basis of the network was rather spontaneously established on friendly terms, and thus was fluid. The organisation reportedly had four branches, each involved in different criminal activities. The interviewed police were more inclined to regard the activities as parallel, and thus do not believe the hierarchy is as strict as previously thought.

#### Operations within or across borders

In the Finnish survey, networks of Russians, Estonians and Finns are reportedly operating together across borders, as well as within the country. One source explained that the organisation was part of an Estonian organisation and run from there. Informants disagree about the level of autonomy and independence among the Finnish procurers. Some claim the Russian criminals do not need as much help from the Finnish criminals anymore, because they have more knowledge about local circumstances and can operate on their own.

#### Case description:

In one Finnish case, an Estonian criminal ran operations from an Estonian prison. Under his supervision, two women were recruiting prostitutes in Estonia, receiving money from Finland and transferring it to the main organisers in Estonia.

Another Estonian man, whose role was also to solve problems in Finland, ran operations in Finland. The members of this organisation were mainly Estonian, other than two Finnish men working as field hands under the Estonian man in prison and his regional manager in Finland. The business was run from apartments and hotels in Helsinki and southern Finland and about 15 women were involved.

In Estonia there are both businesses operating only inside the country and those that work transnationally. Many of the Estonian informants indicated that the members of such networks speak Estonian and

work in partnership with other nationalities. Some of the organisations operate from Estonia and others not.

## Roles and relationships inside and outside networks

Criminals are not isolated: they need other people to succeed and progress. Their relationships and connections may be more important to study, particularly from the crime prevention perspective.

Klaus von Lampe defines all relationships, both internal and external, of criminal actors as “the social microcosm of illegal entrepreneurs” (von Lampe 2007:132–133). Three aspects may describe the relationships: co-offending, social embeddedness and the relationships between illegal and legal spheres. First, co-offending includes criminal relationships but regards crime as a collective performance of not only the accomplices in the specific crime but also all other criminals with whom the criminal must cooperate and trust before, during and afterwards to succeed with the crime. Second, the aspect of social embeddedness broadens the social context, as it implies that criminals are not isolated in a vacuum, and they have to participate with other people, not only criminals, and this may have a bearing on the outcome of the crime. Relations like friends and family may form a basis for criminal cooperation. The final aspect of the social microcosm is the interaction between illegal and legal spheres, either by cooperating with government officials or by taking advantage of the legal infrastructure.

The division of labour inside networks has been called “horizontal differentiation” by Andreas Schloenhardt (Schloenhardt 1999:217–218). Schloenhardt has described the roles of human smuggling organisations that also may be applicable to trafficking organisations for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

In this section, we further examine horizontal diversification. Questions to be answered are: What roles and actors were found in trafficking networks operating in the three countries in the study? How are they related inside the organisations, to the women working for them or to outside actors?

### Results in brief

- In most Swedish cases, there is only one main organiser.
- Organisers commonly work in partnerships of two.
- Drivers are the second most common actor, since there are drivers in nearly all cases.
- Facilitators include friends/family and acquaintances.
- A taxi driver is involved in most cases, either as a facilitator, procurer, or sex buyer.

## Actors

Several actors are involved in the sex industry. In this report, they are categorised as either profiting from the operation (illegal actors) or facilitating it (legal actors).

Figure 9. Actors in the various phases.

	Recruitment	Transport	Procuring
<b>Illegal-Profiteers</b>	Recruiters Forgers	Human smugglers Guides	Traffickers/procurers Drivers Debt-collectors Money launderers Enforcers Field hands Profiteers Telephone operators
<b>Legal-Facilitators</b>	Travel agents	Lorry/bus drivers	Acquaintances/friends Intermediaries Hotel employees Housing suppliers Taxi drivers

Profiteers and facilitators play different roles in the trafficking chain and are of varying importance. Among the profiteers we may find traffickers or procurers, recruiters, transporters, advertisers, drivers. Facilitators are actors involved in trafficking or general prostitution in several ways to make the purchase of sexual services easier. This involvement may be either direct, as when the facilitator works as an intermediary, or indirect, as when the facilitator turns a blind eye (Socialstyrelsen 2004:55). The facilitators mentioned are taxi drivers, hotel owners, receptionists, people working at spas etc. People who help with advertising on the Internet are usually called facilitators as well.

## Illegal actors – criminals

### Recruitment

**Recruiters.** Recruiters play an important role in the recruitment phase. In human smuggling operations, Andreas Schloenhardt describes them as middlemen between the arrangers and the customers of the trafficking organisation. They are given only partial information about the plan for trafficking routes and are only temporarily employed, not on a permanent basis. They often come from the same region as the migrants who are trafficked (human smuggling) (Schloenhardt 1999).

There are few reports of specific recruiters used in the three countries, since recruitment is informal in most cases. In the Swedish survey, the use of specific recruiters is mainly seen in large-scale and medium-scale organisations/networks. They may be used either as

designated recruiters operating inside the organisation or as external recruiting agents, with recruitment carried out externally at brothels or sex clubs.

*Forgers.* There is little evidence of forgers found in the Swedish survey, probably because the majority of women travel on their own documents. There is some information about the use of forgers in large-scale networks, but they were found only to forge documents for the criminals involved. There are also some cases in which fake passports were reportedly made for the women, but there is no information in the pre-trial investigations as to how they were made and by whom.

### Transport

In the transport phase, designated *transporters* take over the activities and help get the smuggled people to airports/ports/train stations in the source and destination countries. They often are not privy to information about how the trafficking operations are organised. With regard to human smuggling, there are also people involved in charges of corruption and bribery, such as turning a blind eye to the illegal activities of the trafficking organisations or obtaining genuine or forged travel documents in some countries (Schloenhardt 1999).

Information-gathering is a particularly important step in the transport phase, which may be directly or indirectly related to failure and success. The criminals gather information to try and find weaknesses in systems, such as legal loopholes in immigration rules, how to obtain visas, identifying weaknesses in border controls, etc (Salt and Stein 1997:478). This category of actor may be called an *informer* whose task is to provide information about immigration regulations, border surveillance, transit procedures etc. Sometimes they are well equipped with sophisticated technology that gives them access to communication systems (Schloenhardt 1999).

*Transporters.* Designated transporters are unusual according to the Swedish survey. There was a human smuggler found in only one case. He was taking a girl from the Balkans by car through eastern Europe after providing her with fake documents that he had bought. In a few other cases the main organisers have used lorry drivers, who were paid by the organisers. The women were transported hidden inside the lorries when crossing the borders. In one case, the lorry driver also was found trafficking drugs along with the woman. In the majority of cases, the organisers transport the women, but it is also common for women to travel on their own. In the Finnish survey, regular drivers were used in the early 2000s to transport women from Murmansk to northern Finland. In another case, the procuring organisation offered the women transport by car or bus. The Swedish survey also found bus drivers used as transporters (see chapter on transport).

*Guides and crewmembers.* According to Schloenhardt, guides and crewmembers are used in human smuggling operations to take migrants from one transit point to another (Schloenhardt 1999). They accompany the migrants throughout the journey. This category is not found in any of the analysed trafficking and procuring cases in the Swedish survey (see the chapter on the transport phase for more information). However, several of the study informants who work for the Swedish border police mentioned that it sometimes happens that guides, often men, accompany trafficked women on the journey, if they travel by ferry or plane.

#### Procuring

*Organisers/traffickers/procurers.*<sup>22</sup> The main character in the procuring phase is what may be called the organiser/trafficker/procurer. In the Swedish survey the organisers often worked alone as the main organiser or in partnerships of several organisers working together. Some networks are run by two or more individuals working in partnership, especially in small-scale and medium-scale organisations. In these cases, one of them is often in a superior position. In the majority of the analysed Swedish cases, the organiser plays several roles in the trafficking chain. In small operations, the organiser runs almost everything from recruitment and transport to procuring and selling, while roles are more diversified in large organisations. In large-scale organisations, the organiser is often the person who runs the business but gets help from others to do various things, such as debt collection and enforcing, as well as other services for which specific knowledge and skills are needed. The main organiser is the person who in most cases, particularly in small to medium-scaled organisations, is in direct contact with the sex buyers, rather than with the women working for them.

*Drivers.* There is a driver involved in most cases in the Swedish survey. In some of cases, the driver also has the role of guarding the women, since this actor lives closely with the women in several cases. This is found in cases where organisers do not live with the women. The study found that the driver and trafficked women usually have good relationships and are often quite close. In one case, the driver took the women sightseeing when they arrived. In cases where prostitution is organised as escort services, the drivers chauffeur the women to and from the clients. In some cases, the driver has a coordinated

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<sup>22</sup> "Organiser" will be used generally to refer to this category, especially when describing the situation for all three countries involved. "Trafficker" is used in cases where the offender has been convicted of trafficking in court in Sweden or Finland and "procurer" is used for persons convicted of aggravated procuring. See also the introduction for definitions used in the report.

role of both driver and organiser, in which case the driver is in a subordinate position.

*Debt-collectors* are people in human smuggling cases who collect fees from the migrants in transit and destination countries by means of coercion, violence and threats (Schloenhardt 1999). In the Swedish trafficking cases debt-collectors are used mainly in the medium to large-scale organisations to collect the profits the women make during the day. In the medium to large-scale organisations the women work rather independently in apartment brothels or as escorts. They collect payment for sexual services themselves and the main organiser is not as closely involved with the women.

*Enforcers* are used to maintain order, often by means of violence. In one of the large-scale organisations enforcers, as well as organisers and debt collectors, were used in contrast to the kinder main organiser, who in this case was a woman. According to a study informant working for the Swedish police, she was thus seen as the good one, while she used the others for difficult tasks like debt collection and checking the women. When the male organisers had behaved badly and threatened the women, the female main organiser came and soothed and comforted the women.

*Field hands* may be seen as illegal middlemen used by procurers. In the Finnish survey, they were found to be involved in recruitment and procuring. According to the interview with the criminal procurer in the Finnish survey, procurers have used Estonian drug addicts and other young men to recruit women in the streets and bars by offering them opportunities to work in Finland as prostitutes. In the procuring phase, the procurers have hired field hands to facilitate the trade. They may be Finnish. In the early 2000s, Russian procuring organisations used Finns as middlemen, but now they employ Russians who have lived in Finland to run their errands for them, such as renting apartments or hotel rooms, acquiring telephones, organising transportation and collecting debts. Field hands may be a definition used for specialised assistants involved in many activities. They can also be procurers.

*Profiteers*. There is only one case found in the Swedish survey where there is an actor called “the roof,” who could be seen as a profiting protector. In the only case, involving the large-scale network, there was no information other than that the person has been operating in the source country, receiving a tenth of the profits earned in Sweden, and that others in the network feared this individual. According to one study informant convicted of procuring in Sweden, there are people working as bodyguards in Russia to protect the women from the

sex buyers. In Sweden, according to this informant, there was no need for protectors because the sex buyers were not as aggressive in Sweden. In the Estonian survey, there is also evidence of so-called roofs used in the criminal networks. In the Finnish survey, the profits from the sex business go to main organisers who usually remain in Russia or Estonia.

*Money launderers.* These actors legalise the profits made from criminal activities via transactions or investments in legal activities. There were no cases in any of the three countries in the survey found where money launderers were involved in the trafficking chain, although several informants in Estonia believe that money laundering occurs in the sex industry. Study informants in Finland also believe money launderers were involved in some of the larger cases.

*Telephone operators.* Telephone operators play a certain role in both the Finnish and Estonian surveys. According to Leskinen, the phone centres are highly organised and may even use tailor-made computer software in their activities. When a client calls, the operator gives him an appointment and the address. The client has to call again to get the exact apartment number. When the prostitute receives the client, she calls the operator to inform them that she is occupied, which the operator records in the books. When the prostitute is available again, she reports that to the operator. The books show the prostitutes' working histories and the prostitutes are charged for this on a daily basis (Leskinen 2003:9–10).

#### Many people involved in medium to large-scale organisations

Apart from the drivers found in almost all Swedish cases of every size, actors other than organisers are involved mainly in the medium to large-scale organisations. What Schloenhardt calls horizontal diversification is thus unnecessary in small networks consisting of only a couple of criminals (1999). Although there are many people involved in large-scale organisations, it seems there are very few that get a share of the profits from the procuring business. There were reports of criminal actors in the largest organisation working with various things like driving and debt collection, who were paid very little. In one case, the person had almost no money to buy a ticket home. The profits thus only went to the main organisers operating in Sweden, apart from the "roof" in Estonia who got 10 per cent of the profit. In medium and large-scale organisations, the main organisers have close relationships with only certain people and use other, distant acquaintances if they need particular skills and knowledge.



### **Legal actors – facilitators**

There are various kinds of facilitators used in the organisations and networks involved in trafficking and procuring. Facilitators may be regarded as an example of how legal actors by profession, such as taxi drivers and hotel employees, are knowingly or unknowingly involved in the business. Sometimes the facilitators are called “useful people.” The term, according to an informant working for the Swedish police, implies that they know little about the operation and seem to be only on the fringes of the criminal networks. This kind of actor does not, according to the informant, gain much by being involved, but they are often tied to the organisation. In some cases, they were not aware of what they were involved in, and thus are not considered organisers because they neither participate in nor profit from illegal activities.

However, there is information indicating that facilitators are more important. According to an analysis of the social networks of drug traffickers and non-traffickers in the Caviar network active in the 1990s, at least some of the legitimate actors were more important than first believed when looking at their interactions (Morselli and Giguere 2006). This was based on analysing the interactions between traffickers and non-traffickers and whether the legitimate actors were passive or active in their contacts with illegitimate actors. The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention came to the same conclusion in a report on drug distributors in which facilitators were found to play a more central role. In this study, it appeared that the activities they were asked to perform were rather minor. From a crime prevention perspective they may also be significant and should therefore not be forgotten (Brottsförebyggande rådet 2007:7:120).

### **Recruitment**

*Travel agents.* These actors are the only facilitators found by the study to be used in the recruitment phase. There is no evidence of travel agents participating actively in the trafficking business in any of the cases. This occurs only in a couple of cases in the Swedish and Finnish surveys involving women from Russia. In one case, the women had been advised to go to the agent and for a fee, the agent helped them organise documents as well as arrange the journey. One of the informants in the Finnish survey believed that travel agents and transport companies might profit from the trafficking business.

### **Procuring**

*Acquaintances/friends.* The use of acquaintances and friends may also be seen as using other people’s skills when temporarily needed. This is found in all categories of networks in the Swedish survey, from small-scale to large-scale. Some acquaintances of criminals may have some knowledge about the business, and others none.

In the only case with a large-scale organisation, the organisers used

a facilitating woman. She was acquitted in court, even though she had been found participating in several cases. She claimed in court that the main organiser had used her. She had been helping the main organisers with all sorts of tasks, such as translating to Swedish when the main organiser rented apartments. She had lived in Sweden for several years and spoke the language. In the police interrogation she personally thought she was only useful because of her language skills. One of the criminals used her as reference person for the visa application. She helped the women book tickets and she was proved to have booked using fake visas, for which the court convicted her. It was said that she was never paid for her services.

The small-scale networks also involve others in their personal networks to be able to manage the business. In one case involving a small-scale network, consisting of two brothers, they did not know how to start the business and phoned their friends to get advice. In another case, one of the interviewed procurers in the Swedish survey admitted that he had helped a person managing a brothel.

*Intermediaries.* In the study cases, this role mainly consists of trainees or people escorting the women or criminals. In some cases, the intermediaries can be seen as a “nursery” for future traffickers. In one case, there was a younger man involved in the sex business. At first, he was used more as a facilitator and friend, but eventually the older organiser left and the younger one stepped into the role as the main organiser. All of the profit went to him and his daily drug habit, since he was an addict. In another small-scale case, there was a young man whose job was to drive the women around. According to the pre-trial investigation, the women saw him as a friend, since they perceived him as supportive. In the same case, the main organiser used drug addicts to monitor the women on the street. According to two interrogated women, the monitors also shouted at the women if they thought they had behaved badly.

*Hotel employees.* There is some information on the involvement of hotel employees, but according to most informants in the Swedish, Finnish and Estonian surveys, hotel employees are usually very helpful and assist the police if something happens. They are also very cautious, because they do not want to get a bad reputation. However, there is information and suspicions in the Estonian survey that some hotel owners and landlords collaborate with sex business owners.

On the other hand, one hotel employee informant in the Swedish survey said that she had experienced that some hotel employees could act as intermediaries for procuring. The two employee categories she had encountered when working in different hotels were the concierge and room service employees. The informant said about the concierge: “*They know everything. They know what is going on (...) they live*

*on this (...)*". If a hotel guest had a discreet question, the concierge would answer it discreetly and might offer three or four business cards to choose among. It was not clear whether this business had involved an organisation or foreign women.

**Suppliers of apartments.** In the majority of Swedish cases, the suppliers of apartments are friends or acquaintances of the organisers. But specific actors were used in some of the more organised cases. In one case, a hotel operation was renting/leasing apartments. The Finnish survey also includes information about agencies being used for sub-leasing. The Swedish survey included one case involving the use of a black market estate agent. In the police interrogation he admitted that he had cooperated with several foreign criminals and helped them sub-let apartments in exchange for a certain fee. He said he knew other estate agents who did the same thing. There is also a case where asylum-seekers supply sub-let apartments, sometimes at third hand, to specific groups. In another case, asylum-seekers were involved in supplying apartments and the traffickers found out about available sub-lets from people staying in refugee reception centres. In this case, the women and organisers were also registered with the Swedish Migration Board at a mailbox address, where they did not live. One person organised this, but was not found to be involved in the business in other ways.

In small-scale cases, this is managed among friends and family and in one case a taxi driver supplied apartments. There were many cases found of ordinary people who sub-let apartments with no knowledge of the intended purpose. According to one procurer informant in the Swedish survey, it is not difficult to find sub-lets, but it is more difficult to explain the reason for sub-leasing.

**Taxi drivers.** There is information about taxi drivers involved in the sex industry in all three countries.

In the Swedish survey, they appear in various roles in nearly all analysed cases. First, they may appear as traffickers/procurers/organisers. This was found in a couple of cases in the Swedish survey. The main case involved four taxi drivers who had established a sex business around their taxi firms and worked in partnership, splitting the profits. In another case, a taxi driver was found to be one of the organisers in a partnership. He was the one who drove the women to the clients and also lodged some of the women.

Second and most commonly, they may appear as facilitators. According to the Swedish survey and the literature, they are seen as a kind of facilitator with regard to prostitution and thus taxi drivers are not directly involved (see e.g., Socialstyrelsen 2004). There are several reports of taxi drivers involved in general prostitution in Sweden, and according to the old prostitution survey, it was impossible

to investigate the extent of their involvement. However, according to an interview survey with 23 taxi drivers and other people involved in taxi businesses, all of the informants knew that taxi drivers cooperated with the sex businesses (in that case, sex clubs) in several ways (Socialdepartementet 1995:94).

The results of the Swedish survey confirm this to a certain extent in both the interviews with taxi drivers and hotel employees and the data from pre-trial investigations. The data show that taxi drivers are mainly involved in arranging and organising, mainly transport. In some cases, they were paid for taxi trips with sex.

Third, taxi drivers also figure in many cases as sex buyers.

One taxi driver informant in the Swedish survey gave an example of how taxi drivers were involved in the sex business via representatives of strip clubs who distributed business cards to taxi drivers:

*They have distributed such cards, business cards to taxi drivers. For driving customers there you get SEK 200 for every customer who pays the cover charge.*

The same informant stated that it was quite common for taxi drivers to take customers there because ordinary taxi trips generally did not generate much money. He also said he had heard rumours of women from street prostitution being brought to strip clubs for prostitution. However, the informant also said he had heard of taxi companies forbidding their drivers to take passengers to strip clubs.

Another taxi driver informant reported that he had heard of drivers acting as intermediaries who marketed prostitution to taxi customers, but that he had no real evidence for this. He also said that it was in the nature of the profession for taxi drivers to provide service, also because knowing where things could be found was a highly valued professional skill. Considering this aspect, according to him, knowledge about prostitution could be valued as much as knowledge about hotels. Sometimes he had been aware that he had driven both sex buyers and prostitutes, in the former case because they seemed rather quiet, and were not as talkative as other customers. Several times he had suspected that he had driven women who were foreign prostitutes.

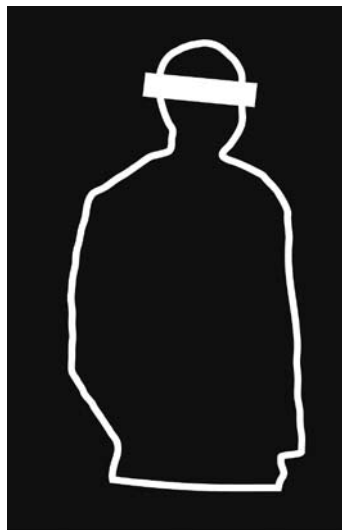
*It's obvious someone has ordered... they are younger and much less raddled-looking than other prostitutes who may be drug addicts. That is the difference (...) during the journey they often talk on their mobile phones, and not in Swedish. And when they arrive at the address, a guy comes down to pick them up. It is hard to say what it really is, because they do it so nicely. It is discreet, you can't tell for sure.*

*It has happened that a guy comes down and pays for the taxi. (...) Then you can start to wonder, if a girl was going to see her boyfriend she would have some money, wouldn't she? (...) You see that they [the guys] have no relationship to the girl. It looks like they were saying hello to an acquaintance.*

The driver also said that he occasionally had picked up male passengers who wanted to go to the central prostitution street and had dropped them off there. Some tried to persuade him to talk to the women and intermediate, but he agreed only to take them there.

The Finnish and Estonian surveys also contain information about taxi drivers facilitating the sex trade. As in the Swedish case involving the strip clubs, some Estonian taxi drivers are paid a percentage when they drive customers to brothels. In Finland, taxi drivers had been driving sex buyers in the case involving the Kapernaum holiday camp for several years and thus were aware of the prostitution. Marttila notes as well that in addition to procurers, brothels and sex bar owners, taxi drivers, hotels, bars and restaurants, ferries and telephone operators benefit from the sex business (Marttila 2006:34).

Figure 10. The sex buyer.



### **The role of the sex buyers**

Market demand governs the sex business and the actors involved. The sex buyers are on the demand side, while the other actors - traffickers, facilitators and women - are on the supply side. Thus, the sex buyers are highly significant in establishing and shaping market demand (Hughes 2005:7). There are both criminal and facilitating elements

found among clients, especially in Sweden, where the purchase of sexual services is prohibited, but also in Finland to some extent.

#### Purchasers of sexual services in Sweden

There are many studies exploring the field of sex purchases and purchasers, but there is little data in Sweden on the extent of sex purchases. The most recent Swedish study is from 1996, in which 12 per cent of study respondents reported that they had paid for sexual services.<sup>23</sup> The study also showed that the majority of sex purchases had taken place when the men were travelling. Almost 80 per cent of sex purchases had taken place when the men were abroad for business or pleasure. This implied that the men had enough money to travel, and the majority of sex buyers were thus found to come from higher social strata (Månsson 1998).<sup>24</sup> These results are similar to the findings of a recent study on purchasers of sexual services in Sweden, where the majority of the purchasers interviewed had a university degree. The purpose of the study was to explore awareness and knowledge of trafficking among prostitution clients. The study showed that knowledge of trafficking was generally very low among the informants. All stated that they would never buy sexual services from a woman they knew had been trafficked. They claimed in the interviews that they could sense whether the woman was not working independently, if she was working for a pimp, or was working involuntarily. Some of the sex buyers also said they avoided buying sex from foreign women because of the risk of encountering a trafficking victim. One of the signs, according to the informants, was that the women did not answer the phones themselves or answered with a text message. Men who had bought sexual services from foreign women believed they all were independent, other than a few who later suspected the women had a pimp or were otherwise controlled. One sign was that the sex purchase had taken place in an apartment in which several women were working. In some cases, they also stated that they had proceeded with the purchase even though they suspected the woman might have been a victim of trafficking (Hagstedt, Korsell and Skagerö 2008:180–183).

Chats and discussions among sex buyers on Internet forums have also been analysed in several studies (Holt and Blevins 2007, see also Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006, see also the Swedish study on purchasers of sexual services in southern Sweden, Malmö stad 2007). An American study found that the sex buyers were engaged in active marketing, because they were exchanging information and advising each other about who, where and how – all aspects and details about a purchase of sexual services (Holt and Blevins 2007).

The Swedish survey shows that the sex buyers are in most cases a

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<sup>23</sup> This was before the Swedish law against purchasing sexual services.

<sup>24</sup> A follow-up to this study will be published in late 2007.

mix of people of various ages and social backgrounds. This is seen in particular in the cases where the Internet was used as a marketing method. The sex buyers in these cases are from both high and low social strata. In the small-scale networks where the clients are found among acquaintances, the clients are mainly from the same social stratum as the organisers and their friends, or friends-of-friends, meaning from the lower social strata, and sometimes criminals as well.

Sex purchases in groups are found to occur mainly in the small-scale networks where women sometimes have been driven around to various acquaintances. This seems to be more common among client groups based on personal networks, but sometimes happens in relation to online-marketed prostitution, where individual sex buyers are more common. In the online prostitution scene, activities take place more anonymously and the organisers take more precautionary measures to prevent the activities from appearing as organised as they are (this is further developed in the section on precautionary measures).

In the analysed cases in the Swedish survey, the sex buyers were sometimes found to participate not only in marketing but also acting as intermediaries in some cases. This applies especially to small-scale organisations and networks and those in which sex purchases occur within personal networks. The survey shows that in these small-scale cases, the boundaries between traffickers and sex buyers are sometimes blurred.

In one case a former sex buyer arranged sex parties for his friends. The main organiser used him as a facilitator and he was not, according to the pre-trial investigation, paid much for his involvement. Purchasers of sexual services reached through online advertising as well as in street prostitution appear to be more anonymous, absolute, and refined as customers. In some of the Internet-based cases, clients were also found to offer their services or skills in exchange for sexual services. This was observed mainly in large-scale or medium-scale organisations where certain skills are needed. The examples of assistance offered were finding accommodation, accounting and developing websites. Examples of sexual services exchanged for other services were also found in small-scale organisations, e.g. taxi transport. Food was also exchanged for sexual services in some cases.

As other studies show, prostitution clients are also actively involved in online marketing. Examples of this in the survey are that sex buyers give each other advice and spread phone numbers in Internet chat forums. However, the organisers do not always regard this as an advantage, especially when clients are dissatisfied with services.

The relationship between the sex buyer and the woman providing sexual services may also be blurred, and there is some evidence of relationships ending up in marriage. There are also a few cases in which the client had to pay a certain amount of money to free the woman from the organisation or network. In one case, a client tipped the po-

lice about the girl. The study informant, a police officer, believed he had done it because he had fallen in love with the girl and wanted to free her.

There are also reports in the pre-trial investigations in Swedish cases of sex buyers and women who kept in touch after she had returned to her home country.

#### Informal networks important in Finland

As in the Swedish survey, the findings in the Finnish survey show that purchasers of sexual services come from different social classes and age groups; some are well educated and have good incomes and may be married. According to one informant, the Internet has made it easier for the sex buyers because it is easier to remain anonymous. All sex buyers have to do is call a number to make a date: there is no need to go looking for prostitutes on the streets.

Informal male networks are another important channel for potential sex buyers. This was seen in the case involving a holiday camp, when news about prostitution travelled through the grapevine over a 600 km radius. The sex buyers were normally local, middle-aged alcoholics who could not get Finnish women, as well as some Swedish men. One witness said that when the place became public knowledge, high-status men also came to buy sexual services.

There is also evidence in the Finnish survey that some clients want to talk about their problems, jobs and business, and feel close to someone. Most clients want to buy sexual services during their lunch hour, before going to work or right after work, and after major public holidays.

The purchase of sexual services is forbidden in Finland only when the prostitute is a victim of trafficking or a subject of procuring. It is unclear whether the sex buyers can identify victims, or care. Several informants mentioned one case as an example, in which the sex buyers failed to notice anything wrong with the mentally disabled woman involved. Some of the clients had been found on the Internet discussing their experiences with the woman who “had a few screws loose.” It has recently come to the Finnish authorities’ attention that women advertising on the Internet sometimes mention in their ads that they are not victims of trafficking.

According to the informants in the Finnish survey, current demand for prostitution seems quite high. There have also recently been signs that the demand exceeds the supply. Demand would be decreased by legislation and restrictions of the market. A change in attitudes would also be required to decrease demand. According to study informants, the greatest challenge is to make the sex buyers open their eyes and see the involvement of organised crime. In public discourse in Finland “prostitutes and/or trafficked women are often perceived as illegal immigrants and criminals rather than victims or women trying to earn a



living” (Marttila 2005a:37). It is also clear that most sex buyers oppose the criminalisation of sex purchases.

Furthermore, there have yet to be any convictions for purchasing sexual services in Finland and the police cannot use telecommunication surveillance information gathered in aggravated procuring or trafficking cases to investigate and fine the sex buyers.

## Internal and external relationships

### **Relationship to the trafficked person**

The relationship between the trafficked woman and the trafficker/procurer is not always easily analysed. The relationships may not be clear and simple, as there may be different aspects to be considered. For example, recruiters are sometimes family, friends, acquaintances and neighbours (see Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006, Maljevic 2005). This may also apply to the relationship between the woman and the organiser.

According to a Swedish prostitution survey from 1993, the relationship between the prostitute and the procurer differs from case to case (Socialdepartementet 1995:117-119). This also applies to the relationships between women in trafficking cases and their organisers. The 1993 survey showed that in some cases the procurer could be more regarded as the prostitute’s common-law spouse, since he was not considered a real procurer but lived on the money the woman earned from prostitution. In other cases, the procurer was to be regarded as the professional. He had a relationship with the prostitute, but only to make the woman prostitute herself and then profit by it. The survey also mentioned the relationship between the female pimp, who was sometimes a friend who took the initiative and advised the woman to become a prostitute.

Sexual relationships between traffickers and trafficked women are also rather common. This aspect may make the situation more difficult for the woman, as there are feelings involved, and it may also be more difficult to see the trafficker as an evil person coercing the woman (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006:41).

In the Swedish survey it is evident in many cases that the boundaries of the relationships between organisers and women are blurred. This is expressed in many ways. First, traffickers and trafficked women often live together. Second, it is not unusual for the organiser or someone working for the organisers and the women to be involved in a romantic relationship. The man who later became the main organiser in the largest organisation in the survey had previously been intimately involved with several of the women working for the organisation. When he was the main organiser, he married a former prostitute in the organisation. She then functioned as one of the organisers. There was also evidence of the main organiser’s closest subordinates

having relationships with the women working for them. However, there is no information available about what kind of relationship they had and how it affected the women's situation.

In many of the analysed cases, they are friends, at least with someone among the organisers. This may of course be seen as a survival strategy, although one could discuss at what price to the women. This was evident in one of the small-scale street prostitution cases. The whole party consisted of four people in the beginning. Two were the girls who were sold in the streets and the other two were men who organised the business on a very spontaneous basis. One of the men was young and was almost the same age as the girls. At first, the older girl was together with the older trafficker, but when he left, the younger trafficker initiated a relationship with her. Then the couple and the youngest girl stayed at various cheap hotels and the two girls worked for the younger trafficker. The youngest girl testified about the violence of the younger trafficker. In one respect, these three were like friends, since they were living and spending time together. One study informant working for the Swedish police said:

*So it can be a bit complicated (...) what side they are on, the girls, it is not evident that the pimps are their greatest enemy, they can also be trapped in dependency and normalisation, that in reality he is kind...*

Another informant expressed the relationships between organisers and the girls working for them thus:

*It can be quite close sometimes; some may be afraid of them, but in quite a few cases we see that they have relationships to them. Sometimes they have a romantic relationship.*

In one case the trafficked girl showed her preference for her former traffickers, as expressed in a phone conversation when she stated that she wanted to leave the current traffickers and return to the previous ones. An interviewed prosecutor explained this as follows:

*And it is typical in a case of human trafficking, in some places they are treated badly and in others, rescuers will appear who will take care of them out of the "kindness of their hearts."*

It becomes clear that the relationships between organisers and the women involved are, like most human relationships, dependant on personal chemistry. In one case the girls involved stated in the police interrogation that the girls had various relationships to the three people working in the partnerships that organised the sex business. One girl said in the police interrogation that she did not like one of the

traffickers because she was pushy and forced her to take more clients. The others treated her differently, so she went to work for them instead.

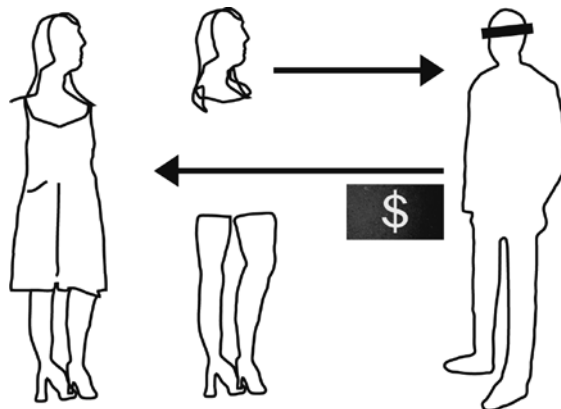
In the larger cases, the boundaries are often clearer in the relationships between organisers and women, mainly because the women in these cases often live alone. In the small-scale cases, relationships are more blurred and the sex trade is sometimes based on the intimate relationships formed between victim and perpetrator, as in the case involving common law spouses. The question in such cases is what is the organiser's aim with the relationship? Is only it to subdue the women?

In some cases it seems that there are people involved who are more supportive and the women find more friendly and comforting, but this is a role that seems to come naturally, since some people get along better than others. In the majority of cases it seems to be part of the organiser's task to support the women if there is a need. Sometimes the organisers delegate this to a facilitator (see the section on facilitators).

Regarding doctors' visits, there is some information that girls have been helped in some cases. In one, the organisers paid for a girl's surgery in her home country when she required abdominal surgery due to injury sustained through her prostitution. In another case, there was information about a facilitator acting as an interpreter when a woman saw the doctor. In a fourth case, relatives of the organisers took the woman to a hospital to have an abortion, telling the hospital she was an asylum-seeker who was living with them.

In some cases the traffickers are either found buying or in some cases stealing clothes for the women, but the purpose may not be supportive, but rather to make the women more attractive to the sex buyers, so this could be analysed as market behaviour.

Figure 11. Many women become organisers. This may be regarded as a step up the career ladder.



### **Female perpetrators – former prostitutes**

The Swedish police have observed an increase in female procurers and traffickers. They believe the traffickers give them the responsibility for the trafficked women, since it is easier for the trafficked women to trust another woman (Rikskriminalpolisen 2006). In a Norwegian study, some of the trafficked women interviewed said that female friends who had already been to Norway working as prostitutes had recruited them. One woman also believed her friend had been paid some kind of reward for recruiting her to Norway (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006:33). Some of the informants also said their mothers were actively involved in their decision to go to Norway to sell sex and some women felt pressured to start working as prostitutes (ibid: 46).

In cases involving trafficking of Nigerian women the system may be seen as matriarchal, where women, “madams,” organise the trafficking at all stages of the business. The madams are often former prostitutes. They started off in this business, but then there was a need for people to make initial investments in Nigeria, for the women’s travel expenses for example. These individuals are called “sponsors” and are often men. The madams often work in pairs, one in the destination country and one in Nigeria (Prina 2003, Carling 2006, Monzini 2005). Since women were the pioneers the business of exploiting Nigerian women, they also run the business.

Mika Junninen has studied organised crime and gender relations in Finland. His research shows that although there are quite a lot of female perpetrators involved, especially in procuring, the male criminals express some scepticism. For instance some said in interviews that they could not trust women because they were jealous and could inexplicably change their attitudes. Junninen also found the women were given different roles in the criminal operations. First and most common was that the women were used as fronts in smuggling operations. The second-most common was involvement as the criminals’ wives, girlfriends or friends, where the women acquired a great deal of information about the business and thus became indirectly involved in the criminality. Third, the women were used as translators or interpreters in negotiations, for example in the sex industry involving Estonian and Russian women. A fourth role found in Junninen’s study was that the women could act as the owner of the man’s property or the only one in the family with taxable income. The fifth role involved using women as couriers in smuggling operations (Junninen 2006:128–130).

In all three countries there is evidence of women being involved as recruiters, mainly as friends or co-workers in brothels. In the Swedish survey there are quite a number of female organisers found in the cases – although the majority are male. In many cases the female organisers play an equally important role as the male organisers, in some cases even the role of main organiser. In several cases they are former

prostitutes and some are both ex-prostitutes and wives or girlfriends of the main organiser. When the main organisers in one case were arrested and sentenced to prison for procuring, a girlfriend took over and ran the sex business in Sweden. Previously she had been working as a prostitute for the organisation. She had also run a similar business in the United Kingdom and was reportedly rather hard on the women working for her there. In Sweden the women did not find her as brutal and hard and she was more inclined to use her softer sides to make the women more cooperative, although in reality she was ruling the business. This may perhaps be seen as a common way to express feminine power?

One study informant working for the Swedish police put it this way about the female organiser:

*She may in some way be seen as successful. And in the girls' eyes she has become someone. This is not negative. Before, she and the girls were friends and the friendship remains. She is still the person who facilitates for the other girls to come here and work and continue earning money. And she is concerned about the girls' well-being while they are here working; she depends on them for her own survival. This is a kind of strange symbiosis.*

In some cases the female organisers were considered tough, sometimes tougher than male organisers. In one case the husband of the female organiser was the subordinate. He may only have been regarded as an intermediary taking calls when she was not there. The female organiser was the one who decided over the business activities.

In another case there were four women running the sex trade. They had diversified roles in the business. All had previously had a prostitution career. Two were still working as prostitutes when they were procuring. The network was run as a partnership and two of the women ran the prostitution business together. The other two facilitated the business: one advertised on the Internet and was paid for this activity and the other acted as a supplier of apartments for which, according to her court testimony, she was not paid.

To become a female trafficker may also be seen as a step up the career ladder in this industry, as confirmed by several informants. One informant, a Swedish prosecutor, saw this as one of the only careers left for a woman in this situation. According to him, this was a process where the first step was taken when the girl was established as a prostitute. She was then subdued. In this phase, she could either leave before it was too late or she would have to stay. If she chose to stay she had to accept the conditions of prostitution and then she hardened. The final step in this process, according to the prosecutor, was that of crossing the line from victim to perpetrator.

Using female organisers may also be a strategy employed by male

organisers. One informant who works for Swedish social services exemplified this as follows:

*An example of how they organise ... is that they often use women, and this is a strategy, it is often a woman who has experience from being a prostitute in the past, or has worked for these men before or has risen in the ranks and stopped working with prostitution and started to organise the girls instead, because she know how it works, she is a woman.*

The use of female recruiters is also mentioned in the Finnish survey as a facilitating factor, since the recruiter is often a woman, a friend or other person the victims can relate to or trust. In the early 2000s local female networks in Murmansk were responsible for recruiting new woman to work as prostitutes in northern Finland. There were also local networks operating in western Lapland, who arranged girlfriends and prostitutes for local men. According to Skaffari and Urponen, some of these activities were related to procuring, the rest were about networking (Skaffari and Urponen 2004:43; 54).

### **Relationships of loyalty or dependency**

There is no evidence in the Swedish survey of certain patterns of loyalty used to form relationships between the criminal actors in the trafficking networks. In the medium to large-scale networks there are more examples of conflicts between the people involved than of any strategic establishment or maintenance of friendly relationships. In a few cases, there are even examples of how organisers try to go behind each other's backs and cheat. In some cases they are also found to grass to the police about each other in the closer networks and partnerships.

In one case, the organiser felt threatened when a recruiter was having too much contact with one of her women. The recruiter seemed to be taking control over the girl and supporting her against the organiser in an attempt to cut her out of the picture by manoeuvre.

In the most large-scale organisations, the organisers also have difficulties maintaining loyalty. In one of these cases, a woman had a relationship with a recruiter working for the organisation in the source country and when the case was in court the recruiter advised the woman to go to Sweden to testify against the main organiser. In the same case, the organisers also had problems with their protectors, the "roofs" who received 10 per cent of the profits. One of the recruiters in the source country had not paid his percentage to the roof, so the main organiser for the roof sent another person to threaten the recruiter. The main organiser in Sweden had discussed this with another person in the network and agreed that the recruiter was rude but that they still needed him. In the third and most recent case involving this

organisation, the recruiter took over by becoming the main organiser of the Swedish operation.

In the small-scale networks the relationships between the organisers look different, presumably because friends and family are often the basis for the networks. For that reason, they are more dependent on each other in these cases and there is no information regarding disloyalty.

One example of how this may manifest was seen in one of the small-scale cases with respect to how cautiously the traffickers behaved when they were in detention, even there they did not want to grass on each other. The main traffickers were two brothers and their closest accomplices were friends and acquaintances.

Debt is another factor found that may create relationships of dependency. In several cases, there is evidence of how the criminals have to relate to people because of debts. In one case, the debt is paid through a service where the facilitator repaid his debt to the main organisers by acquiring three clients. In yet another case, the organiser let the women provide sexual services to persons he was indebted to.

In summary, we do not find any particular patterns of loyalty or dependency in the relationships other than in small-scale networks based on friends and family.

### **Hierarchies**

Vertical differentiation is used for the hierarchy of how information and knowledge about the structure is spread in the networks. Secrecy combined with money and intimidation are powerful tools used to keep accomplices loyal and protect and prevent the main organisers from detection and arrest (Schloenhardt 2003:340).

There is very little information in the analysed cases in the Swedish survey that could be interpreted as hierarchies for how information is spread in the networks and organisations. In one case, the organisers discuss keeping facilitators and others outside the business by not talking about money, which may be interpreted as keeping more of the profits themselves rather than keeping facilitators in the dark.

As the relationships in the majority of the cases are based on personal relationships, everyone may not know everything, but there is no evidence found in the material of special strategies used to achieve this.

There is evidence in the Finnish survey that it is common for people at lower levels of the organisation to know less than the leaders. This has caused a problem for investigating authorities according to the informants in the Finnish survey, especially because in one of the large-scale cases the highest level of the organisation was never caught. The Finnish organisers said they had no detailed information and were only working for the main organiser in Estonia. It is usually the mid-

level players in the organisation who get caught, according to one informant. The main organisers stay in the source country.

In the Estonian survey there is no information about hierarchies in the networks. Several of the experts who acted as study informants explained this by saying that the police have not reached the common treasury – the top of the sex businesses.

### **Socio-economic factors, ethnicity and nationality – do they play a role?**

According to Vesna Nolic-Ristanovic, socio-economic factors play an important role in becoming either a victim or a perpetrator of trafficking. Some of the new players in the trafficking market come from lower social strata. Perpetrators and victims often belong to the same social strata, the marginalised poor, and often belong to the same ethnic group or nationality (Nolic-Ristanovic 2004). Nolic-Ristanovic also found parallels between criminalisation and victimisation, and that many of the people who become victims of trafficking also get involved in criminality, such as recruiting (Nolic-Ristanovic 2004:130). There are also links between victims of trafficking and oppressed minorities; for instance, 80 per cent of the prostitutes in Estonia are belonging to the Russian-speaking minority from various parts of Estonia (IOM 2006).

Franz Bovenkerk discusses several factors to explain how ethnicity and criminality are connected (Bovenkerk 2001:116). Bovenkerk explains by finding political and geographical causes, since organised crime is strong in weak countries where the governments have no control, for example in border regions and regions that are economically depressed and remote. He also finds that minorities in political conflicts with central governments may be involved in organised crime, since the profits may be used to obtain their goals. Sociologically, the connection may be explained by using the strain theory that some ethnic groups run a heightened risk of getting involved. The cultural aspects explain that there are possibilities for illegal organisations to prosper in the seclusion of some ethnic communities.

In the Swedish survey, the perpetrators and victims come from similar backgrounds in a majority of the cases. In most cases they come from the lower social strata, often the lowest. In many of the analysed cases both perpetrators and victims are from marginalised minority groups, such as the Roma in eastern European countries and the Russian-speaking minority in the Baltic countries. Also, in the majority of cases where the organisers live in Sweden, they originally belong to the same ethnic and national groups as the women they recruit. This is also the case in the Finnish survey. In Sweden, this fact is particularly evident in the small-scale networks, since the women are often recruited from among acquaintances and family. In the larger-scale organisations there are more variations found. In one case, there were



operations in both Norway and Sweden and the women were recruited from various recruiting agents in the Baltic countries. In another case, the women were recruited from several eastern European countries by organisers who were originally from the same area, but not the same country.

In the cases where criminal and facilitating actors reside in Sweden, the majority have no real employment and many have no income other than public economic assistance. Other aspects reported in the cases are drug and alcohol abuse, and some of the people are reportedly living on temporary disability pensions. In one case, a pizzeria owner was living on this type of pension and he claimed in court that he did not work, but the police had staked out the pizzeria and had seen the man open and close it every day, even though he claimed in the police interrogation that the business was run by someone else.

There are some exceptions in which the organisers own their apartments or houses and are employed full time.

## Business activities

This section describes business activities and how the criminal organisations and networks are established and operate. Other major factors significant to the business are expansion, competition, relationships to the legal sphere and multi-criminality.

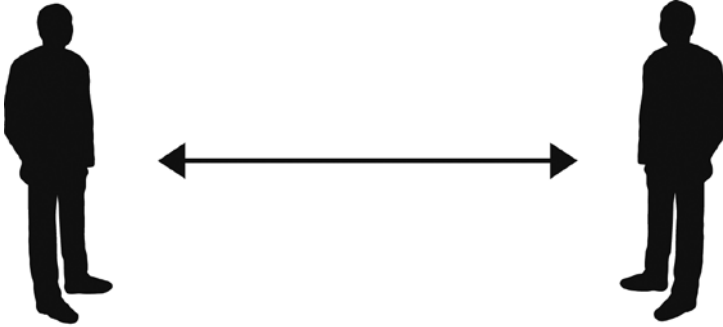
### **How networks are established and operate**

In general, there are two principles that seem to be important for organisers when they choose how to establish a sex trade and how to operate. These are based on proximity and contacts. Some operate within borders and some transnationally. Three categories for how traffickers establish their organisations and networks crystallised in the Swedish survey.

#### Establishing a sex business

The *first* category regards organisers that come to the destination country with one purpose only – to establish a procuring business. In several of these networks, they have established sex businesses in other countries, Finland in particular. This group is characterised by strong ties to the source country. In these cases, the networks have a person or a couple of people with basic knowledge about Sweden, in one case a facilitator who could speak Swedish. In other cases, they have been in Sweden before and worked illegally and are familiar with the surroundings. In one case, the organiser had been in Sweden before working as a prostitute and her former clients were the basis for her trafficking business. The organisers use formal recruiters and recruit from brothels or use more informal recruitment channels and recruit from among friends and acquaintances. Pipeline recruitment is another characteristic of large-scale organisations. The medium and

large-scale organisations are found in this category, often originating from Estonia and Russia.

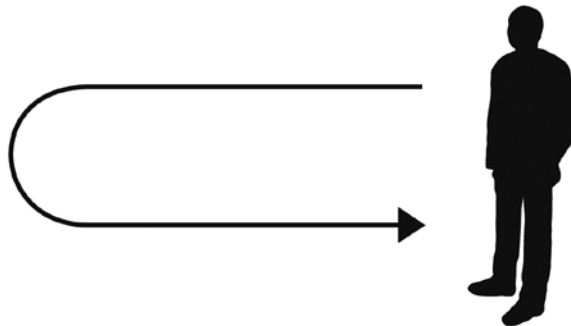


#### Establishment based on to residence

The *second* category is also characterised by the organisers having strong ties to other countries, but specifically, they reside in Sweden, which is the purpose for establishing here. In many cases, the organisers are originally from the region where they recruit women, or if the organisers are from Sweden they have strong connections with the source country through marriage or former residence, as in cases where women have been recruited from Thailand.

In cases where the organisers are from the source country, they return there and recruit by initiating contact with women, in several cases by forming some kind of connection or relationship with them.

The recruited women are often acquaintances. Many of the small-scale and spontaneously operated businesses with no real budget belong to this group. Another example is housing, which in this category is mainly very cheaply organised, with women often staying in cheap hotels or hostels. The sex purchases are easily established or marketed by word-of-mouth within personal networks or on the streets. One of the major examples involves a family running a street prostitution



business. The women stayed at a campsite and were recruited from an eastern European country. The head of the organisation is the father and his children reportedly run their own businesses. The women are recruited from among acquaintances and are taken on cheap bus journeys to Sweden.

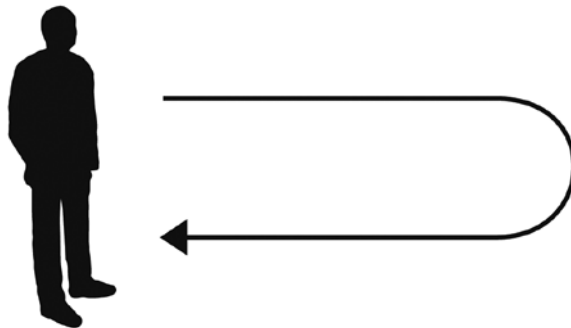
The source countries are in most cases countries in eastern Europe/ the Balkans, and Thailand. In some cases, some medium-scale organisations could also be categorised to this group, mainly because the main organisers resided in Sweden.

#### Established and operating from the source country

The *third* category differs from the other two in that the organisers are not established in the destination country. This may appear in two ways, both of them are arranged as road-movies – one planned, the other more spontaneously organised.

First, in the more organised “city tours” the organisers stay in the source country and operate from there by sending the women abroad with a laptop and a mobile phone. The base of operations is the source country. The dates when the women are coming to the chosen cities are published in the online ads, where clients book the women in advance. Mid-range and higher hotels are also booked in advance. The category is characterised by high levels of professionalism; the women work independently and the prostitution is to some degree “high-class.”

The second example of how this category is established may be characterised as being the more spontaneously arranged road-movie with very small-scale activities. The organisers are not established, as in the city tours example. They also move from place to place, but in this sub-category the organisers and women move together. In comparison with the city tours business the activities in this sub-category are very spontaneous and opportunistic. The purpose and aim are not as defined as in all other categories. In a few cases, this has been expressed as that they drive around in Sweden, not knowing the sur-



roundings at all, just to see if they get lucky. In another case, one of the Lithuanian organisers had some knowledge of Sweden because he had once worked there illegally.

These three categories overlap in some cases.

### **Expansion**

As networks expand their operations, costs also increase. More organisation is needed if several women need entry visas and the organisers may need someone who can forge documents. Modes of transport may also become more complex and there may be a need to rely on corrupt officials so that transports can be organised (IOM 2002:15).

There was little information found in the Swedish survey on expansion. In cases where it was found, it seems to have happened rather spontaneously, especially in cases involving small-scale networks. In the less organised cases, they may expand with only one or two women and it is not always evident whether the expansion was planned. In several cases when organisers/traffickers were wiretapped, they have been overheard talking about expanding by taking new women from different countries, but this never happens because the police raid them before they can follow through. In another case, the trafficker admitted in the police interrogation that she planned to bring new a couple of new women to an apartment she had recently rented for the purpose.

In one of the few street prostitution cases, one of the main organisers was planning to expand the business to involve Internet-marketed operations. This operation was stopped when the police disrupted the business with a raid. In this case, there were indications that the expansion also entailed adding new services. One of the women working for the organisation said in the police interrogation that they only provided “normal” sex on the street, but the services offered on the Internet included fellatio.

In the more organised networks with long-term activities, expansion also seems unplanned and spontaneous as the business waxes and wanes in scope; sometimes there are more women working, sometimes fewer.

### **Competition**

There are some records that may be interpreted as competition strategies observed in some criminal behaviour. In some cases this is manifest in threats or violence, in others the criminals employ specific strategies to avoid competition.

An example of how organisers avoid competition is that in some cases the organisers allow the prices published on the Internet to determine the prices they set for sexual services, thus keeping prices at the same level. They are also very concerned that the prices are not

dropped, which is exemplified by how the main organiser in one case instructed the women not to drop the prices.

Another more technical strategy for competition found in the Swedish survey is the updating of ads on the Internet in order to stay at the top of the list on the main web portal, the Secretary Academy. According to the criminal procurer informant in the Swedish survey, this follow-up entailed more work and organisation.

Another example of competition strategies was found in a case where the main organiser decided to establish operations in another city, since she had seen on the Secretary Academy site that there were only a couple of prostitutes working there. The main organiser also found smaller cities better for the business. In the police interrogation she described it from her own experiences:

*Interrogator: Why did they go there?*

*Main organiser: When I worked in Finland, the work was better when you worked in smaller cities. It is the same here, in xxx [city she was working], there are a lot of girls working. And in xxx [city they planned to expand to] there were only two girls working, at least according to the ad.*

In the same case there was evidence of other competition strategies involving threats and violence. One example as when the main organiser had found advertisements regarding women from a neighbouring country on the Internet, which displeased him. The organisers pretended to be clients and booked dates with the women and came to the apartment brothel where they worked. The organisers robbed the women and demanded that they start working for them instead. However, the police did not observe the organisers going back to the women later.

However, no competition was found in most cases in the Swedish survey, perhaps because organisers operate in isolation from each other and thus do not feel any competition from others.

#### Evidence of robberies in the Finnish survey

There are similar cases in the Finnish survey in which organisers have threatened independent prostitutes and coerced them by robbing them of their profits. This was the case in the early 2000s when there were rival procuring organisations competing for prostitutes. Estonian and Russian gangs wanted all prostitutes to work under one organisation and tried to disrupt Finnish procurers by robbing the prostitutes of money and mobile phones. The business was disrupted for several days. According to the interviewed criminal procurer, one of the cities was split between Estonian and Russian gangs and no one was allowed to work there independently. After the 2004 ban on sex advertisements in newspapers, a large part of the Russian and Estonian

gangs disappeared. The criminal procurer also stated that the police had done good work, so that few groups are still operating.

The results of the Estonian survey show that the networks that reach abroad are most likely to have good relationships with local sex businesses, because you have to know the local laws and customs to be able to do business.

Regarding relationships and establishing trust and loyalty within networks, there are certain rules that everyone concerned must follow. Thus the members of the network know that their co-workers are reliable. These rules may also be considered as a control strategy.

## **Adaptation to the outside world**

### **Precautionary measures during the trafficking process**

The criminals are found to a great extent to adapt to the outside world in different ways and are dependant on outside factors (Brottsförebyggande rådet 2005:11). Criminals involved in trafficking have to adapt and learn to operate in dynamic environments, which change constantly due to fluctuating demand for the illegal activities, changes in the law and changes in border controls (Ruggiero 2000, Schloenhardt 2003:339). They must plan accordingly and learn to “take advantage of general weaknesses in systems,” such as legal and immigration issues and when and where it is best to cross borders (Salt and Stein 1997:477).

In the Swedish survey, the majority of examples found apply to adaptation to the justice system, mainly police surveillance.

Regarding transport, there is evidence of precautionary measures with respect to border control and Customs. In some cases, we have seen that organisers and women avoid certain routes because they are known to Customs or passport control. This behaviour is found in the cases where the largest scaled organisations operate. In one case, the organisers planned to cross the border in a rubber boat and timed the crossing with changing of the guards in order to elude notice.

### **Procuring**

The Swedish survey found that most precautionary measures are taken in the procuring phase, at least with regard to major organisations. In the only large-scale case in the Swedish survey, several findings showed that the organisers were aware of the risks involved. There are examples showing that they were aware of being under police surveillance and that their phones had been tapped. In this case, there are also examples showing how the organisers had adapted and developed different strategies during their years in operation. One study informant working for the Swedish police described the main organisers' approach to security in terms like:

*Among other things this has to do with the living. They live in a grand style, and then they become grandiose and drug themselves. There is a reason for their criminality. They are not as smart as people who get a job and make a fortune in a legal way. They are stupid people, that is the way (...) and if you see it like that, then they fail completely. It is the drug use that is devastating. When you start taking cocaine you automatically get grandiose ideas and make a fool of oneself... you do a lot of stupid things..*

Another informant representing the police said:

*At the same time, they are very aware of what they are doing. They do not talk as clearly as they used to before. They may break off in the middle of a sentence and say "No, let's talk about something else, or we can meet on Skype." This causes us legal problems... in court. Even if we know what they are talking about, it is not clear enough for the court to find them guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.*

According to the informants, one of the stupid thing the police have seen them do was when the main organiser had been caught shoplifting when high on cocaine. The police officer continued:

*How stupid can a person be? A thing like that can start a ball rolling.*

However, in this criminal network it is apparent how the organisers have learned to adapt to police surveillance, in particular by using new strategies to collect the profit from the women. At first the debt collectors did that openly by picking up the profits from the apartments. Later they learned to hide the money in cigarette packages and pass it to each other in a brief meeting on a bus or similar.

However, even though the organisers take precautionary measures and they try to consider security, they appear in many cases to act rather carelessly. One example regarded using mobile phone numbers in the same series or letting different women use the same phone number.

The medium and small-scale networks seem to think less about security or not at all. One example was found in a street prostitution case. A social worker informant said:

*This was really not the sharpest knife in the drawer who planned this. It is not that hard to find out that we have a central street where prostitution is taking place, that is simple. Nor is the discussion about trafficking in Sweden anonymous in general and it is not very hard to get information about how the police and*

*social services are combating street prostitution. And still they put five girls there who stand around in a group, they are totally new, none of them speaks Swedish and they all have Romanian passports. We knew it after an hour or so ...*

According to an interview with another representative working for the Swedish police, the organisers do not see this as something criminal. Instead, they view their activities as helping the women and they do not think they profited very much. And according to them there was no coercion and no violence involved. This view may become apparent when comparing risk behaviours of criminals also involved in other crimes, such as drugs and stolen goods. One example was seen in a case where the criminals were multi-criminal, and took precautionary measures with regard to other criminal activities but not the trafficking business, where they acted openly. In this case the criminal, a pizzeria owner, openly procured in a telephone call, even though there had been a police raid the same day. First he said they had raided him but that the procuring business was of no interest to the police and continued discussing the business with the presumptive client.

#### Case description: Security thinking at various levels

It was also apparent in another case that the main organiser was not as security-minded as the acquaintance they contacted for assistance.

The quotations are from the Swedish police's wiretap of a phone conversation between the main organiser and the facilitating acquaintance. Initially the main organiser wanted help to find clients: "*Help me find some...we have bought a hooker.*" The facilitating acquaintance was very cautious and did not want to say anything on the phone, and he said: "*Ok...you have to be careful with this, you know...slow down.. you must not talk to anyone.*" The facilitating friend also said "*don't talk so much on the phone, my phone is not secure.*" The facilitator's phone had, as matter of fact, been tapped. He was also involved in criminality at higher levels than the main organisers, who were rather new and did not know very much about the business. It was also through the wiretap the police found out about the trafficking case and after only a little more than a week they arrested the organisers and the police also found out about a huge drug case.

A very simple way to protect oneself is by using false names. In many cases, this method is used both by the women involved and the organisers. In many cases the organisers instruct the women to use pseudonyms.



### Code language

In most cases analysed in the Swedish survey, criminals are seen to openly discuss the procuring business on the phone or in text messages. They talk about prices, women and the sexual services involved. However, one of the most common precautionary measures found in the survey involved coded language or code words. The examples of how organisers use code words in the sex trade are found in phone calls and in text messages between the organisers, but also between organisers and sex buyers.

There are many examples of code words. In one case the organisers wanted to signal that the police had made several raids against them by sending the text message *“Remove the picture from the sales, the shop will be closed tomorrow.”* After this text message had been sent all ads on the Internet regarding the organisation’s activities were quickly taken down.

In another case the organisers informed each other by sending text messages such as: *“Don’t forget text messages are also evidence.”* This may be an example of how organisers seem to forget how the police work, in particular that they collect evidence from different aspects.

The examples of code language found in the different cases seem to mostly be very simple and easily decoded. In the examples from the Swedish survey they use flowers, cars and bottles of liquor as code words. In some cases this may not be seen as a precautionary measure, it may also be seen as a way of talking to each other, but also as an effort to impress, since using code language may imply that they are on a higher criminal level than they really are, according to the interviewed prosecutor. In one case where the organisers sent coded text messages to clients, the purpose may have been to conceal the sex purchases from wives or girlfriends.

### Other precautionary measures

There are several examples found in the cases of precautionary measures that apply if organisers are observed and apprehended.

The majority of examples found in cases in the Swedish survey involve the organisers coaching the women to say different things if they are caught by the police. In most cases, they coach the women to say that they are related to each other or are married. They are also coached not to say anything at all. A woman described in the police interrogation how the main organiser instructed her:

*No, she did not say that, she said that if I were caught I shouldn’t say anything I could say about her.*

In this case the main organiser had also instructed the woman not to say anything about the business on the phone, whereas the main

organiser herself was found talking on the phone about it uninhibitedly.

There are also examples of threats of violence found in the Swedish survey. In several cases the organisers have threatened the women if they testify in court. In one case when the organiser could not get in touch with the woman, he threatened her family. She still testified. Also in the large-scale cases the organisers have threatened the women.

In one case, the traffickers tried to influence each other by sending letters to each other when in detention. In another case as well, the main organiser sent letters to the women while being in detention. The purpose was to instruct the women what to say in court.

There are few examples of how the organisers take precautionary measures to protect women from clients. In these few cases, the organisers care about the women and the phone calls to the women when receiving clients may also be seen as a precaution taken to protect them. In one case, the main organiser instructs her accomplice to further instruct the girl to call her if she needs help, because of the money, or if it hurts or if there was something she did not want to do.

### **Multi-criminality**

There seems to be signs of multi-criminality among organisations and networks involved in trafficking. First, the organisations are developing what are called “horizontal interdependencies” (Ardamoli et al. 1998 p. 17 cited in Aronowitz 2001:178). This is referring to the diversification indicated by established connections among different activities. The criminal organisations use the existing skills, routes, contacts and corrupt networks to expand into other markets. Europol has found evidence that the majority of the organised crime groups involved in trafficking in human beings and illegal immigration are using money laundering as a “complementary crime.” They have observed this connection in particular with regard to eastern European countries like Bulgaria, Ukraine and Russia, and the Chinese community (Europol 2005b). According to the Swedish Police’s report on trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, criminals involved in trafficking have in several cases been involved in other criminal activities, such as drugs, rape, weapons and theft (Rikskriminalpolisen 2006).

Another perspective of the multi-criminality in which trafficking organisations are involved is that they also involve their victims in other kinds of crimes, such as trafficking of drugs, people used to pick pockets, and other kinds of trafficking (Nicolic-Ristanovic 2004, Aronowitz 2001).

In nearly all cases in the Swedish survey there is evidence of the organisers’ involvement in other types of crime, mainly petty crimes

like possession of narcotics for personal use. First, their criminality with regard to other types of criminal activities, so-called “sidetrack criminality,” which covers related crimes such as rape, threats and violence, weapons, and the use of narcotics, either to manage running the business or sold in the business. The second type of criminality is professional criminality, where evidence was found in the Swedish survey of involvement in robberies and aggravated drugs crimes.

There is evidence of multi-criminality in only in five of the thirty analysed cases. In two, there were major drug cases involved. In one, weapons and balaclavas were found in an apartment used by the organisation and there were also reports of organisers being involved in trafficking cocaine.

The other examples involve petty crimes, such as shoplifting of clothes and perfume, also in more organised forms. In one case, there were connections to an organised shoplifting business in which girls and boys were recruited to come to Sweden for the purpose of shoplifting and then the stolen goods were sent home. There was little information about how this had been organised or if and how it was connected to the sex business, except that they found stolen clothes in one of the apartments used by the network. There was also evidence found in phone calls that women could be recruited either to the shoplifting business or the sex business.

In the large-scale case, the organisers were also involved in shoplifting expensive perfumes. The activity seemed spontaneous rather than organised.

There are two cases of restaurants or cafés involved offering a variety of multi-criminal services to presumptive buyers. One case involved a restaurant that was used as a trade centre for all kinds of smuggled goods, women, drugs, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes and guns.

The Finnish survey contains little data about multi-criminality, although there is some evidence of smuggling of alcohol and drugs. According to the criminal procurer, some organisations also dealt in drugs, but that was separate from the procuring business. In general, organised crime groups concentrate on drugs smuggling rather than human trafficking, according to informants from the police and border guards. According to Leskinen, prostitution and drugs have been brought to Finland by Estonian and Russian crime bosses. Hired procurers also traffic and sell drugs. Some procurers have refused to get involved in the drugs business (Leskinen 2003:12).

### **The involvement of legal enterprises**

The involvement of legal elements in organised crime has been confirmed by criminologists and others (von Lampe 2007, Schloenhardt 2003, Morselli and Giguere 2006). The legal involvement can take

place in two ways, either by using legal enterprises in the illegal activities or by using the legal infrastructure.

There was little evidence in the Swedish survey of legal involvement in illegal businesses. In the only large-scale organisation in the survey, there was a construction company that could be regarded as a parallel legal business, even though they were working illegally. It never became clear if the organisation was used as a front for the sex business. The organisers were engaged as sub-contractors to a Swedish company. In this organisation, the organisers also had another legal business, an “events company” in Thailand.

In another case, the sex business was established based on existing taxi companies. According to the court verdict, it could not be confirmed whether it has been used as a front, since the taxi companies were already established. For that reason, the court could not find proof that the original purpose of establishing a company was to conceal the sex business.

There was some evidence of possible corruption in the Finnish survey. Criminals had tried to bargain with the authorities and offer them “compensation” for their cooperation. In one case, the main organiser told the border guards that they would get free sex if they came to the brothel. In another case, a procurer and prostitute offered police free sex. The criminal procurer informant had heard of about a police officer who had worn his uniform when visiting a prostitute, although he was not on duty.

The Estonian survey contains some information about the involvement of politicians in the sex business, including one who owned a house in which a brothel was operating.

## Organisation summary

The organisations and networks found in the survey in the three countries vary in size, level of organisation, and how they establish, operate and expand their operations. There are some conclusions to be drawn.

The majority of the cases in the Swedish survey are small or medium-scale operations and mainly very spontaneously organised. Both the women involved and the organisers are few. In most cases, only one person is involved as the main character; he or she recruits the women and takes them to Sweden. Women are personally recruited from among the organiser’s acquaintances and the woman or her family often knows the procurer. Only one large organisation was found to be involved in the Swedish survey, for which the main organisers have changed several times. In this case, it is believed there is an organisation running the criminal operation from the source country, but this has not been confirmed. Some informants do not consider it organised due to several factors, including the change of main organiser.

The Finnish survey showed similar organisations involved in the procuring business. There are reports of affiliation with Russian and Estonian criminal networks that are operating with Finnish procurers. Some informants in the Finnish survey also believe these organisations are involved in most procuring operations in Finland. Swedish operations are not limited to Estonian and Russian women and procurers; in small-scale cases the procurers and women also come from eastern Europe and the Balkans. The results of the Finnish survey show that the criminal networks involved in procuring are not particularly large.

In the networks, the organisers work either alone or in partnerships, usually of two people, in some cases up to four. Horizontal diversification varies among the cases. Large-scale operations are more diversified and several people are used for different tasks, both as facilitators inside the organisation and employed from the outside for certain assignments, such as arranging housing. Diversification is less apparent in small-scale organisations, where the main organisers manage most tasks or are assisted by friends, family and acquaintances. In small-scale cases family members are often involved in the operation. But there are many examples found in the data of how both small and large-scale organisations spontaneously contact and use people for different tasks, whose skills may range from languages to Internet expertise to expertise in the procuring business. The people contacted are already known to the organisers in one way or another. Thus, the organisers may involve many people in order to succeed with the business, but few are paid. The organisers are often from the lowest social stratum and have no conventional employment. In most cases they are of the same background as the women they recruit, which applies in many of the cases where both perpetrators and victims are from ethnic minorities.

The important facilitating actors include taxi drivers. There are reports that taxi drivers are involved in the business in all three countries. They are often paid for their services; there are reports of drivers being paid to take people to brothels and sex clubs. Taxi drivers also play other roles. In some cases, they are also organisers, clients themselves, or facilitators who help the organisers in various ways.

The study shows that the purpose of establishing and operating these organisations is dependent on their size and level. The major organisations (medium to large-scale) come to the destination country with the sole purpose of establishing a sex business. Small to medium-scale operations are often organised by people already residing in the country, in many cases Swedish citizens. In these cases, the organisers' networks are often made up of family/friends/acquaintances and are very spontaneously formed. The final category operates only from the source country, and may either be more highly organised with a genu-

ine and defined purpose and the goal of sending women on city tours or to organisers who purposelessly tour the country with women.

Expansion and competition were mainly found in the major organisations, which need people to be able to expand, especially facilitators given tasks like finding and sub-leasing flats, booking tickets, etc. Any real competition strategies are also found in these organisations.

The organisers are sometimes very creative about adapting to the outside world. The main example is presumably how the largest organisation developed strategies, especially to disrupt police operations to monitor the phases in the sex trade. In this way, the large-scale organisations are more aware of what the police are doing than are other organisations and networks. They may have learned more and been operating for a longer time. Many of the small-scale organisations found in the Swedish survey have not been operating as long.

The larger the organisation, the more sophisticated and the greater their involvement in more advanced multi-criminal activities, especially with regard to major drug cases. But there are other criminal activities involved in nearly all cases, whether related crimes or petty crimes like shoplifting. There are only a few major criminal activities involved.

There is little information about the involvement of the legal sphere in procuring in the three countries. There were only two cases found in Sweden, in the single large-scale organisation, and no information found on organisations being used as fronts for the sex trade. Records of corruption were found only in the Estonian survey.

# Discussion and recommendations

A great deal of attention has been paid to organised crime in recent years, resulting in joint initiatives and transnational measures to combat this type of criminal activity, which also applies to the crime of trafficking in human beings. Trafficking in human being is a crime that often has been connected to organised crime. Transnational activities have been initiated mainly to support the victims of trafficking. Several efforts to harmonise policies and legislation have been initiated, most recently the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS no. 197). International efforts initiated aimed at harmonising policies have also been initiated with regard to organised crime.

The aim of the study presented in this report was to survey the organisational and structural aspects of the crime of trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation in Sweden, Finland and Estonia, aimed at formulating new crime prevention strategies inside those three countries and on the transnational level. The selection of these three countries was proven successful in the study due to the different roles they play in the trafficking chain: Estonia as a source country where traffickers and procurers recruit; Finland as both a destination country and in some cases a transit country chosen by traffickers for the strategic purpose of transporting women and others to a third country; and Sweden, mainly as a final destination where the sexual exploitation of women takes place.

The study in the three countries shows that the organisations and networks participating in the trafficking chain vary in many respects. They differ in size, scale of operations, nationalities involved and organisationally with respect to how they establish and operate sex businesses in the three countries. Although much attention has been paid to the organised crime aspects of trafficking in human beings (see e.g. *Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län 2007*, *Leskinen 2003*), the main results of this survey show that the majority of trafficking and procuring businesses, at least in Sweden and Finland, are mainly small-scale operations. This has been confirmed by the Swedish Police (*Rikskriminalpolisen 2007*). During the years studied in the survey, very few large-scale organisations were involved, at least according to the evidence found by analysing cases detected by the police. Some organisations may never be detected.

## Problems encountered in the survey

This report reveals several difficulties in surveying the organisation of trafficking networks. The primary aim of this report was to describe how these criminal networks work and the secondary aim was to

describe the various national contexts in the participating countries with regard to trafficking and related issues, such as procuring and prostitution. The objective was not to compare the countries, which would have been a nearly impossible task, mainly due to the different state approaches to related issues as prostitution, purchase of sexual services and procuring (Hughes 2002). This became evident in the survey when we examined national conditions, such as how trafficking is perceived.

Defining who is a victim of trafficking, and the significance of consent in determining who is and who is not a victim of trafficking, was another main topic of discussion. The different state approaches are mainly apparent in the differences between source and destination countries, at least with respect to the three countries that participated in the study. This was shown in the study, since there are legislative differences between the three countries and variations in estimates related to trafficking. The results of the Estonian survey, which is, as mentioned, more of a source country for trafficking women, differ to a great extent from the results of the Finnish and Swedish surveys. The latter are both destination countries with relatively similar approaches to trafficking, procuring and prostitution.

It also became evident that there are great differences in the data available in the three countries. In Sweden, pre-trial investigations were very useful in data collection, in most cases more so than interviews, because in most cases, pre-trial investigations contain extensive data. Interviews were also significant in a later phase to clarify information gleaned from the pre-trial investigations. This kind of extensive data was difficult to access in the Finnish and Estonian surveys. For that reason, court judgments, interviews and, to some extent, media reports were important data collection methods in Finland and Estonia.

Differences of approach and attitude in the three participating countries also entailed discussion of how trafficking and procuring should be defined. The solutions to the quandaries were pragmatic and thus, the data should be regarded from a qualitative perspective, rather than quantitative. This was why the study analysed both trafficking and procuring cases, since they are characterised by similar features in both Sweden and Finland.

## Simultaneous action on multiple levels

Combating this type of crime requires simultaneous action on multiple levels. Actions must take place on local, regional, national and international levels at the same time.

On the general level, international and comprehensive actions must be initiated. On the local and national levels, actions against trafficking must target certain, specific links in the trafficking chain, such as the recruiting of women in source countries, with actions to disrupt



the transport of women. In destination countries, actions must be initiated to disrupt sexual exploitation by criminal organisations and networks, as well as demand by preventing prostitution clients from pursuing the purchase of sexual services.

## Recruitment

Women are recruited mainly in areas that are generally economically weak and mainly from among ethnic minorities. This is nothing new. Social problems often also figure in the backgrounds of women at risk for recruitment to the sex industry. The survey shows that poverty and unemployment are also factors in many cases. Many of the women are single mothers in the source countries who are forced to leave their children in order to support them. It appears that in many countries where women are recruited, the situation of women should be improved on a general level. It is difficult for women to find jobs, and what jobs there are do not pay enough to support them. Women need other options for survival and other means of supporting themselves to prevent them from being recruited to the sex business.

The results, in the Swedish survey in particular, show that many of the girls recruited are very young, in some cases under 18. Several of the stories related in the survey describe social problems like alcoholism, divorce, school dropout and lack of parental supervision at home. The study also shows that the recruiters in many cases are women, friends and co-workers, rather than men. Another conclusion drawn from the results of the data collection is that recruitment is carried out mainly in the open. The majority of women report that they were aware of what kind of business they were being recruited for and that deception referred more to conditions and terms. This is especially evident in the debt bondage systems that many women are locked into and find hard to escape. Another result is that re-recruitments are common. Women who have been recruited in the past and return to the home country are at higher risk of being recruited again, even though they may be aware of the risks. However, there is a lack of knowledge regarding repatriated trafficking victims, which was confirmed by the study. In Sweden, the social services are involved in trafficking cases until a court verdict is handed down. Their work is mainly to provide support and resolve practical issues related to trafficking victims. Once the case is closed, the women usually want to return home, and in most cases the social services lose contact with the women and are not able to follow up their situations. In some cases, they have heard about women being re-recruited into procuring and prostitution.

### **Recommendations pertaining to recruitment**

- More research about recruitment, re-recruitment and what happens to women after they are repatriated is needed in order to determine the extent to which they are re-recruited and why, and to develop strategies for preventing re-recruitment.
- Improved cooperation is needed among victim advocacy actors, such as social services, NGOs and women shelters working with victims in destination and source countries, so that victims can be followed up after return and prevent their re-recruitment.
- Campaigns to raise awareness should be arranged to enlighten and inform the public and at-risk groups about how recruitment to the sex industry is done. As well, women who are knowingly recruited should be informed about what the situation in destination countries may be like with regard to aspects such as deception and debt bondage systems.
- Information should be spread in places where potential trafficking victims congregate, such as outside brothels where they already may be working as prostitutes in the source countries. This should also be done in relation to the most at-risk girls, for instance by making professionals at youth welfare organisations aware of the risks and improving their ability to follow up young people involved in their activities, since they are most likely at higher risk of being recruited to this kind of activity.

### **Transport**

Weakening border controls are frequently mentioned in the public discussion of organised crime. This aspect also appeared in the survey findings in Sweden, Finland and Estonia with regard to the transport phase. One factor that appears is the changes following accession to the European Union or the Schengen Agreement. The latter in particular entails drastic changes in border control procedures.

During the course of this survey, the three Baltic countries of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia joined the Schengen Agreement. The Baltic countries, especially Estonia, are among the more common source countries found in the Swedish and Finnish surveys. Even before joining Schengen, the survey shows that border control officials had difficulty picking up the signals and following up when they did. Several informants in the Swedish survey claimed that although there were some signals of women being trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, everything else, such as their documents and their stories, were in order. Participation in the Schengen Agreement makes border controls and follow-up even more difficult to pursue, since mandatory individual border controls are eliminated. This aspect is also brought

up in the survey as an obstacle to combating this kind of criminal activity.

False documents seem not to be a major factor. The survey shows that the majority of women going to Sweden, Finland and, to some extent, Estonia to work in the sex industry, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, are from nearby countries and travel on their own documents. In cases where it is more difficult to transport women from the source country to the destination country, due to visa requirements for instance, the survey provides a variety of examples of how organised crime networks adapt to national conditions. They use smugglers and false documents and figure out where and when to cross the border and how to elude detection by border guards and police. Their behaviour reveals a wealth of creative solutions, which may sometimes be regarded as more trial-and-error, although the survey also shows that the criminals find transport and related logistics to be one of the main obstacles. One clear example of this kind of adaptation is found in cases where the organisers and women being transported were refused entry at one border, so they attempted to cross at another border. Another is that they apply for Finnish visas and transit Finland to reach Sweden, the ultimate destination. It is well known among many that it is easier for Russian citizens to get Finnish visas than to get Swedish visas. The results also show that travel agents may be involved in transports to some degree but it is not clear whether they are aware of the criminal activities involved.

### **Recommendations pertaining to transport**

- Work at the borders must be improved. For instance, border control personnel should be trained to be more receptive to signals of trafficking. This is even more important where there is no border control. Police and border guards should initiate strategies for preventing presumptive victims from entering the country, and when they do enter, improve follow-up of suspected cases. One way might be to improve and structure interagency cooperation, e.g., between border guards and police, to avoid missing important details in the follow-up of suspected cases.
- Cooperation between police, border guard personnel and ferry lines, airlines and other transport companies should also be initiated and improved, as it may be apparent during the transport that trafficking victims are involved. Informational materials can be developed and spread on these modes of transport. The material should include information for victims of trafficking about how and where they can go for help in destination countries. Brochures should also include brief information in the languages of potential victims about laws and related matters.

- Improved cooperation could also be initiated between police and travel agents, initially for the purpose of providing information. Travel agents may be unaware that they could be unwittingly involved in criminal activities.

## Procuring

As mentioned, approaches vary in the three countries involved in the survey, Estonia, Finland and Sweden, as do their actions and initiatives. The situations with regard to trafficking, procuring and prostitution also differ.

### **Policies and legislation**

On a general level combating trafficking has to do with policies and definitions. The first step is to continue efforts towards harmonisation, compliance with international conventions like the Palermo Protocol and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Estonia has no comprehensive statutes against trafficking in the penal code. Estonia has neither signed nor ratified the Council of Europe convention. Sweden and Finland have signed the convention but had not yet ratified while this report was in progress. Sweden and Finland have comprehensive anti-trafficking laws, meaning the two countries are to some extent complying with international agreements. The survey shows that there have been few trafficking cases in either country and few that have led to convictions for trafficking. The outcome of most cases is a conviction for aggravated procuring. The Swedish law against trafficking has been difficult to apply because coercion, control, deception and use of improper means by the trafficker are difficult to prove in court. The majority of cases in which offenders have been convicted involved girls under 18, which does not require the use of improper means. The results of the Swedish survey also show that this is something trafficking organisations have learnt and that they have adapted their activities accordingly. Nowadays, they avoid recruiting girls under 18 years of age.

The Finnish survey found only one trafficking case, in which the victim was a mentally disabled woman. The circumstances were extraordinary in this case, as they often are in the Swedish cases involving underage girls.

The legal judgments thus reflect a certain lack of understanding of the means used by traffickers to exert control over the women. The results also show that traffickers have adapted and learned from experience. They avoid violence and direct force, and instead use more subtle methods like debt bondage systems or restriction of freedom through constant monitoring by phone, since the women must be constantly available to their traffickers. Another difficulty that arises when approaching victims of trafficking and procuring may be the various survival and defence mechanisms the women use to protect

themselves. This may imply that many victims find it extremely difficult to talk about their experiences, especially if they have consented to some participation.

Ultimately, this may have to do with the voluntary and involuntary aspects of victim participation, both in the recruitment phase and in the destination country. Although the results show that the majority were aware of what kind of business they were recruited to, they also show that the women are often deceived in many ways. For instance, they may have consented to recruitment, but not to the sexual exploitation. Another reflection is that the results show that many of the girls were under 18 when they initially consented. Although the girl may be over 18 by the time a case gets to court, does that make it reasonable to assume that the girls also consented to the sexual exploitation? It is also true that although some women consent to working in the sex industry, they are also treated as commodities to a great extent, in cases for example where women are purchased from brothels and taken to the destination countries. These aspects complicate the understanding of what is voluntary versus involuntary. The stories told by the women, and perhaps in some cases those that remain untold, are not as black and white as they may seem at first glance. The only finding that applies to all women involved in this business is that of exploitation.

### **Police efforts**

Clearly, trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation is not an easy crime to combat, compared for instance to drug crimes, even though there is much information about the huge profits to be made in this business (see e.g. Williams 2001). The results of the survey do not confirm this, but in some cases the criminals may have earned a great deal of money in trafficking and procuring, since the results show considerable variation in how much organisations make and what they do with the profits. The police need substantial financial and human resources to monitor all activities in order to acquire information about how these organisations work and how much they earn. These resources are also required to gather sufficient evidence to get convictions, especially because the victims of traffickers and procurers may be reluctant for several reasons to talk about aspects that would lead to convictions. The police also have to set the right priorities.

In Sweden, police efforts against trafficking and procuring vary from region to region. In two of the major cities, Stockholm and Gothenburg, there are regional units dedicated to trafficking and related crimes, such as procuring and prostitution. The unit is permanent only in Gothenburg. Dedicated trafficking and prostitution units are good initiatives, but the work of these two police departments is mainly regional, and there are few police authorities tackling the issue

elsewhere in the country. This implies that there is little action being taken in other regions against trafficking and procuring operations, which do take place elsewhere even though they may be concentrated to metropolitan areas. The Swedish survey clearly shows the effectiveness of the dedicated, regional police units aimed at trafficking and procuring, since the majority of cases found in the Swedish survey are from these two regions. However, trafficking and procuring networks are often fluid and mobile and may not be operating in only one police district. Accordingly, the resources and means dedicated to combating trafficking and related crimes should be distributed more evenly and reach other districts.

Cooperation among police districts and the knowledge and expertise that have been accumulated by the dedicated trafficking units could also be spread to police districts that do not have the resources and expertise to pick up the signals and monitor illegal operations in order to gather sufficient evidence for a conviction. It is also clear that some large-scale organisations adapt and develop methods to elude police surveillance and other measures used to hinder the trafficking business. This kind of knowledge is also very relevant and useful to police working in regions where trafficking is not prioritised.

However, one of the important findings of the study is that cooperation does exist between police and other professional groups involved in trafficking cases, such as Customs, border guards and social services. This kind of interagency cooperation has proven successful in both Sweden and Finland. In the metropolitan areas of Sweden, dedicated police units are cooperating with social services, which are involved in the cases from the outset by taking care of the women after arrests have been made. Thereafter, the social services are involved in victim advocacy until the case is closed and a verdict has been handed down. In Finland the police have successfully cooperated with Customs and the border guard.

This study has shown that attitudes are important in the fight against trafficking and procuring. Demand is a key factor in the existence of trafficking operations, and those who purchase sexual services constitute the demand. The purchase of sexual services is illegal in Sweden and to some extent in Finland, but not in Estonia. There are pros and cons to this kind of legislation, which are not discussed in this report because the situations in the three countries vary widely.

### **Sex tourism**

The study shows that sex tourism in the Baltic Sea region has been neglected. Sex tourism may be regarded as an issue of a reverse nature to trafficking. Sex tourists, mainly men, travel to nearby countries to buy sexual services from women, either native or foreign. The results of this survey show that men from Sweden and Finland go to Estonia and Russia. There is some evidence in the Swedish survey that Swed-

ish men in particular are interested in sex tourism because purchasing sexual services is illegal in Sweden. This applies especially to travels to Denmark for the purpose. Policymakers and other professional groups involved have not focused as much on this aspect of the sex industry in the Baltic Sea region, and little research has been done. Accordingly, this is an area in which we lack knowledge and greater understanding is required in order to combat and prevent women from both recruitment and sex tourism in these countries. This applies not only to sex tourism within limited geographical regions, but also that which takes place in more distant countries like Thailand and the Philippines, although in recent years there has been more attention paid to the latter than to sex tourism taking place between the Nordic and the Baltic countries.

### **Recommendations pertaining to procuring**

- Further and continued work aimed at harmonisation of policies and legislation through signature and ratification of major international conventions is needed in all three participating countries.
- More knowledge is needed about victims and key aspects of human trafficking, especially aspects of control and how those aspects have developed in recent years. Greater understanding of the victims as well as the means traffickers use to maintain control of the victims would be useful to various professional actors, especially within the justice system. One recommendation is therefore to initiate further research. For instance, qualitative studies focused on the experiences of trafficking victims in various situations in which control was exerted by traffickers could lead to better understanding of the more subtle means of control, which might ultimately lead to improved application of the law. Such a qualitative study would contain in-depth interviews with victims of trafficking.
- With regard to Sweden, one recommendation is to find ways to improve the geographical distribution of the resources dedicated to combating trafficking and allocate resources to make police trafficking and procuring units permanent and to allocate resources to the social services involved. This is important in order to continue the effort, follow up and retain the continuity and expertise gathered thus far.
- Interagency cooperation and inter-regional knowledge transfer should be improved and/or maintained.
- With regard to sex tourism, new strategies must be initiated to make policymakers aware of this aspect of the sex industry. First, since there is a lack of knowledge with respect to sex tourism in the Baltic region in particular, more research is needed. This could

be accomplished in a joint project by the countries in the region, similar to this project.

- Efforts to shape attitudes and opinions about this issue should be maintained and improved. This could be achieved through information campaigns that raise the issues of trafficking and procuring of women, as well as the neglected area of sex tourism, in the three countries. Action must be taken towards changing people's attitudes about going to other countries to do things that are not socially acceptable at home.

## Organisations

The organisations operate on different levels and vary widely from case to case. The results of the surveys in Sweden and Finland were similar and showed that the majority of the criminal activities involved in trafficking and procuring were rather small-scale and spontaneously organised. Very few highly organised networks appeared to be involved in trafficking. As the results of the survey were dependent on data previously selected, by the police in particular, the data in the survey may not fully describe the situation. The data in the survey also depend on where and how the police focus their surveillance and their priorities. This may imply that there are trafficking networks and organisations undetected and operating without being monitored.

In the literature on organised crime, the relationships and connections between the illegal and the legal spheres are emphasised as significant to the criminal activities (Morselli and Giguere 2006). There were few reports in the surveys of legal enterprises used in illegal activities, but there were some reports of facilitating groups. The role of facilitators in the sex industry may not be as great as believed at the outset of the study. However, some facilitating actors do recur in many of the analysed cases, which applies especially to taxi drivers and, to a certain extent, the involvement of sex buyers. Learning more about these facilitating groups was problematic, mainly because it was difficult to find informants from these groups.

### **Recommendations pertaining to organisation**

- Surveillance of highly organised crime groups and small-scale organisations involved in human trafficking should be prioritised and resources allocated for the purpose. Various actions must be initiated so that different kinds of networks can be combated.
- The police and other important professional groups should develop strategies to become aware of their own selection mechanisms in order to determine whether there may be groups of trafficking networks operating undetected.



- More research is needed on the legal and illegal actors involved in order to learn more about how they cooperate. A study could be initiated with the specific purpose of studying and clarifying the involvement of specific facilitating groups. Taxi drivers are one group that could be of interest for further study.

## Concluding remarks

In recent years, the issues of trafficking and the victims of trafficking have garnered attention in many ways. One example is the work already achieved with respect to harmonising national laws and policies through international conventions such as the Palermo Protocol and, most recently, the work of the Council of Europe. Other ongoing monitoring activities are also in progress, such as the work of international agencies like the UN, the IOM and various NGOs, as well as the US State Department, which issues annual reports on trafficking in persons around the world. There are many activities in progress on the national level as well. For instance, in the three countries that participated in this study, there are efforts in progress to draft national action plans against trafficking and related issues. There are also ongoing public debates on trafficking, procuring and prostitution.

It must be emphasised that when interviewing and meeting police, border control personnel, social services, NGOs, prosecutors and others involved in trafficking cases and related issues, we were consistently impressed by the enormous effort and dedication these professionals devote to their work. Without them, we would not have reached as far as we have today.

Still, there is a great deal of work to be done in order to completely stop the trafficking networks from recruiting women and girls to the sex industry and new accomplices to their organisations and networks, and ultimately in the destination countries to stop men from buying sexual services from victims of trafficking. This work must be done on multiple levels and from various perspectives simultaneously – which is no easy task.

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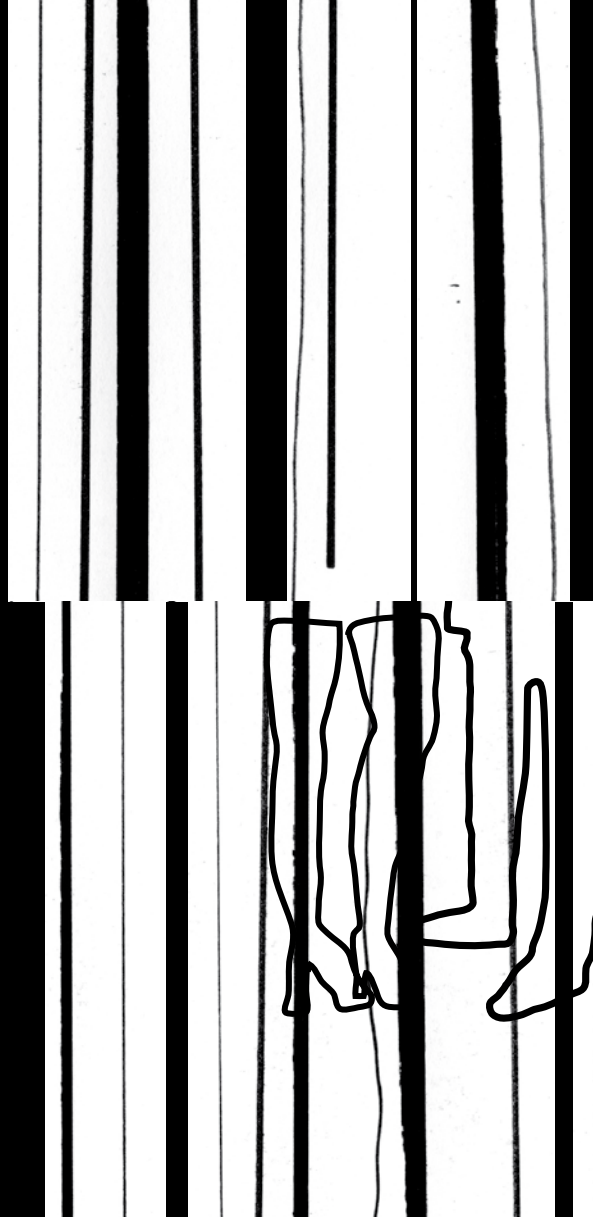
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Each year, hundreds of thousands of people are recruited and transported for the purpose of exploitation. The majority are women and girls, and the main purpose is sexual exploitation. This is something many of us already know. But who are the people behind this kind of criminal activity and how is it organised? This and other questions regarding the organisation of trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation are answered in this report.

This is the final report from a joint research project about the organisation and structure of criminal networks involved in trafficking for sexual exploitation in Sweden, Finland and Estonia. The project was carried out in 2007–2008 by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet, Brå) together with the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI), Finland, and the Institute of Law at Tartu University in Estonia.



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