Trafficking in Human Beings as an Enterprise: Highlighting Key Questions About Data Shortage on the Business Side

by

Julia Muraszkiewicz

PhD Researcher at Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Dr. Hayley Watson

Senior Research Analyst at Trilateral Research & Consulting

Kush Wadhwa

Senior Partner at Trilateral Research & Consulting

Dr. Paul De Hert

Professor at Vrije Universiteit Brussel and Head of the Department Interdisciplinary Legal Studies

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by Julia Muraszkiewicz[1], Hayley Watson[2], Kush Wadhwa[3] and Paul De Hert[45]

Acknowledgement

Abstract

Researchers and policymakers face a shortage of data on the business side of human trafficking. This inevitably leads to problems when trying to combat this crime. Questions such as: who is involved in trafficking, how do they operate, what is their relationship with organised crime groups (or other traffickers and third parties) remain unanswered. The purpose of this article is to harvest the knowledge on what we know about trafficking as a criminal enterprise and, in turn, encourage further research. The article also aims to show that the challenges encountered by researchers.

1. Introduction

Difficulties with obtaining reliable and accurate data on the prevalence of trafficking in human beings (THB) in Europe results in a lack of understanding about the true extent of the crime, which can lead to an inaccurate knowledge on the nature of the problem, and accordingly, how best to respond to it. Consequently, the European Commission (EC) is pursuing a research agenda that

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[1] PhD student at Vrije Universiteit Brussels and is a member of the research group fundamental rights & constitutionalism.

[2] Associate partner, Trilateral Research & Consulting.

[3] Senior partner, Trilateral Research & Consulting.

[4] Free University of Brussels, Belgium (VUB-LSTS) & Tilburg University (Tilt) Netherlands.

[5] We would like to acknowledge Conny Rijken for her writing assistance, participating in discussions and providing support.

seeks to further recognise the various dimensions relating to the extent and nature of THB, including a greater understanding of those responsible.

This article draws attention to the need to widen our understanding of the business element of human trafficking. Analysing this crime from the perspective of a business enterprise is valuable as it can help stakeholders determine better preventive solutions. It is hypothesised in this article, that using a model to understand human trafficking from a business perspective can allow us to complement traditional criminological models. In brief, the hypothesis assumes that those engaging in human trafficking exhibit rationality, will power and self-interest and thus operate with the realms of the rational choice theory. In addition they commit the crimes under the principles of an economic theory, where the perceived benefits offset the perceived risks such as prosecutions. Lastly, it is assumed that by ascertaining the market the perpetrators determine the methods within which their business will operate. Of course the article acknowledges that some human trafficking is committed with the realm of "crime of opportunity" where the actor commits the crime without planning but simply acts on an instinct aroused by opportunity. This assumption complicates any study and development of a model of trafficking as a criminal enterprise, for the players are not as predictable. Nevertheless the dominant framework, within which the authors think about this issue, is that human trafficking is to a far extent an organised enterprise and thus it is possible to deduce patterns and trends.

As such, the authors argue that in order to enhance policies aimed at disrupting and preventing THB, it is necessary for researchers to explore key questions, which this article aims to consider: first, what is the business structure of the trafficking organisation, and who are they? Second, how do the traffickers operate? The value of these questions is emphasised by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) who argue that: 'To fully understand the mechanisms of human trafficking, it is necessary to focus not only on the environment or situations which make potential victims more vulnerable to trafficking, but also on those factors that facilitate the traffickers and those who participate or aid in the crime of trafficking' (Aronowitz, Theuermann and Tyurykanova 2010, 15).

This article will focus on THB in relation to the different types of exploitation: labour, sexual, forced begging, organ removal and for the purpose of crime. It will begin by defining what we mean by the terms the 'business side' of human trafficking and the 'trafficker' and asking what is the value in studying human trafficking as a business enterprise (subsection two). The article will then (in subsection three) go on to explore the different business models that are known to exist in THB. This analysis will also include a review of literature on the typologies of the traffickers. Subsection four will provide a scrutiny of the business

operations - the methodologies used to run the business. By focusing on these elements, we will highlight further areas of research, including the need for statistical data and detailed typologies of traffickers. Before concluding the authors will pay attention to challenges in research.

This article is primarily based on a review of existing literature. It does not aim to be a theoretical paper but instead highlight some key questions that are urgently in need of answering in order to enhance our capacities to respond to this growing crime. The authors acknowledge that a complete and close scrutiny of these issues is beyond the scope of this paper and the analysis is therefore limited to a selection of examples. However, by doing so, the authors believe that this article provides a foundation for further research and discussion. One such instance of further research, and indeed the genesis of this article, is the recently funded project by the European Commission; "*Trafficking as a Criminal Enterprise*" (TRACE).[6] By considering trafficking as a "criminal enterprise" TRACE aims, in part, to consider how THB operates as a form of organised crime

2. The business of human trafficking and traffickers: definitions

At the outset, it is necessary to clarify what we mean by the "business side of human trafficking". A business is regarded as an occupation and a trade, which supplies goods to the market in order to generate profit. Those participating in the business of THB make rational choices to make profits, through calculating opportunities, risks, costs and then engaging in the selling and/or exploitation of humans (EUROPOL 2007, 2). The business may be local or global and may involve one or more of the following activities: recruitment, transportation, harbouring, obtaining, and exploiting persons, often using force, threats, lies, or other physical and psychological methods of control over a person.

Trafficking of human beings is defined as:

> "The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat, or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose

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[6] TRACE (Grant agreement no: 607669) has started 1st May 2014. It is made up of an inter-disciplinary consortium made up of national commissions working towards combatting THB, law enforcements, SME's, academic institutions and civil society organisations. TRACE aims to support stakeholders in combatting and disrupting human trafficking, one of the largest criminal enterprises in the world, by assessing and consolidating information surrounding the perpetrators and the wider trafficking enterprise. All authors participate in TRACE.

of exploitation" (The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children).

It thus follows that a trafficker or a trafficking group is a party responsible for one or more of the actions (as described in the Protocol) for the purpose of exploitation. However, in reality the question of "who do we consider to be traffickers?" has a broader and more theoretical spectrum and poses some difficulty. For instance, any understanding of the trafficking business model must acknowledge that those involved in the crime will often have to rely on others and thus be part of some sort of network. They will be abetted and aided because the barriers to entry for traffickers have created a need for a vast amount of facilitators who will help with various aspects, such as transportation or illegal entry along the journey (Shelley 2014, 1).

What is the value in studying human trafficking as a business enterprise? Human trafficking is composed of a multiple of factors that combined allow the industry to function and flourish. The crime will not occur without elements that are found within the business side of the process; these include for example but are not limited to successful recruitment techniques, ability and ease of transfer and aptitude of controlling trafficked persons. In order to eliminate the ease of running such business it is necessary to acquire the knowledge of these fundamentals and more broadly how human trafficking operates as a criminal enterprise and where and when it can be disrupted. As argued by authors like Schelling analysing the business side of the criminal world can help in identifying the incentives and disincentives to organise crime and other factors that can ease disruption (Schelling, 2001, p.62). Iselin (2004) also notes the value of understanding human trafficking as a commodity chain of human trafficking.

In this article we thus consider the visualisation of the processes involved in human trafficking coupled with a conception of the actual human behaviours involved – it is assumed that traffickers like other criminals act rationally in order to maximise their profits. Such an analysis is a valid and valuable approach in achieving the aim of disrupting human trafficking and also fits within the framework of behavioural economics.[7] However, scholars analysing behaviours and trends in crime have predominantly focused on more known forms of criminality such as homicide, theft or drug related crimes (for example of drug businesses as a criminal enterprise see Ruggiero and Khan, 2007). Less common is

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[7] The recognition of the relationship between criminal behavior and economics can be said to have begun with Gary Becker's article "Crime and Punishment: an Economic Approach" (Becker, 1968) and since literature has include a wide range of debates on the topic (see Sullivan, 1973. Findlay, 1999.). In brief, it can be ascertained that organised crime follows similar patterns that govern the legal market. As such it is rational that noting the amount of studies focused on understating various sectors of the legal market from a perspective of analyzing the business operation we also study the illegal ones such as human trafficking.

research on the subject of human trafficking – Of course there are exceptions such as the work undertaken by authors such Lutya and Lanier (2012) or Aronwitz.

3. Analysis of the business model and the players within

A. Structure of the trafficking businesses

There is no set business model that those involved in trafficking follow. A human trafficking business can be made up of: one or few individuals, a loose network of individuals or a highly structured and large organised network (Aronowitz, Theuermann and Tyurykanova 2010, 21). Within these three models there will also be variations. For instance, single individuals can compromise a small family group or just one person acting as a freelance criminal, whilst the highly structured network can be international or national.[8] Much will depend on barriers to entry, economics of scale required, competition or even a unit's own attitude.

Busch-Armendariz et al. tried to broaden our understanding of the business by aiming to find a pattern between the business model and the type of trafficking (Busch-Armendariz et al. 2009, 15). They analysed 46 cases and distinguished between: domestic servitude, forced labour, domestic sex trafficking and international trafficking. In brief, they found that:

(i)   Traffickers for domestic servitude were often a couple or a family.
(ii) Traffickers for forced labour varied from small family businesses to larger organised crime syndicates.
(iii) Traffickers for domestic sex were typically males with an emerging generation of young traffickers, including minors.
(iv) Traffickers for international sex trafficking were often part of a larger organised crime ring and were both male and female.

Studying the business model requires an understanding what roles do players play. A human trafficking business may specialize in one aspect of human trafficking such as transportation or on the other end of a spectrum a large criminal organisation may control all stages of THB and even engage in other crimes such as the trafficking of drugs. An example of this can be found primarily in Asia (Shelley 2010, 114-118). Whether the entire process of human trafficking engages one organised criminal organisation or is made possible by various separate individuals/groups, does not deter from the fact that the business will only operate

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[8] Of interest is Allum's and Sands' (2004) detailed explanation of the nature of organised crime groups in Europe

where there is coordination, either internally or with other units. However, conversely to Shelley's Asia model, we are noting de-centralised and smaller units involved in the business, which allows for specialisation and prompt re-organisation. Aronwitz argues that we are moving away from the traditional large organised groups controlling THB to smaller more flexible horizontal structures, these however can still take the form of organised crime syndicates. (Aronowitz, 2001. P. 176). For stakeholders this means that there is a need to disturb this coordination and co-operation between the various groups. To do this however we need to move away from generalisation and unverifiable data and create a knowledge base of the inter-relationships that exist within the chain of business.

B. The trafficker

There is also a need to develop an understanding of the personal characteristics of the individuals involved in trafficking, e.g., nationality, age, education and qualifications, language skills, work/life prior to becoming involved in trafficking, and previous criminal behaviour/convictions (Dowling et al. 2007, 6). Iselin (2004) highlights the need to develop knowledge of the traffickers, including their perception of the market, arguing that:

> 'In order to explore the minds of those running the businesses, it is helpful simply to turn to business management theory. While in all business models the consumer is sovereign, it is not individual demand that of itself causes the nature and volume of production. It is the seller's perceptions of consumer decisions that determine what services will be provided, in what quantities, and how resources will be allocated'

As it stands, existing literature suggests there is little in the way of a single profile of traffickers, it is therefore necessary for researchers to continue to take efforts to understand the wider demography of those involved in trafficking.

Some countries, such as Germany, deliver annual numbers on traffickers that are arrested; they provide statistics on nationality, age and sex (Bundeskriminalamt website). Similarly the Dutch National Rapporteur on THB provides details on traffickers who are charged, and this includes their age, sex and country of birth (National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings 2010). Such statistics are useful and contribute to our understanding of the business, however not all countries make such publications available. Consequently, police and court authorities should collect as much detail about traffickers and make them available through national rapporteurs on human trafficking or similar bodies. Moreover, as identified by Steve Harvey (2014) the collection of information should not be

restricted to law enforcement bodies, as other groups, such as medical professionals, may also encounter trafficked persons who can at times be accompanied by either traffickers or persons associated with trafficking.

When it comes to understanding the trafficker, those individuals involved in research need to supplement the study scope to include data on education, family, skills, wages, psychology etc. For instance, with regard to the trafficked persons there is some literature, albeit still limited, about their psychology (Hughes at al. 2002). There have been very few studies of this focus in relation to the trafficker, with the exception of a study conducted in the Netherlands (Hoogeboom 2009). This study concerned a limited sample of nine traffickers and focused on the characteristics of their personalities. The traffickers were described as 'bossy, dictatorial, egocentric, authoritarian personalities' who conquered, controlled and used people for their own purpose (Hoogeboom 2009, 21). The link between the psychological characteristics and the action is of extreme interest, as a greater understanding of the relationship between the two would be useful to establish a means by which actual traffickers operate which could contribute to preventing individuals from participating in trafficking. Moreover, the value of undertaking sociological or psychological analysis has been established by similar research with regard to other crimes. Janowska (1974) did this already 40 years ago in relation to homicide offenders.[9]

Lastly, when considering the profile of the trafficker, we can also consider their sex. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) found cases in the former Soviet Union where trafficked women became recruiters. A large proportion of these women previously worked in the sex industry and as such it is a business they knew best and was almost a natural route for them (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2006, 7). This is also the case for Nigerian madams who have been trafficked and afterwards become traffickers (Kleemans 2007, 184). Evidence suggests that women are more active in the crime of THB than in any other transnational crime (Siegel et al. 2010), however, they still account for less than half of the traffickers, and according to the UN, an analysis of the offenders in Europe revealed that women rarely compose more than one-third of identified suspects (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2009, 56). Rather, it would appear that many of the women involved are former victims themselves. Understanding why this is the case is a key area of further research. Needed is empirical research in the form of interviews, to understand the inter-relationship between victims of trafficking and their role in the wider trafficking chain.

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[9] Janowska concerned herself with the characteristics of the socio-demographic and socio-psychological features of offenders and the motives of their action.

Whilst our background knowledge of traffickers is expanding, such an effort must continue in a comparative fashion across Europe in order to continue to widen our understanding of those involved in trafficking. Some, such as Troshynski et al. (2008) have attempted to develop a wider understanding of the profile of the trafficker, yet it is evident that traffickers as offenders are less understood than other criminals. In contrast, research on the typology of sex offenders includes detailed and sophisticated works (e.g. Meloy 2000; McCabe and Wauchope 2005). In this context our understanding of who the trafficker is and how he/she operates remains incomplete and in need of on-going examination. There are a number of data sources that researcher could utilise to gather this information, and indeed this is applicable to the remaining areas of research analysed in this article. Firstly, even 'without investigating substantial new resources, more could be done to fully exploit existing information and make it more widely available' (Laczko, 2007. 43). Interviews with perpetrators, victims and those who have come into contact with the business of THB could provide for first hand knowledge, but of course this method is limited by bias and barriers to access (more in section five). In addition study of secondary sources can also provide an insight (again this will be discussed in the last section of this article). Further knowledge could be developed using surveillance and infiltration of the business; this however is not always an option for a regular researcher but instead is a matter for police or other specialised authority bodies.

4. The business operations: overview of methodologies and trends

In this next section of the article we aim to understand the human trafficking business management whilst also showing that there are variations within. The criminal groups, involved in one or more of the phases in THB, will rely on specific methodologies that they deem successful and most profitable, whilst being 'extremely sensitive to emerging or changing demand…' (Siegel 2010, 446). In addition as noted by Iselin (2004) most of the methods adopted will be made in light of factors such as price, time, perceived cost and perceived risk. The understanding of the data on the business operation will allow stakeholders to assess the dimensions of the business and where/how it can be disrupted, including how to develop possible "market disincentives" for the businesses.

A. Recruitment

Traffickers target people seeking to better their life and/or vulnerable individuals whereby their vulnerability can spur from lack of education, economic conditions, migration status, family situations, discrimination, circumstances such

as natural/political disasters and other conditions (Tran 2007). Despite the images portrayed in popular culture, seldom 'is violence perpetrated against the victim during the recruitment phase – except in the case of kidnapping, which rarely occurs.[10] Victims are generally recruited through deception and promises of a better life, an education, job skills training, a viable or good job' (Aronowitz, Theuermann and Tyurykanova 2010, 19). In some countries and cultures where marriage is the only way a woman can secure her life, false marriage offers are an effective recruitment method. Siddharth Kara, who met with many trafficked persons as part of his research, found that Albania was one such country (Kara, 2008). Recruitment within one's own group – national, ethnic or cultural – is also prevalent as it removes any language or cultural barriers and through proximity allows a relationship of trust to be developed. Outside of these factors it is difficult to provide a consistent pattern of recruitment, as it will differ for each region and trafficking type; in Eastern Europe for instance it is common to use technology and the media for recruitment. 'The widely used techniques in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union- advertisements and websites are utilized less frequently in the poorer countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In regions with poorly educated victims, recruitment most frequently occurs on a personal basis' (Shelley 2010, 96).

Furthering our understanding of the recruitment process within the trafficking of human beings is crucial to successfully preventing THB, however, many questions remain. Do traffickers "screen" potential individuals, how often do they change their methods, what impact will technological developments have on future recruitment? Will refugee camps, such as those resulting from the Syrian conflict, become breeding grounds for recruiters?

B. Transportation, harbouring and entry

The movement of trafficked people is so vast and through such a wide geographical area that it is difficult to fully understand the diffusion of trafficking. The act of transportation, like recruitment, varies amongst regions and depends on whether the entry into the country is licit. Where there is no legal entry and no visas, traffickers may turn to smugglers. Equally, traffickers can rely on legal loopholes to gain entry into a country. For instance, in Austria and the United Kingdom, research shows that traffickers used visas for dancers or dance training to bring girls into the country (Aronowitz, Theuermann and Tyurykanova 2010, 47). Another technique that is known to be used to gain entry is the abuse of the asylum system: 'trafficked minors enter a country, apply for asylum and, while

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[10] Kidnapping makes transportation challenging, as kidnapped individuals are unwilling to travel and seek to escape.

awaiting a decision, are taken by the traffickers' (Aronowitz, Theuermann and Tyurykanova 2010, 48). Other methods include: the use of forged documents or relying on the freedom of movement within the Schengen zone.

The routes used by criminals also vary, within Europe evidence from the Not for Sale NGO suggests that traffickers rely on a variety of routes that will include entry though Italy, Spain and Greece. Shelley (2014, 1) adds that 'the primary transit routes are across the Mediterranean, and through the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and Turkey. Many of these are the same routes that are used for traded goods.' It has been observed that these routes will change over time as traffickers adapt to changes in political, legal and geographical factors. For example, the accession of the Czech Republic and Poland into the European Union reduced transfer across these countries. On the other hand with the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union in 2007 we have not observed the shutting off of the Balkan route (Shelley 2014, 6). It is interesting to question why.
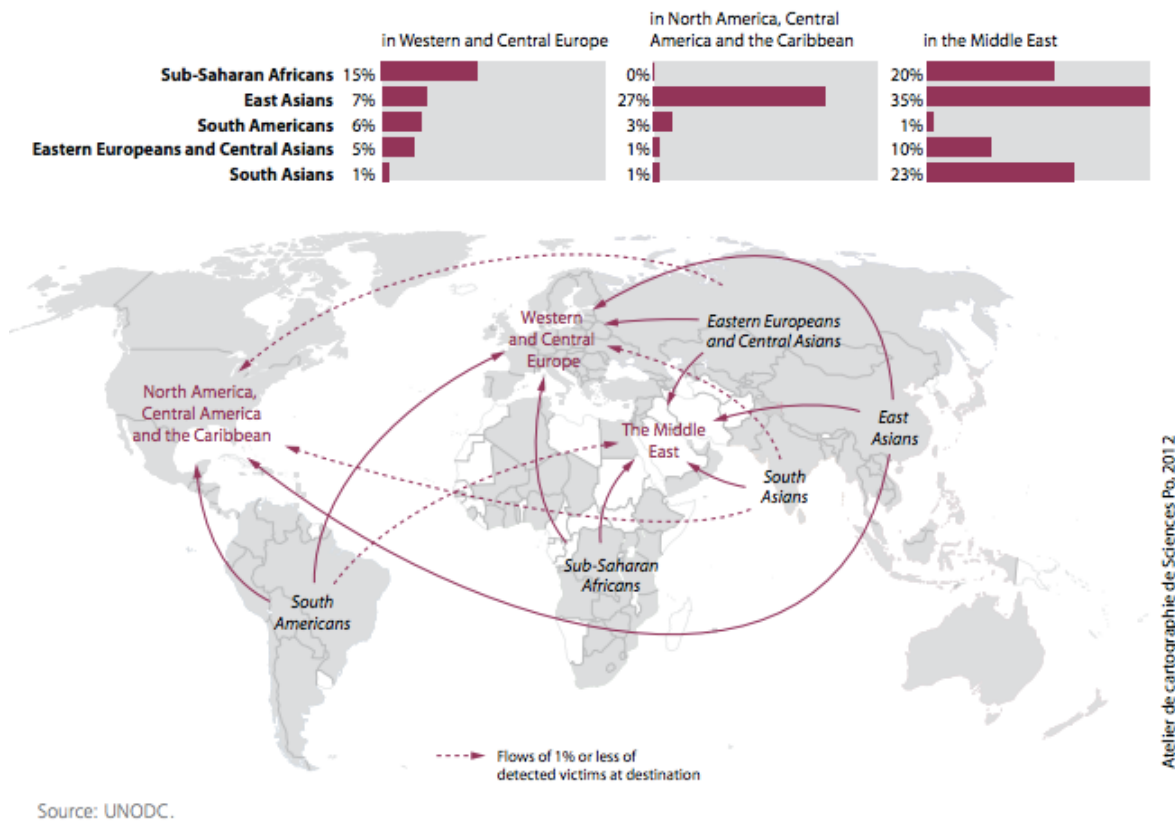

Figure 3 Transnational flows: Nationalities of victims detected in some major destination regions, shares of the total number of victims detected there, 2007-2010

As with recruitment, there is some research that informs us of the means of transportation and entry, however, as acknowledged by the Home Office report (Marsh, Kevin, Sarmah, Rashmi and Davies, Phil 2012, 12), traffickers change their transfer paths. The changes are needed to reflect trends in demand and supply and to avoid interception by immigration control, police or FRONTEX.[11] As such, further research is required to, put in most basic terms, know where to invest policy efforts (e.g., airports, low cost airlines, borders, closing loopholes etc.)

C. Control

This sub-section describes how trafficked persons are controlled by violence, psychology, money, threats and other practices. The magnitude of control is illustrated in literature that tells the victims' stories (Yen 2008, 653. Gupta, 2007). The methods of control are not all uniform, in some instances traffickers may rely on drugs, in others they may form a bond with the victims and others may use black magic. 'Black magic is used in many cases of women trafficking from African countries, especially Nigeria. The rituals vary from making a 'voodoo-doll'…to rituals exercised by African doctors' (Siegel et al. 2010, 445). Shelley (2010, 107) also references the seizure of passports and documents so as to deprive the trafficked persons of their legal status and identity. For other traffickers the central element of control is fear, which they embed in the victim by physical abuse and threats. The threats can include the loss of life or harm to the trafficked person or their family members.

As with other aspects of trafficking, control also has its trends. Many women trafficked into prostitution are now (contrasted to the past) earning a minor income which provides hope for paying off their debts (Aranowitz et al. 2010, 51). This can ensure that a victim is more relaxed and has less reason to try and escape, equally this weakens the line drawn between trafficked persons and freelance sex workers and makes it more difficult from the perspective of the law.

Research has highlighted the wide methods of control and has shown that different traffickers have their own modus operandi for control, at the same time we recognise that the patterns are changing. Surtees (2007) notes that the use of overt violence is decreasing while psychological abuse/manipulation is on the rise - this exploitation is more subtle and harder to identify. In light of this, and in order to increase the opportunity to disrupt the crime, future research needs to identify current and future trends in relation to the use of control by traffickers. Research in

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[11] FRONTEX is the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union

this field could be compiled by interviews with victims, which is less risky to the researcher and interviews with perpetrators.

D. Infrastructure

Interwoven through the crime of THB is the infrastructure of technology; a two-edged sword that helps to both facilitate and combat trafficking, forcing us to question the relationship between THB and technology. In 2001, Aronowitz argued that advances in new technologies would contribute to the expanding market of the smuggling and THB, and consequently, law enforcement and intelligence agencies would have no choice but to stay alert to the impact that new technologies, specifically the Internet, would have on the recruitment phases of trafficking (Aronowitz 2001, 175). Maltzahn argues that the traffic on the internet refers to people as well as the internet and ponders if traffickers use technology as we all do, to make communication easier (Maltzahn, 2006). Elsewhere, Hughes (2002) examined the impact of new technologies, including the development of the Digital Video Disk (DVD) and the Internet (including newsgroups, chat rooms etc.) on the sexual exploitation of women and children, where she claimed that:

> 'The use of new communications and information technologies in the sexual exploitation of women and children continues to grow with the increased number of users on the internet.'

Since 2001, via an EU funded project, 'Misuse of the Internet for the recruitment of victims of trafficking in human beings', efforts have been made to provide European Member States with appropriate legal, administrative, technical and awareness raising measures in order to respond to the growing use of the Internet to recruit those vulnerable to being trafficked (Sykiotou 2007). The project offered insights into the various options available on the Internet (e.g., search engines, public channels such as chat rooms, Internet dating and spam e-mail) that traffickers could use for the recruitment of individuals and provided a series of recommendations on the various legal and technical measures that could be taken to fight trafficking in human beings via the Internet.

Further efforts to disrupt the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) on facilitating THB can be seen via the 2008 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) workshop on "Technology and Human Trafficking" (Anti-human Trafficking Unit 2008). Prior to the workshop, a background paper was supplied to participants identifying the various ways in which technology was both part of the problem (e.g., being part of the modus operandi used by traffickers as well as being used for recruitment and exploitation

purposes), and a solution to combatting trafficking (e.g., for investigative purposes as well as for supporting those that had been trafficked). However, this information was based on dated research stemming from 2001 through to that by Sykiotou in 2007. Consequently, due to the period in which the study was conducted, very little research has been carried out regarding the role of new media applications, particularly social media (e.g., Facebook, Skype and Twitter) within the trafficking industry, as well as by those working to combat THB. Writing in 2006 Maltzahn noted that there was limited information about how – of indeed if – traffickers are going beyond the 'obvious use of ICTs for communication and if ICTs are shaping the experience of trafficked women.' She further argues that 'much more is known about the ways ICTs are used in child pornography and in other exploitations of children than in human trafficking (Maltzahn, 2006. p.4).

Of those that have begun to expand our understanding of the role of new and emerging ICTs on THB is work that has been conducted in the US by Latonero et al. who have explored the role of mobile technologies (Latonero et al 2012), as well as the role of social networking websites and online classifieds. This research provide a series of recommendations on tools and methods including data mining, mapping, and advanced analytics, to be used within law enforcement to help combat THB online (Latonero et al 2011). Key findings from this research point to developments in digital technology providing traffickers with an "unprecedented ability to exploit a greater number of victims and advertise their services across geographic boundaries", thereby enhancing the globalised impact of THB (Latonero et al 2011, IV). Their findings point to an urgent need to further understand the impact of the web, particularly social networking sites, on facilitating trafficking, and that efforts are therefore needed to enhance online monitoring and prevention measures.

In an effort to drive research into this area, in early 2012, Boyd and Johnson, in collaboration with Microsoft Research and the Microsoft Digital Crimes Unit, announced the results of a call for further research in understanding the use of technology in THB (Boyd et al. 2012). The proposed research would need to understand the various ways in which technology could influence THB. As identified by Boyd et al. attention would (for instance) need to be placed on: the recruitment and abduction of individuals, the transit and control of individuals, the retention of individuals, the advertising and selling of individuals and perpetrator's activities in money exchange and laundering (Boyd et al 2011). However, this research by Boyd et al. was limited to the context of the United States, and in addition, was also limited to focusing on one aspect of human trafficking: sexual exploitation of those under 18 in the US (Boyd et al 2011, 2). Accordingly, further research, such as the activities planned for TRACE, is required to identify, assess and understand how technology and its associated applications facilitate different

types of THB in Europe, and how, in turn, authorities can effectively mitigate the consequences of advances in technology and enhance their guidance on preventing THB.

5. Data challenges in the area of human trafficking

This section aims to provide an introduction to the discourse on the practical and ethical difficulties associated with more data collection.

Although efforts have been taken to expand our understanding of the operation of THB from a business perspective, further research is required. It is acknowledged that within the domain of THB gaining useful data can be risky and requires resources and logistical preparation, in particular when we consider the ethical requirements that researchers need to satisfy. However in order to better dismantle the business of THB the data can potentially be worth the effort and maybe even risk. The UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa deems it a "knowledge crisis" and goes onto explain the probative value of such data:

> 'Only by understanding the depth, breadth and scope of the problem can we address […] how to counter it. So far we have not attained much knowledge and therefore initiatives have been inadequate and disjointed' (UNODC, 2009.)

Scholarship in THB continues to be hindered by the clandestine nature of the crime and so access to primary information is difficult to obtain (Busch-Armendariz et al. 2009, 9). For example in the fields of criminology and criminal justice survey research usually dominates – this however is not a practicable option with regard to THB. The relatively small population size that a researcher will have access to, coupled with the uniqueness of each case render this method impractical. Likewise, relying on archival data is not a feasible option as THB in terms of prosecution is still a relatively new crime. From this the authors draw the implication that a best research methodology would entail convenience sampling (the sample consists of individuals that are either convenient or readily available to the researcher) and snowball sampling (the sample consists of individuals who are referred to the researcher individually by previous research subjects). Information in the proposed methodology is obtained from subjects through interviews, which follows a verbally administered questionnaire with several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but there is also room for the researcher or participant to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. Although this would appear as an optimal methodology there are numerous challenges within. Firstly, a researcher's ability to gain direct access to those

responsible for trafficking is problematic, to the extent that even law enforcement officers have been only vaguely successful in locating and prosecuting the perpetrator. For instance, in the US, during 2001-2006 the Department of Justice succeeded in convicting an annual average of 40 defendants charged with human trafficking crimes (United States Department of Justice 2007). Even when the trafficker can be located, he/she may not wish to engage in dialogues or they may be in places, such as prisons or remote locations, which are not easily reachable for researchers. Equally access to victims is hard to obtain, as they are not always willing to speak about their story and as stated by Gallagher many fear the risks from their traffickers, such as harm to them or their families and may also be ashamed of their experience (Gallagher, 2006).

Gaining ethical approval to carry out an interview can act as a further obstruction. Various institutional boards require rigorous ethical requirements, which researchers do not always meet. Those working on the TRACE project found that gaining access to prisons and thus contacting convicted traffickers proved, understandably, particularly challenging. It is predominantly with regard to data protection and privacy that questions about obtaining information have been raised. Data protection and privacy are important, with regard to the victim and the perpetrator, however they can introduce novel challenges and exacerbate the practical difficulties in accessing and disseminating the needed knowledge. Moreover, regulations or guidelines can be out-dated or conflicting among States making the work of a researcher problematic. There are however, some common standards with regard to data protection (see for detail: United Nations Inter-Agency Project on human trafficking, 2008).[12]

Unfortunately due to limitations of this article the authors cannot reflect in depth on the safety of researchers and the risks they undertake – this too acts as a challenge. The risks associated with researching THB are real and it is important to balance safety and privacy of a researcher with the political need to discover data, however the question remains how far should researchers go in the pursuit of data? The United Nations Inter-Agency Project on human trafficking (2008) report states as one of its key recommendations that researchers should minimise risk. Following this guidance should research demand that individuals do not try and infiltrate THB organisations or even interview traffickers due to fears or repercussion is data not worth the risk?

With extensive difficulties in gaining primary data, it is necessary to consider the various secondary sources of information that researchers can utilise to enhance their research into the business side of THB. Some secondary sources,

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[12] The question of human trafficking and data protection is also well raised and discussed by the datACT project and the authors encourage a review of the literature contained on the website.

which have proved successful, include; official police court documents and materials such as the *Forced Labour and Human Trafficking: Casebook of Court Decisions* or the Legislationonline database run by the OSCE and ODIHR (provides links to national cases on THB). Although these sources are useful, they are also limited, for they fail to provide any indication of the activities of those who have not been prosecuted. Moreover they do not always include personal information such as educational background of the criminal, but instead focus on the crime committed or basic details such as age. Other sources of information, such as facts on traffickers from trafficked persons, may also provide researchers with supplementary information; yet, this may not necessarily be detailed on the life histories and the operation of trafficking as a business, and further they can be biased.

6. Conclusion

This article has shown that there is currently a lack of detailed and comprehensive data concerning the way the human trafficking business is organised and run, as such, policy makers still do not entirely know who the traffickers are, how they operate, or which externalities influence their actions. Conversely, there is added value in studying human trafficking as a criminal enterprise; by understanding the parameters of the business the crime can be better anticipated, investigated and prevented. This however has to be done against the backdrop of the various research challenges such as data protection and lack of access to research subjects.

It is a distinguishing feature of human trafficking that it is an underground crime, however, the need for up-to-date grounded research is becoming 'increasingly important in governmental and nongovernmental circles…In the absence of robust data, there is a real risk that policy responses are developed which do not reflect realities on the ground, which in turn can mean that initiatives are misdirected and their positive impact is limited' (Goodey 2011, 39-40). The pressing need for research in this field also stems from international law whereby the UN Protocol, in Article 10, provides that law enforcement, immigration, and other relevant authorities of different states shall cooperate with one another to identify 'the means and methods used by organised criminal groups for the purpose of trafficking in persons, including the recruitment and transportation of victims, routes and links between and among individuals and groups engaged in such trafficking, and possible measures for detecting them.'

It is necessary for future research efforts to take steps to broaden our understanding of how THB functions as a form of organised crime. As identified throughout this article, one such study is the TRACE project, a multidisciplinary

study that will use both primary and secondary research methods to: 1) develop a theory-driven understanding of trafficking as a criminal enterprise; 2) acquire a part-theory, part-evidence based understanding of the specific characteristics of the traffickers and the victims; their interactions with one another and other parties to trafficking; 3) develop a framework of the factors influencing the trends in THB; and 4) develop a theory-driven understanding of the policies in place and provide a framework of what further options are available for stakeholders. Efforts such as TRACE aim to contribute to law enforcement agencies, policy makers and civil society organisations' understanding of how THB operates, which in turn has the ability to assist their efforts in disrupting THB.

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