

RECRUITMENT FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND ONLINE IMAGE OF WOMEN

Case Studies of Latvia, Estonia and UK

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Case Studies of Latvia,
Estonia and UK



Dear reader,

This research presents conclusions about drivers that influence the involvement of women and girls in prostitution and trafficking, identifies the trends and recruitment mechanisms on the Internet, and analyzes vulnerabilities that limit the possibilities for exit.

Project partner organizations working with victims of trafficking and prostitution in Latvia, Estonia and the UK, supported by victim testimony, observe that the Internet is increasingly used as a channel for recruitment. Being a woman is a crucial factor in being recruited for sexual exploitation and fictive marriages – therefore the research has a gender perspective.

Latvia and Estonia are typical examples of countries of origin for victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, labour and fictive marriages. The UK is the most favoured destination for people from Latvia and Estonia seeking jobs abroad and many women are trafficked there. At the same time, Latvia and Estonia is a destination for men from Western EU countries, particularly men from the UK, and women report the experience of offensive and overbearing behaviour in night clubs, bars and on the streets. This facilitates trafficking for sexual exploitation from rural areas to the Capital.

Research history and approaches on trafficking and prostitution are at different levels in partner countries, therefore the applied research methodology is different in each country, adapted to reach a result that will best benefit appropriate policy development.

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RESEARCH ON PROSTITUTION IN LATVIA AND ESTONIA

- conditions that promote engaging women in prostitution
- current tendencies of recruitment
- conditions that promote women to exit prostitution

FINAL REPORT

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Riga 2013

INTRODUCTION

Research on prostitution in Latvia and Estonia is part of activities within the EC project “Safety Compass: signposting ways to escape trafficking”. The research process focuses on conditions that determine how people are being engaged in prostitution, general mechanisms of recruitment and the main recruitment tendencies on the Internet, as well as observing various aspects of vulnerability that influence potential exiting from prostitution. Finding answers to these questions will facilitate the creation of support and exit programmes for women engaged in prostitution, and the implementation of preventative measures.

The main goal of this project complies with the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016, where emphasis is put on providing extensive support to prostitution victims and cooperation of different social agents in averting human trafficking (thereafter – HT)¹. In international documents it is admitted that human trafficking is gender-vulnerable, namely, HT victims are mainly women. EUROSTAT data indicate that among HT victims identified and acknowledged in 2008-2010, 68% of them were women and 12% girls (persons under the age of 18), who were mainly subject to sexual exploitation². A common view of prostitution is that engaging and remaining in prostitution is a free choice made by women; therefore prostitution should not be considered to be HT. However, there are several arguments for a close connection between prostitution and HT, including such aspects as enforcing, power and control by souteurs and customers. The ability to make a choice can be very limited in relation to staying in or exiting prostitution. As stated in the handbook on the link between prostitution and HT, attempts to create strict borders between “forced” and “voluntary” prostitution are destined to fail, because both are analytical formulations based in politics³. Divisions and borders fade away when considered from the perspective of the reality of children’s and women’s lives. As a result, prostitution in its nature is one form of HT.

Experience and observations by project partners in Latvia, Estonia, and Great Britain, and stories told by HT victims, show that opportunities offered on the Internet are more frequently used as a recruitment channel for offering sexual services, fictive marriages and enforced work. Latvia and Estonia are considered to be countries of origin of HT victims, whereas Great Britain is the most attractive country for immigration. On the other hand, Latvia and Estonia are popular sex tourism destinations for British and Scandinavian men. This project is intended to create a coordinating vision, an understanding of the existent problem and the forming of an effective mechanism of cooperation among participating partner organizations.

Taking into account that the extent of research on prostitution and its legal regulation differ in countries represented by project partners, the respective research methodologies

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- 1 The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016, <http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/entity.action?path=EU+Policy%2FNew+European+Strategy>
 - 2 Human Trafficking in the EU. Slavery of our times, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/pdf/infographics_ht_in_eu_en.pdf
 - 3 Okonnora M., Hilija G. (2006). Informatīva rokasgrāmata: Prostitūcijas un cilvēku tirdzniecības saikne. Koalīcija pret sievietu tirdzniecību un Eiropas Sieviešu lobījs, 56 lpp.

are not identical, but rather designed so that the research gives the most benefit for influencing the policy landscape of the respective country.

The research on prostitution was conducted in Latvia and Estonia from February to October 2013. The main results of the research in Latvia and Estonia are disclosed in this report. Some parameters of the results are specific to each country; however, in general, research results among participating countries are comparable, give insights into the nature and topicality of prostitution and are useful for solving the existing problems.

The researchers are grateful to all informants who shared their experience, movement Freedom 61 for their support, and all experts who participated in the research process.

1. THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF PROSTITUTION

Prostitution is defined as sexual activity in exchange for money or goods, where the primary motivation of such action is neither sexual nor emotional¹. The main keyword therein is emotional uninvolvedness, because women who often change their sexual partners are not considered prostitutes². Prostitution has several forms; for example, street prostitution, brothels, female escort. The distribution of prostitution is approximately calculated by how many people are under the supervision of the police or other organizations³.

Debates about prostitution as a phenomenon range from considering it as a form of violence against women, to an individual's free choice to use his or her sexuality (criminal activity without victims).⁴ Defenders of legalising prostitution emphasize that illegal prostitution cannot be controlled; it is connected with other criminal activities. Meanwhile, opponents of legalising prostitution insist that such legalization strengthens the sex industry as a whole (operation of customers, souteneurs and brothels); at the same time, it does not support those engaged in prostitution but instead makes women even more vulnerable, because they do not want to register and promote their occupation⁵. The main problem that they face is not stigmatization, but violence⁶.

PROSTITUTION:

sexual activity in exchange of money or goods where the primary motivation to engage in it is neither sexual nor emotional. It is a form of violence. Prostitution is part of the social system closely intertwined with moral values and division of gender roles in the society.

Therefore, prostitution should be viewed as a form of female exploitation and HT, because it is determined by poverty, limited employment opportunities, and a culture which concentrates first on women's sexuality and on their other skills and qualities second⁷ (objectification). If prostitution is

1 Sullivan T.J., Thompson K.S. (1988). Introduction in Social problems. NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 521 p.

2 Clinard M.B. (1989). Sociology of Deviant Behavior. Fourth Edition. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 629 p.

3 Sullivan T.J., Thompson K.S. (1988). Introduction in Social problems. NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 521 p.

4 Raymond J.G. (1998). Prostitution as violence against women: NGO stonewalling in Beijing and elsewhere. In: Women's Studies International Forum, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 1-9.

5 Raymond J.G. (2003). 10 Reasons for Not Legalizing Prostitution. <http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/10%20reasons%20for%20not%20legalizing%20prostitution.pdf>

6 Raymond J.G. (1998). Prostitution as violence against women: NGO stonewalling in Beijing and elsewhere. In: Women's Studies International Forum, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 1-9.

7 Sullivan T.J., Thompson K.S. (1988). Introduction in Social problems. NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 521 p.

OBJECTIFICATION:

if the person is perceived and used as an asset and means for another person to achieve his/her goals; and such:

- which does not have self-determination capacity;
- which can be destroyed or wounded;
- whose feelings and experience need not be taken into account; and
- which is interchangeable.

decriminalized/strengthened/institutionalized, it results in its normalization, and consequently, objectification.

By tolerating prostitution, society sends the message that prostitution is a social norm. As Janice G. Raymond writes, the disappearance of legal borders also promotes the disappearance of social and ethical borders. As a result, women are considered to be sexual goods¹. Several studies also find that prostitution is a survival strategy and not the expression of free will^{2,3}. However, there are still defenders and opponents for each view, and each is implemented in different countries and regions in some form.

This research places emphasis on the causes and conditions that determine the engagement of women in prostitution. There are several possible answers to the question of who is engaged in prostitution and how. First and most frequently heard in the public space is forced engagement in prostitution, which is the most rarely employed type of recruitment (not more than 4% of women). Direct physical violence is rarely observable; rather, covert and indirect forms of influence are used. Familiarity with someone who is related to this occupation in some way (learning prostitution) is the most frequently-used type of recruitment; often through close emotional relationships with friends and relatives. Gradually, prostitution comes to be seen as an attractive and pleasant lifestyle. Recruitment agents also play a practical role and ensure necessary contacts at the beginning. In this way, such relationships become the main “component” of engagement in prostitution⁴, which is a time-consuming and systematic process⁵.

Engagement in prostitution is divided into three stages: recruitment, the beginner’s stage and making contacts. In the first stage, a woman begins engaging in prostitution. In the second stage, usually lasting 2-3 months, activities and “job” opportunities are organized for this woman, and her values and standards are shaped. Thus, a woman is integrated into this community and isolated from society. The third stage is enforced by prostitution organizers, who make and control contacts with customers⁶.

All stages may include violence against women, both to recruit and force engagement in prostitution and later as means of punishment and deterrent, and as an instrument of

1 Raymond J.G. (2003). 10 Reasons for Not Legalizing Prostitution. <http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/10%20reasons%20for%20not%20legalizing%20prostitution.pdf>

2 Farley, M. (2003). Prostitution and the Invisibility of Harm. Co-published simultaneously in *Women & Therapy* (The Haworth Press, Inc.) Vol. 26, No. 3/4, 2003, pp. 247-280; and: *Women with Visible and Invisible Disabilities: Multiple Intersections, Multiple Issues, Multiple Therapies* (ed: Martha E. Banks, and Ellyn Kaschak) The Haworth Press, Inc., 2003, pp. 247-280.

3 Raymond J.G. (2003). 10 Reasons for Not Legalizing Prostitution. <http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/10%20reasons%20for%20not%20legalizing%20prostitution.pdf>

4 Sullivan T.J., Thompson K.S. (1988). *Introduction in Social problems*. NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 521 p.

5 Clinard M.B. (1989). *Sociology of Deviant Behavior*. Fourth Edition. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 629 p.

6 Clinard M.B. (1989). *Sociology of Deviant Behavior*. Fourth Edition. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 629 p.

humiliation and isolation¹, although it may not be physical violence.

Research results show that experience of early and regular casual sex, juvenile delinquency, early arrest², unstable family (alcoholism, physical and sexual violence), as well as poverty promotes women engaging in prostitution (it serves as a driving factor)³. Engagement in prostitution connected to addiction needs to be especially emphasized; alcoholism and drug addiction require regular funds. A significant role can be played by the rejection of a woman by her family (stigmatization). As a result, she considers any type of deviant behaviour⁴ to be suitable. Factors that determine the engagement of women in prostitution are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Vulnerability aspects influencing involvement of women in prostitution

Psychological vulnerability	Economic vulnerability	Social (cultural) vulnerability
Early childhood experience (sexual exploitation, violence)	Poverty, especially, long-term	Family conditions (dysfunctional families – addictions, violence etc.)
Psychological trauma	Unemployment	Influence of family members and friends (in this case, if they are related to prostitution and support it)
Drug addiction	Low wages	Lack of relatives, friends and other supporting persons
Sudden crisis, loss of life	Skills unsuitable for labour market or lack of skills	Prostitution distribution (number of women engaged in prostitution)
Ambitions, desires for "achieving more"		Existence of sex services infrastructure (souteneurs, "massage salons", advertising)
Desire to avoid routine job		Demand for sex services
		Dominating attitude by society against prostitution

Sources: Liu, M. (2012). Chinese Migrant Women in the Sex Industry: Exploring Their Paths to Prostitution. In: *Feminist Criminology*, Vol.7, pp. 327-349. Brunovskis, A., Tildum, G. (2004). Crossing borders: An empirical study of transnational prostitution and trafficking in human beings. Retrieved from <http://www.fafno/pub/rapp/426/426.pdf>

In addition to these factors, so-called situational factors also influence a woman's choice. These are factors that determine the conditions and problems that a woman faces at a particular moment (for example, urgent need for money). These factors also include accessibility of a prostitution infrastructure (massage salons, brothels) in the vicinity, advertisements

1 Raymond J.G. (2003). 10 Reasons for Not Legalizing Prostitution. <http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/10%20reasons%20for%20not%20legalizing%20prostitution.pdf>

2 Sullivan T.J., Thompson K.S. (1988). Introduction in *Social problems*. NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 521 p.

3 Scarpitti F.R. (1997). *Social Problems*. NY: Longman Pub Group, 539 p.

4 Clinard M.B. (1989). *Sociology of Deviant Behavior*. Fourth Edition. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 629 p.

"HUMAN TRAFFICKING"

means 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, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. (UN)

VULNERABILITY – SITUATION FACTORS:

factors which characterize circumstances and issues encountered by a woman at the specific time and affecting women's freedom of choice. For example, acute need for money, death of a relative; availability of prostitution infrastructure in the nearest vicinity (massage parlours, brothels); advertising in media and public places which each individual and all together are underlying determinants of woman's behaviour.

in the mass media and public places, which play a crucial role in decision-making¹. This consideration, which is based on studies, serves as an important argument against the legalisation of prostitution, because the implication here is that prostitution is a natural occupation for any woman.

Studies emphasize that engaging in prostitution is not determined by one factor alone, but rather by a combination of different factors. As such, prostitution can be defined as a complicated result of interaction between a rational choice made by an individual and with the influence of friends, accompanied by the pressure of external conditions; for example, financial considerations, family situation or personal problems. The combination of these conditions allows talking about prostitution as a reasoned, logical and real opportunity².

The phenomenon of prostitution is connected with several stereotypical notions and myths. For example, it is frequently said that prostitution has always been and always will be. Prostitution is indeed deeply enrooted, but it does not follow that it is incontrovertible or necessary for society. Functionalism considers prostitution to be part of the social system, which is closely related to society's moral values and the division of sex roles³. Kingsley Davis has written that the cause of prostitution is the moral structure of society. On the one hand, it offers benefits (an illusion about easy and quick money, opportunities to live better than others), on the other, condemnation and lowering of a woman's social value. This thereby highlights a duality and insincerity in social attitudes. Society considers prostitution as a morally condemnable act; at the same time, demand for sex services continues. The responsibility for prostitution (its manifestation and consequences) is seen to lie with women engaged in prostitution. They are considered perverse, deviant and unacceptable, helping to preserve a relatively high social status for other members of society. However, it is exactly this insincerity which provides justification for women engaged in prostitution. To alleviate the sense of internal contradiction between condemnation and services they provided, women consider themselves to be morally superior than „respected” members of society, because they at least do not lie. Further, they believe themselves to be helping society by keeping families together, averting rape⁴ and acting as “social workers”⁵, by providing especially humane services⁶.

K. Davis' argued that societal efforts to control sexual behaviour through curbing it in marriage and related responsibilities, forcing men to consider celibacy, or grounding their sexual behaviour on love, provides opportunities

- 1 Liu, M. (2012). Chinese Migrant Women in the Sex Industry: Exploring Their Paths to Prostitution. In: *Feminist Criminology*, Vol.7, pp. 327-349.
- 2 Sharpe, K. (1998). *Red light, blue light: Prostitutes, punters and the police*. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate.
- 3 Scarpitti F.R. (1997). *Social Problems*. NY: Longman Pub Group, 539 p.
- 4 Sullivan T.J., Thompson K.S. (1988). *Introduction in Social problems*. NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 521 p.
- 5 Clinard M.B. (1989). *Sociology of Deviant Behavior*. Fourth Edition. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 629 p.
- 6 Scarpitti F.R. (1997). *Social Problems*. NY: Longman Pub Group, 539 p.

for prostitution to prosper¹. In other words, the tighter the social structure, the stricter the social standards, the more it promotes a deviant action.

Prostitution is also related to many other social values. Sexual appeal has high cultural value; however, many people fail to meet perceived standards. Therefore, prostitution fills the gap caused by the huge demand and limited supply for achieving these standards².

These and other³ arguments frequently act as justification for buying and selling one's body, treating those engaged in prostitution violently, and making decisions in order to strengthen prostitution. At the same time, these arguments promote the distribution of outdated and stereotypical viewpoints, do not reflect the situation of people engaged in prostitution and do not encourage them to exit prostitution.

2. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH CONDUCTED IN LATVIA AND ESTONIA

The most frequently examined aspect of prostitution in the research and public spheres of Latvia is the legal dimension. However, the main goal of this research and thus this report is not to analyze laws related to prostitution. This can be seen elsewhere; for example, in the report prepared by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Latvia "On foreign experience in the sphere of limiting prostitution and suggestions for limiting prostitution in Latvia"⁴, which currently can be regarded as the most topical document in Latvia that mentions measures for limiting prostitution in various countries and describes the situation in Latvia.

Legal aspects of prostitution are frequently analyzed in studies by law students and MA programme students (for example, Master's Paper "Prostitution and criminal offences related to prostitution" by Liga Ansberga). Dr. Hist. Ineta Lipša has presented her Promotion Paper in history on public morals in Latvia from 1918 to 1940⁵.

Although the issues of prostitution and HT are frequently analyzed in the public space (articles by journalists, stories, interviews), still scholarship on prostitution in Latvia is comparatively weak (it differs significantly in comparison to partner countries of this project – Estonia and Great Britain).

Studies in the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences contribute to research about prostitution and HT, within the framework of "Open labour market for women", the project of the EC

1 Clinard M.B. (1989). *Sociology of Deviant Behavior*. Fourth Edition. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 629 p.

2 Clinard M.B. (1989). *Sociology of Deviant Behavior*. Fourth Edition. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 629 p.

3 Raymond J.G. (2004). *Prostitution on Demand: Legalizing the Buyers as Sexual Consumers*. In: *Violence Against Women*, Vol.10, No.10, pp.1156-1186.

4 Informative report "Par ārvalstu pieredzi prostitūcijas ierobežošanas jomā un priekšlikumiem prostitūcijas mazināšanai Latvijā", <http://www.mk.gov.lv/lv/mk/tap/?pid=40258143>

5 Information on Dr. hist. degree received by Ineta Lipša http://www.lza.lv/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=693&Itemid=327

PROSTITUTION AND MYTHS ABOUT IT

Various myths exist about prostitution to justify trading humans:

- Myth: "Prostitution is the oldest profession." Do you know any other "profession" where 80% of employees face physical and sexual abuse on daily basis? How many women and men choose it as their dream profession?
 - Myth: "It is a free choice." A research shows various circumstances which affect the person's choice and concludes that there is no freedom of choice in this situation.
 - Myth: "Prostitution ensures economic independence of women." Economic vulnerability is one of the facts forcing to engage in prostitution.
 - Myth: "Prostitution is an expression of sexual freedom." Sexual freedom means right to health without discrimination and various acts of violence.
- Prostitution is an atrocity. Find more at <http://www.womenlobby.org/news/ewl-news/article/18-myths-on-prostitution-read-and>

initiative EQUAL. These studies involved a “Study on the sex industry and its limiting mechanisms in Riga and Latvia” in 2007¹, “Human trafficking in Latvia: stereotypes and situation description” in 2005², and a study financed by ESF and SIF, “Efficiency of social services in the reintegration of human trafficking victims” in 2007³.

In the 1990s and especially since EU accession, Latvia has had opportunities to participate in studies on an EU and international scale. Researchers from other countries and international non-governmental organizations have been interested in the situation in Latvia to gather data and compare it with other countries. Information for such studies has been provided both by relevant ministries and non-governmental organizations at the national level. As a result, several studies and reports are available in Latvia; for example, the book published by IOM, “Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Baltic States: Social and Legal Aspects” (2001)⁴, a report by the General Assembly of the United Nations on child prostitution and pornography in Latvia (2008), E-notes report on measures implemented by countries to avert HT in 27 EU Member States⁵), and handbooks (for example, the handbook on HT for social workers, created by IOM (2007)⁶). Other publications can be found on the website www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv⁷ developed by the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Latvia.

As it can be observed, these studies mainly concentrate on human trafficking, with no special emphasis on prostitution.

Prostitution in Latvia has been studied in only a fragmentary manner to date. Information on the causes of prostitution can be found in the book “Marginālās jeb 1376.fonds”⁸ by V. Zelče and V. Sprugaine, who analyze prostitution in the 1920s-1930s. According to the authors, the main causes for women becoming prostitutes are unemployment and deprivation (391 women out of 502 mentioned these factors). In nine occasions women explained that they have engaged in prostitution “because of pleasure”, in turn, five “felt weariness of working”. Voluntary registration, lack of consideration, the influence of friends and family conflicts⁹ are also mentioned among other causes.

After analyzing the situation of women in a post-Soviet state, Daina Stukuls states that the main causes of prostitution are economic difficulties. She notes that women were most affected at the beginning of the 1990s; sex and sexuality became a product, with a lack of laws

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- 1 Pētījums par seksa industriju un tās ierobežošanas mehānismiem Rīgā un Latvijā, 2007, http://www.biss.soc.lv/downloads%5Cresources%5Cequal/biss_petijums_seksa_industrija.pdf
 - 2 Pētījums „Cilvēku tirdzniecība Latvijā: stereotipi un situācijas raksturojums”, http://s3.amazonaws.com/politika/public/article_files/1590/original/cilv_tirdzn_equal_1105.pdf?1332253302
 - 3 Pētījums „Sociālo pakalpojumu efektivitāte cilvēku tirdzniecības upuru reintegrācijai, 2007, http://www.biss.soc.lv/downloads/resources/cilvektirdznieciba/biss_petijums_cvt.pdf
 - 4 Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Baltic States: Social and Legal Aspects, 2001, <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/data/File/macibspekiem/prostitution.pdf>
 - 5 E-notes. Report on the implementation of anti-trafficking policies and interventions in the 27 EU Member States from a human rights perspective (2008 and 2009), <http://lastradainternational.org/lisidocs/E-notes%20final%20report.pdf>
 - 6 Cilvēku tirdzniecība: izpratne, problēmas, risinājumi, 2006, <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/data/File/macibspekiem/CT.pdf>
 - 7 Studies and publications, <http://www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv/index.php?catalogue&id=151>
 - 8 Zelče V., Sprugaine V. (2005). Marginālās jeb 1376.fonds. Rīga: Latvijas Valsts Vēstures arhivs, 254 p.
 - 9 Zelče V., Sprugaine V. (2005). Marginālās jeb 1376.fonds. Rīga: Latvijas Valsts Vēstures arhivs, 254 p.

and regulations that could regulate the sex trade. According to data from 1997, there were 4000-10,000 prostitutes in Riga, mostly aged from 14 to 59, including 10%-19% under-aged prostitutes. The business of sex services flourished not only in Riga in the 1990s, but also elsewhere in Latvia using widespread advertising and offers of work abroad, which was very attractive at that time. The expansion of the sex trade was considered a manifestation of the economic reorganization of that time.

In a study conducted in 1995 on engagement in prostitution, it is stated that 79% of women engage for the purpose of survival.

Economic considerations can be divided into the following categories:

- satisfying basic needs for themselves, their children and parents;
- inability to find a job in places where knowledge of the Latvian language is required;
- inability to earn enough money in their principal work, therefore prostitution is chosen as an option for additional earnings;
- need to complete studies¹.

Among other reasons mentioned is a desire to earn money for expensive clothes and cosmetics, to become rich very quickly, and a desire to meet a man and get married². D. Stukuls also describes the public opinion and peculiarities of policy-making in post-Soviet Latvia; namely,

an opinion that prostitutes are immoral and have to take responsibility (this idea was in opposition to the ideology of capitalist countries that prostitution is rooted in inequality and insecurity) developed in the late Soviet period. As a result, nothing was done to address the main causes of prostitution – poverty and poor economic conditions. Instead, a discussion developed about the legalization of prostitution, so that women could express their “sexual freedom”.

Daina Stukuls concludes that in post-Soviet Latvia women are domesticated, commodified, and thus marginalized³.

Attention should be drawn to the research “Prostitution – social problem?”⁴ conducted in 2004 in the Baltic States and Northwest Russia by the Estonian Women’s Studies and Resource Centre. This research reveals the opinions of policy-makers about prostitution as a functional, natural occurrence, which cannot be regarded as a social problem and therefore

1 Stukuls D. (1999) Body of the Nation: Mothering, Prostitution, and Women’s Place in Postcommunist Latvia, Slavic Review, no. 3, pp. 543-54.

2 Stukuls D. (1999) Body of the Nation: Mothering, Prostitution, and Women’s Place in Postcommunist Latvia, Slavic Review, no. 3, pp. 543-54.

3 Stukuls D. (1999) Body of the Nation: Mothering, Prostitution, and Women’s Place in Postcommunist Latvia, Slavic Review, no. 3, pp. 543-54.

4 Pajumets, M., Sebre, S., Khodyreva, N., & Mikalajunaite, R. (2004). The views on prostitution’s nature, causes and effects in the Baltic states and north-western Russia. Funded by: Nordic Council of Ministers. http://www.sm.ee/fileadmin/meedia/Dokumendid/Sotsiaalvaldkond/kogumik/prostitution_1_.pdf

BACKGROUND: FACTORS OF ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

Continuous poverty, unemployment, low wages, low education level, financial responsibility for one’s family, life in an economically depressed region are only a few factors determining woman’s actions. Prostitution is the last resort to survive.

BACKGROUND (2004)

In Latvia the policymakers were of an opinion and accepted prostitution as a functional and natural phenomenon. Therefore it was not labelled a social problem and, subsequently, no decisions to resolve it in its essence were passed.

decisions to solve it cannot be made on its merits.

Information about prostitution in Latvia can also be found in other publicly available sources^{1,2}. Research conducted by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control concerning HIV distribution among women engaged in prostitution³ is one such example. Information about this research is also available on mass media. Furthermore, there are also inquiries organized by separate websites, where research methodology and data selection are not described; however, speculative figures are provided⁴.

This review of research available in Latvia concerning prostitution leads to the conclusion that there is a lack of recent research on prostitution in Latvia. Existing research is somewhat outdated, and some suggestions for limiting prostitution and HT are impractical because of difficulties caused by the economic crisis. However, the main problem in the case of Latvia is that the formation of policy and public opinion is currently based on opinions of officials or specialists which are frequently erroneous, stereotypical or borrowed from other countries. Therefore, new research is necessary to “diagnose” the existing situation as precisely as possible and design solutions that are most suited to Latvia.

The report prepared by Estonian partner organizations, notes that for the past 20 years since Estonia regained its independence, researchers have paid great attention to prostitution and human trafficking, thereby developing a more current understanding of these issues^{5,6,7}. However, despite an active research process and campaigns to influence public opinion, a discussion about prostitution has remained topical. In general, **Estonia has a scientific, research-based understanding about the following aspects of prostitution:**

- **involvement of children and adults in prostitution^{8,9,10,11};**
- **formation of public opinion^{12,13};**

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- 1 Latvia and the European Union, Country Report Series V, 2012. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/140368921/Latvia-and-the-European-Union>
 - 2 Violence against Women in Latvia, 2011, <http://www.stopvaw.org/latvia>
 - 3 Latvija lielākais HIV inficēto prostitūtu ipatsvars Eiropā, 2013, http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/latvija/466248-latvija_lielakais_hiv_inficeto_prostitutu_ipatsvars_eiropa
 - 4 Seksa pētījums: 45% vīriešu atbalsta prostitūcijas legalizēšanu Latvijā, 2012, http://www.krusttevs.com/raksti/seks/par_un_ap_to/602-seksa_petijums_45_viriesu_atbalsta_prostitucijas_legalizesanu_latvija?18
 - 5 Pettai, I., 2002. Prostitutsioon ja naistekaubandus Tallinna politsei hinnangul, ettekanne Põhja- ja Baltimaade ühiseminaril Naistega kaubitsemine kui kaasaegne orjakaubandus 29 – 31 mai 2002 Tallinn www.nmr.ee/women/presentations/lirisPettai.pdf 04.12.2002.
 - 6 Pettai I., Proos I., Kase H., 2003. Prostitutsioon Eestis: sotsiaalsed riskid ja majanduslik surve. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn. (http://www.oef.org.ee/_repository/Document/Prostitutsioon_Eestis.pdf, 30.11.2007)
 - 7 Pajumets M, 2004. Prostitution – a social problem?: The views on prostitution's nature, causes and effects in the Baltic states and north-western Russia.
 - 8 Trummal, A. 2001. Alaealiste prostitutsioon Tallinnas – nähtuse olemus ja tagamaad. EHI bakalaureusetöö. Tallinn
 - 9 Trummal, A., Fischer, K., Raudne, R., 2006. HIV nakkuse levimus ning riskikäitumine prostitutsiooni kaasatud naiste hulgas Tallinnas. Tallinn: Tervise Arengu Instituut
 - 10 Pettai I., Kase H., Proos I., 2006. Prostitutsioon Eestis: ülevaade prostitutsiooni kaasatud naiste olukorrast. Sotsioloogilise uurimuse materjalid. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn (http://www.tai.ee/failid/Prostitutsiooni_kasatute_uurimus_2006.pdf, 30.11.2007)
 - 11 Klein, M., 2006. Prostitutsioon seestpoolt nähtuna: prostituudid tõlgendavad oma tegevust. Magistritöö. Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikool.
 - 12 Pajumets M, 2004. Prostitution – a social problem?: The views on prostitution's nature, causes and effects in the Baltic states and north-western Russia.
 - 13 Eespere, K. 2004. Inimkaubanduse vastane tegevus Eestis: ekspertide hinnangud

- **public attitudes to prostitution^{1,2,3};**
- **specialists who work with people involved in prostitution – police, social workers, education workers⁴;**
- **sex buyers⁵.**

Theoretically, studies conducted in Estonia can be divided into three stages. The first stage involves the exploration and description of the problem, drawing attention to human trafficking and increasing public understanding. In the 1990s, information about prostitution appeared in the media. Several researchers then focused on general research of this issue^{6,7}, identifying risk groups^{8,9}, gathering information on experts and makers of public opinion,^{10,11,12}. This stage highlighted the existence of the problem, described the main tendencies and provided material for further research. Interviews with representatives of state and non- organizations found that representatives of state institutions understood little about prostitution, Ministry officials did not engage with the issue, and representatives of non-governmental organizations had a low level of knowledge and few skills to work with people involved in prostitution. Because of insufficient understanding of the issue, policy makers were more inclined to legalize prostitution, without being aware of the consequences of such a decision¹³. At the same time, researchers indicated that a large number of women were involved

ESTONIA'S APPROACH:
RESEARCH-BASED
ACTIONS

Stage 1 –
research of the situation.

probleemidele ja lahendustele. ENUT, Põhjamaade Ministrite Nõukogu, Tallinn.

- 1 Pettai I., Proos I., Kase H., 2003. Prostitutsioon Eestis: sotsiaalsed riskid ja majanduslik surve. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn. (http://www.oef.org.ee/_repository/Document/Prostitutsioon_Eestis.pdf, 30.11.2007)
- 2 Pettai I., Kase H., Proos I., 2005. Pervägivald Lääne-Eestis 2004–2005. Politseistatistika analüüs. Avatud Eesti Fond 2005, Tallinn <http://www.sm.ee/tegevus/sooline-vordoiguslikkus/pervagivald/uuringud.html>
- 3 Pettai I., Kase H., Proos I. 2008. On the meaning of prostitution in Estonia: critical attitudes are increasing Sotsioloogilise uurimuse materjalid. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn
- 4 Pettai, I., Kase, H. 2002. Prostitutsioon ja naistega kauplemine kui lahendamata probleem Eestis. Eesti riigi suutlikkus tõkestada ja ennetada prostitutsiooni ja naistega kauplemist. Aruanne. Tallinn.
- 5 Eespere, K., Prostitutsiooni varjatud pool: räägivad seksi ostjad. Sotsiaalministeeriumi toimetised nr 5/2007
- 6 Trummal, A. 2001. Alaealiste prostitutsioon Tallinnas – nähtuse olemus ja tagamaad. EHI bakalaureusetöö. Tallinn
- 7 Pettai, I., Kase, H. 2002. Prostitutsioon ja naistega kauplemine kui lahendamata probleem Eestis. Eesti riigi suutlikkus tõkestada ja ennetada prostitutsiooni ja naistega kauplemist. Aruanne. Tallinn.
- 8 Pajumets, M., 2002. Keskkooli lõpetavate neidude kui tulevaste töötajate teadlikkus inimkaubitsemisest. (Raport) Tallinn http://www.ehi.ee/publicatsioonid/pajumets_eng.htm
- 9 SOCIO, uuringukeskus 2007. Inimkaubandus ja prostitutsioon. Kutse- ja keskkooliõpilaste perspektiiv. Uurimisaruanne. Tallinn
- 10 Trummal, A. 2003. Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes in Europe: The Sending Countries. Estonian Research Report. Tallinn. http://eusk.tai.ee/failid/ECPAT_Estonia_Country_Report_2003.pdf.
- 11 Eespere, K. 2004. Inimkaubanduse vastane tegevus Eestis: ekspertide hinnangud probleemidele ja lahendustele. ENUT, Põhjamaade Ministrite Nõukogu, Tallinn.
- 12 Pajumets M, 2004. Prostitution – a social problem?: The views on prostitution's nature, causes and effects in the Baltic states and north-western Russia.
- 13 Pettai, I., Kase, H. 2002. Prostitutsioon ja naistega kauplemine kui lahendamata probleem Eestis. Eesti riigi suutlikkus tõkestada ja ennetada prostitutsiooni ja naistega kauplemist. Aruanne. Tallinn.

ESTONIA'S APPROACH:
RESEARCH-BASED
ACTIONS

Stage 2 –
analysis of persons
involved in prostitution
(social profile, reasons)
resulting in identification of
vulnerability aspects.

in prostitution – more than 3000¹, or 3000-5000². According to police data, there were approximately 1000 women involved in Tallinn³. Public opinion regarding prostitution has been liberal. For example, in 2003 51% of Estonians supported the existence of brothels (50% of male respondents and 42% of female respondents answered that brothels are necessary)⁴. In 2008, public opinion regarding brothels was more critical, maintaining that it is necessary to develop support services for people involved in prostitution and who have suffered from human trafficking⁵.

The second stage sought to explore the type of people involved in prostitution, focusing on social-demographic aspects and sexual behaviour. Researchers analyzed the social portrait of women involved in prostitution, their reasons for engaging in prostitution, their attitude towards their customers, the social and demographic portrait of sex service customers, and the medical consequences of prostitution^{6,7,8}. This stage created a clear understanding about psychological and social vulnerabilities of women involved in prostitution⁹, the reality of prostitution (diseases, including HIV and STD, violence, income)^{10,11}, as well as explaining the conditions which lead women to engage in prostitution, placing the main accent on family situation and childhood experience^{12,13}.

The slogan of the third stage is “to look broader”, characterized by focusing on other

- 1 Pettai I, Proos I, Kase H., 2003. Prostitutsioon Eestis: sotsiaalsed riskid ja majanduslik surve. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn. (http://www.oef.org.ee/_repository/Document/Prostitutsioon_Eestis.pdf, 30.11.2007)
- 2 Nordic Council of Ministers. 2002. Report: Campaign in Estonia Against Trafficking in Women of the Nordic Countries and the Baltic States 2002.
- 3 Pettai I, Kase H., 2002. Prostitutsioon ja naistega kauplemine kui lahendamata probleem Eestis. Eesti riigi suutlikkus tõkestada ja ennetada prostitutsiooni ja naistega kauplemist. Aruanne. Tallinn.
- 4 Pettai I, Proos I, Kase H., 2003. Prostitutsioon Eestis: sotsiaalsed riskid ja majanduslik surve. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn.
- 5 Pettai I, Kase H., Proos I. 2008. On the meaning of prostitution in Estonia: critical attitudes are increasing Sotsioloogilise uurimuse materjalid. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn
- 6 Pettai I, Kase H., Proos I., 2006. Prostitutsioon Eestis: ülevaade prostitutsiooni kaasatud naiste olukorrast. Sotsioloogilise uurimuse materjalid. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn (http://www.tai.ee/failid/Prostitutsiooni_kasatute_uurimus_2006.pdf, 30.11.2007)
- 7 Trummal, A., Fischer, K., Raudne, R., 2006. HIV nakkuse levimus ning riskikäitumine prostitutsiooni kaasatud naiste hulgas Tallinnas. Tallinn: Tervise Arengu Instituut
- 8 Klein, M., 2006. Prostitutsioon seestpoolt nähtuna: prostituudid tõlgendavad oma tegevust. Magistritöö. Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikool.
- 9 Pettai I, Kase H., Proos I., 2006. Prostitutsioon Eestis: ülevaade prostitutsiooni kaasatud naiste olukorrast. Sotsioloogilise uurimuse materjalid. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn (http://www.tai.ee/failid/Prostitutsiooni_kasatute_uurimus_2006.pdf, 30.11.2007)
- 10 Pettai I, Kase H., Proos I., 2006. Prostitutsioon Eestis: ülevaade prostitutsiooni kaasatud naiste olukorrast. Sotsioloogilise uurimuse materjalid. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn (http://www.tai.ee/failid/Prostitutsiooni_kasatute_uurimus_2006.pdf, 30.11.2007)
- 11 Trummal, A., Fischer, K., Raudne, R., 2006. HIV nakkuse levimus ning riskikäitumine prostitutsiooni kaasatud naiste hulgas Tallinnas. Tallinn: Tervise Arengu Instituut
- 12 Klein, M., 2006. Prostitutsioon seestpoolt nähtuna: prostituudid tõlgendavad oma tegevust. Magistritöö. Tallinn: Tallinna Ülikool.
- 13 Pettai I, Kase H., Proos I., 2006. Prostitutsioon Eestis: ülevaade prostitutsiooni kaasatud naiste olukorrast. Sotsioloogilise uurimuse materjalid. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn (http://www.tai.ee/failid/Prostitutsiooni_kasatute_uurimus_2006.pdf, 30.11.2007)

particular aspects of prostitution^{1,2}. The health of women is monitored regularly^{3,4,5} and special attention is paid to psychological aspects of prostitution. In recent years, researchers are focusing on other forms of human trafficking, for example, forced labour^{6,7}.

The differences between the Latvian and Estonian research processes on prostitution are significant. In Estonia, prostitution is regarded as one of the HT forms, whereas in Latvia it is formally considered as a risk factor of HT. This necessarily means the application of different attitudes and judgements to this issue. In Estonia, this phenomenon is studied widely, with attention paid to various aspects. It is also of note that public opinion and policy are formed according to the results of research.

The current situation in Latvia, however, is comparable to the first stage of research in Estonia; namely, general and episodal research. However, public and policy makers regard this issue in a rigid and stereotypical manner. In addition, there is a hesitation to view prostitution as a social problem at the level of policy making. Prostitution is still considered to be a woman's free choice and expression of her sexuality.

ESTONIA'S APPROACH: RESEARCH-BASED ACTIONS

Stage 3 –
broader approach, research
of psychological aspects and
awareness of prostitution as
a form of human trafficking.

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The design of the research methodology was based on literature and the analysis of other studies. To identify the causes and conditions of prostitution, a qualitative research method was used – namely, narrative interviews⁸ with women involved in prostitution. Narrative interviews were chosen to allow informants to talk freely about their experiences. The main emphasis in these interviews was placed on the informant's experience in regard to prostitution, including information about their lives before and after engagement in prostitution.

- 1 SOCIO, uuringukeskus 2007. Inimkaubandus ja prostitutsioon. Kutse- ja keskkooliõpilaste perspektiiv. Uurimisuuanne. Tallinn
- 2 Eespere, K., Prostitutsiooni varjatud pool: räägivad seksi ostjad. Sotsiaalministeeriumi toimetised nr 5/2007
- 3 Lõhmus, L., Trummal, A., 2007: Prostitutsiooni kaasatute meditsiiniteenuste külastajate. HIV/AIDS-iga seotud riskikäitumine ja teadmised. Esma- ja korduv klientide võrdlev analüüs
- 4 Lõhmus, L., Trummal, A., 2008: Prostitutsiooni kaasatute meditsiiniteenuste külastajate. HIV/AIDS-iga seotud riskikäitumine ja teadmised. Esma- ja korduv klientide võrdlev analüüs
- 5 Lõhmus, L., Trummal, A., 2012: Prostitutsiooni kaasatute meditsiiniteenuste külastajate. HIV/AIDS-iga seotud riskikäitumine ja teadmised. Esma- ja korduv klientide võrdlev analüüs
- 6 Surva L. 2012. Sunniviisilise töö ja tööjõu ärakasutamise eesmärgil viljeletava inimkaubanduse juhtumirte tuvastamise võimalikkus Eestis. Magistritöö. Tartu Ülikool Õigusteaduskond Tallinnas, avaliku õiguse instituut; juhendaja prof. Juri Saar. Tallinn
- 7 Tootsi B. 2013, Töölase ärakasutamise elemendid kelmuste juhtumites. Uurimustöö. Tartu Ülikool Õigusteaduskond Tallinnas, avaliku õiguse instituut; juhendaja Anu Leps, kaasjuhendaj Anna Markina. Tallinn
- 8 "in the narrative interview, the informant is asked to present the history of an area of interest, in which the interviewee participated, in an extempore narrative... the interviewer's task is to make the informant tell the story of the area of interest in question as a consistent story of all relevant events from its beginning to its end" Flick U., 2006. An Introduction to Qualitative Research: 3d Edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 443.

Researchers paid special attention to conditions that have promoted engagement and staying in prostitution, identifying and determining situations, decisions and critical points that have influenced women's engagement in prostitution.

The initial goal of the research was to acquire 15 interviews with women in each country involved, trying to select women with as different experiences as possible (for example, women who are involved in street prostitution, "massage salons", HT victims, etc.). The analysis of interviews was conducted using principles of narrative analysis¹. The material acquired through interviews was processed and analyzed by comparing and contrasting the biographical details of informants, and searching for common details, regularities and models of behaviour which provide explanations for engagement in prostitution.

Three main research questions were established, which were also used in structuring empirical information:

- 1. What reasons and conditions have promoted women's engagement in prostitution?**
- 2. What is the mechanism of recruitment for prostitution?**
- 3. What mechanisms work to keep women in prostitution?**

In the case of Latvia, information acquired from interviews covers a wider range of problems than the initial goal to determine the causes for women's involvement in prostitution. As far as practicable, this information was analyzed more deeply to better understand prostitution.

Taking into account that it is difficult to find and motivate informants for such research, a major contribution was made by the partner organization of the project – "Jaunatne ar misiju" (movement Freedom 61). Members of this organization persuaded those women involved in street prostitution who periodically visit the movement Freedom 61 café to participate. Participants trusted members of this organization, and thus they also trusted researchers (freely speaking about their experiences, showing photos of their children, etc.) and ensured authentic data. A relative setback of the research was the atmosphere in the café, which was not always suitable for interviews. Each interview was frequently affected by the noise and commentaries of other women. Some interviews took a place in a separate room; however, not all women agreed to speak individually. Therefore, of primary importance was to ensure the trust and frankness of informants, somewhat diverging from the methodology planned initially. In some cases an interview took place at a café table, where women shared their life stories in turn and other women added to each story. In some instances, information on one woman was collected over several consecutive evenings, because the informant was present a number of times. All informants received a present from AVON.

Not all interviews carried out in the café were able to be used for the purpose of the research. Some interviews contained information that was too limited, and in some cases dictaphone recordings were difficult to understand. Therefore, data analysis is based on

1 "a more comprehensive and contextualized version of events and experiences. First the initial situation is outlined ("how everything started"), then the events relevant to the narrative are selected from the whole host of experiences and presented as a coherent progression of events ("how things developed"), and finally the situation at the end of the development is presented ("what became") Flick U., 2006. An Introduction to Qualitative Research: 3d Edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 443.

14 interviews with women who are considered to be involved in street prostitution.

During the research, researchers repeatedly tried to contact women who offer sex services in their own flats or in massage salons. None of these efforts were successful, except one interview with a masseuse and one former bartender in a massage salon, who described activities undertaken in massage salons. As suggested by experts, contacting women involved in so-called latent prostitution and persuading them to give an interview proved to be unfeasible.

For expanding the selection of informants, researchers contacted the administration of Ilūgciems prison to acquire interviews with imprisoned women who have been involved in prostitution. In the feedback from the Latvian Prison Administration received on 9 August 2013, it was stated that none of the imprisoned women had given their consent for an interview. In the time period prescribed for doing interviews, it was also not possible to interview women identified as HT victims and currently receiving rehabilitation services. Specialists involved in the rehabilitation process stated that revealing their prostitution experiences can be traumatic for these women.

To acquire deeper and more varied information about prostitution, nine partially structured interviews with experts were organised (individual and group) involving specialists in Latvia who have extensive knowledge in different prostitution-related aspects. Experts were selected using information from publications about the situation in Latvia, thereby identifying organizations that work with people involved in prostitution. The so-called “snowball sampling” was also employed, whereby experts recommended other specialists as potential informants. The researchers closed the interview process with experts and women involved in prostitution when information became repetitive and saturation was reached. Partially structured interviews within this research were organised with the following specialists:

1. Lysette Klop – a representative of “Youth With A Mission”, the leader of Freedom 61 (LK);
2. Dana – voluntary worker at Freedom 61 (D);
3. The State Police of Latvia, State Police Directorate for Combating Organised Crime, Department No. 3 (Human Trafficking and Souteneurism Combat Unit); head Armands Lubarts (ALu) and senior inspector Vadims Nazarovs (VN);
4. Armands Logins (ALo), chief inspector of the State Police of Latvia, Riga Regional Board, Unit of Control and Operational Coordination;
5. Agita Sēja (AS), manager of Social and HIV prevention programmes, and Bils Muižnieks (BM), social worker at society “DIA+LOGS”;
6. Iluta Lāce (IL), director of Resource Centre for Women “Marta”;
7. Zane Gutberga (ZG), social worker at “Samaritan Association of Latvia” Crisis Centre for Children and Women “Māras centrs”;
8. MA, Mg. Psych. Inga Birkmane (IB), practising psychotherapist;
9. Nikola Dzina (NDz), psychologist and psychotherapist;

An added value of this research proved to be an interview with one former recruiter in Latvia, and one existing recruiter in Estonia, who recounted their experiences in recruiting women for the provision of sex services. For the purpose of ensuring anonymity, the names of these informants are not mentioned in the data analysis, replacing their names with letter

I (informant) and interview number.

In the case of Estonia, the selection of informants was facilitated by the project partner's ("Atoll", non-governmental organization "Eluliin") position as a psychosocial rehabilitation centre for human trafficking victims; it was therefore relatively easy to meet potential informants. As such, the selection of informants was purposeful; experience in prostitution was considered the main criterion, and subsequently researchers sought to select as varied instances as possible.

The researcher addressed informants and explained the general goals and procedures of the research. If a woman consented to give an interview, a suitable place and time was appointed. Most interviews took place in the rehabilitation centre, because informants considered it to be a convenient and safe place. Before the interview, the woman was acquainted with the goals of the research, methodology, provisions of interview procedure, and an assurance of anonymity was given. Participants were offered psychological support due to the painful and traumatizing nature of the events that they were sharing. All informants received presents (sweets, tea, coffee).

In the case of Estonia, the planned 15 interviews with women engaged in prostitution seemed a relatively straightforward task; however, over the period of research the police closed a brothel in Tallinn, arresting 15 taxi drivers, four of the brothel owners and confiscating more than 150,000 euros. Considering that this incident was widely reported by the media and caused a public outcry, women revoked the initially appointed interviews, fearing for their anonymity. Subsequent interviews were conducted upon continuation of the research in autumn 2013.

Seven experts representing state institutions (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Affairs, police) and institutions from the non-governmental sector were interviewed in Estonia. Experts wished to remain anonymous, therefore in further text only the institution represented by interviewees will be revealed.

The results of this research in the two countries could not be compared for every aspect, due to the differences in the research of prostitution and regulations in both countries. For example, Estonian researchers made a larger contribution to analyzing conditions that influence the engagement of women in prostitution, whereas Latvian researchers mainly undertook to describe mechanisms that keep women in prostitution.

In addition, a content analysis of job recruitment websites was conducted in order to contribute to information about recruitment tendencies for offering sex services in Latvia and Estonia as origin countries of HT victims. Such analysis sought to acquire information about recruitment methods and possible new forms used on the Internet. The content analysis was conducted on the most popular job recruitment websites in Latvia and Estonia – www.ss.lv and www.okidoki.ee. The main objective of such analysis was to determine the nature and extent of current recruitment methods. The analysis was conducted in the following categories: section of announcement, language, author, objective of recruitment, promises given (see Annex 1). Acquired data were processed using MS Excel and SPSS.

It is significant to emphasize the limitations of the research – data analysis was mostly based on presumptions made by the researchers. The veracity of information provided in announcements and offers was not verified within the research process. The main objective

of the research was to concentrate on the recruiter and type of recruitment, whereas replies to offers and announcements were not analyzed. The data acquired as a result of the research can be used as the basis for further research, and also provide information on the main recruitment tendencies on the Internet. The results of analysis can be regarded as a representative summary of methods used for recruitment within the particular time period. The analysis was conducted by observing announcements of job searching, employment offers and dating advertisements on a daily basis in previously specified websites.

The majority of recruitment activities occur in private correspondence and using other means of communication which are not publicly available, therefore researchers also employed other approaches to further uncover methods of recruitment. One such alternative approach was the analysis of case law: “Case law in cases on human trafficking and sending persons for sexual abuse. Summary of case law. Supreme Court, 2006”; (“Tiesu prakse lietās par cilvēku tirdzniecību un personu nosūtīšanu seksuālai izmantošanai. Tiesu prakses apkopojums. Augstākā tiesa, 2006. gads”) which is the major summary of case law, offering an insight into recruitment practice. Information provided in this summary allows conclusions to be drawn about recruitment techniques, promises given by recruiters, and the experiences of victims (see Annex 2). In turn, “Informative report of the Ministry of the Interior on results of human trafficking enforcement in Latvia in 2012” (“Iekšlietu ministrijas informatīvais ziņojums par 2012.gada cilvēku tirdzniecības novēršanas un apkarošanas rezultātiem Latvijā”) is the most recent summary information available on the situation of human trafficking in Latvia. It provides useful information for this research concerning recruitment and involvement in prostitution.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. General characterisation of the situation

Prostitution is a complicated and complex phenomenon, at which, as already mentioned, two contradictory perspectives are at work: whether engagement in prostitution should be regarded as an individual's free choice, or a result of different methods of enforcement. Policies are formed according to opinions about these issues held by the public and decision makers.

As a result of careful research and discussions in the public space about prostitution, prostitution in Estonia is understood as a social problem and a form of human trafficking. As such, attention is paid to personal and social aspects which influence engagement in prostitution, and responsibility and blame are not directed solely at those involved in prostitution.

PROSTITUTION
IN LATVIA IN 2013:

- 5-7% male
- Street prostitution spreads
- Young girls are getting involved (age 15-16)
- Forced recruitment is carried out
- In general, involvement of minors reduces

Estonian experts acknowledge that in recent years the fight against human trafficking requires action both at the legislative level (police, ministries) and by non-governmental organizations. In the past five years, mainly due to action from police, the number of human trafficking victims has decreased significantly, at the same time as an inter-institutional support system has been provided to HT victims:

In 2003¹ there were 43 large brothels in Tallinn. The situation has radically changed during the past ten years. Today we do not have such places anymore. However, if we are concerned about forced labour or other forms of human trafficking, we do not have precise data. (A representative of the Criminal Police of Estonia)

Experts also disclose that efficiency of implemented measures differs for various forms of human trafficking. In addition, opinions about HT vary amongst different social agents. However, Estonian experts note that a lot has been done to prevent sexual exploitation:

I presume that Estonia can offer services not worse than in other countries, even better. At the same time this issue is marginal in the public. People think that this is a problem that concerns only a separate part of society, not all of it.

(A representative of non-governmental organization in Estonia)

In Estonia, it has been observed that people are exploited in several ways, for example, fictive marriage and forced labour. Sexual exploitation is being frequently concealed behind legal job announcements, which are difficult to identify and expose.

In Estonia the problem of prostitution as a form of HT is topical and there are mechanisms in place for tackling prostitution as a form of HT. The latter is supported, for example, by implementation of prostitution exit programmes.

In Latvia, opinions differ amongst agents involved in the prevention of human trafficking and between state institutions and various non-governmental organizations. We cannot talk currently about a lasting and unitary inter-institutional cooperation network for preventing prostitution and HT. In terms of legislation and public attitudes in Latvia, prostitution is not considered a social problem and a form of HT. This significantly influences the policy making process.

Police representatives state that due to police activities, the spread of prostitution and recruitment (at least its visible form) has decreased in recent years:

If we open announcement websites, some will say that a half of our population is involved in prostitution. We examine these instances. Someone has 5-6 telephones and has published announcements in all websites, therefore this number is so large. (ALo)

¹ On 1 October 2003, the Bureau of Criminal Police of Estonia formed a special investigation group for fighting souteneurism and the spread of prostitution.

According to some experts, there is no discernible forced recruitment in Latvia, and under-aged involvement has decreased:

When recruiting the first question by those who maintain brothels is — adult or under-aged? And these people are recruited based on mutually beneficial principles. They reach an agreement on payments, nuances and leave. (ALu)

However, other experts and interviewed women state that street prostitution in Riga is expanding — young girls who are just “from school” (15-16 years old) get involved, thereby increasing competition amongst those involved in street prostitution:

A car stops in front of me, but this [young girl] takes my place... It was friendlier before. Now everyone tries to ruin something for others, steal from customers, you cannot trust anybody...(16)

Experts emphasize that differences can be observed between different types of prostitution:

The essence of this phenomenon for people who work on detour roads will differ from female escorts who go to their customer in a hotel. Firstly, regarding money, and secondly, in the internal attitude of a woman against her occupation. For a person who works on detour roads, money is frequently a vitally important aspect. The difference between the sum of money paid on detour roads and paid to female escorts starts at 20 times greater. In such cases we cannot say that money is vitally important for that person (VN)

According to observations from police, 5%-7% of those providing sex services are men, and the remainder are women. It is difficult to draw a strict line between different forms of prostitution. There is a “migration” of women engaged in prostitution — they work on street by day and in clubs by night, where their customers are foreigners. Women who have a good knowledge of foreign languages make extra earnings by providing seasonal escort services. It is considered a career development when a woman working on the street moves to work in a club. The most visible (although it may not be the largest) contingent is represented by people who have engaged in street prostitution. It should be noted that any prostitution-related statistics from specialists are only estimates, because a prohibition issued by the Ombudsman forbids calculations of any kind concerning prostitution in Latvia:

It is based on UN documents that prohibit counting prostitutes. We can only operate with the number of offences committed by prostitutes — how many administrative reports have been issued. (ALu, VN)

Whilst experts agree that it is difficult to generalise about the situation for women in prostitution, those involved in street prostitution usually have a low level of education — primary school level or lower (illiteracy is an issue for some); however, there are women with

a higher level of education and knowledge of several foreign languages. The average age of women engaged in prostitution is 25-35 years, although age is considered to be a secondary aspect in the provision of sex services. A significant proportion has worked on the streets for a long time (15-20 years). The majority of women in street-based prostitution are addicted to drugs or alcohol, and HIV and other diseases are common amongst women in prostitution with addiction problems:

Very often they do not have safe sex [without a condom], because by doing so they can earn more money (LK)

Prices for services have decreased significantly in recent years, as an impact of the economic crisis. In several interviews, “then” is mentioned, as a time when income was very high. Women are currently forced to work every day to survive:

They buy potatoes and milk on the market for five lats and eat for two days. (I4)

Despite the decrease in prices for sex services, there has not been a discernible substantial influx of new people during the crisis. Experts identify the emigration process as the main reason for this:

On average, the number of these people is constant. The economic situation can influence prices. The number of people will rather decrease, because people emigrate. Mainly they go to Germany or the Netherlands to work in clubs. The majority of them now are aware of where they go, because the exchange of information is [good]. If massage clubs here are closed by the State Police Directorate for Combating Organised Crime, they go abroad. When in the past 1.5-2 years arrests of massage salons owners were organized, we received a lot of information that these people go abroad. (ALo)

It can therefore be concluded that prostitution in Latvia is a highly varied phenomenon, with no absolutes that can be applied to all those involved in prostitution. In addition, conflicting information about the slowdown or accelerating expansion of prostitution is controversial; reports are difficult to verify because prostitution is a mutable and adaptable phenomenon. It can depend on infrastructure, the economic situation, financial capacity of customers and other conditions. The manifestation of prostitution or, as characterised by one expert, the relationship of demand and offer in prostitution are also changing, therefore it cannot be asserted that the expansion of prostitution is slowing down or recruitment processes do not involve any type of violence. It is most likely that prostitution as a phenomenon adjusts to the changes in legislation and police activities, which affects how it manifests.

4.2 Conditions that influence women engaging in prostitution

Attention was paid in this research to the analysis of conditions that have influenced engagement in prostitution, taking into account personal, economic and social factors, and the interplay of free choice in the decision-making process.

In her interview, Latvian expert Nikola Dzina divides possible risk factors into three groups:

1. personal and family factors – the social situation of a woman, peculiarities of personality development, psychological trauma (especially sexual violence), physical and social marginality; social isolation, reserved families with a low income level who often change residence; frustrated, controlling mothers, addicted fathers;
2. factors related to prostitution demand – psychological problems of customers, traumas, structures of personality, addictions;
3. factors related to the cultural environment – prostitution is regarded as a normal solution for women in difficult situations (the myth that women are trophies, that prostitution allows women to survive, relationships of patriarchal society).

Another structured division of conditions that promote prostitution can be seen in Table 1 (page 11) through various aspects of vulnerability or defencelessness – psychological, economic and social. Stories from interviewed women and experts affirm the existence of these conditions and reveal additional factors that are inherent to Estonia and Latvia as post-socialist countries. It should be emphasized that distinctions between influencing factors are only theoretical; each particular experience reveals several aspects that have influenced a woman to engage in prostitution.

4.2.1. Personal and family conditions

In total, 14 women were interviewed in Latvia and 15 in Estonia, revealing a set of complicated conditions that have influenced their engagement in prostitution. Women were asked to recount their life stories in order to identify conditions that resulted in entering prostitution.

The circumstances in which these women were raised vary, with some remembering early years as an “ordinary childhood of a happy Soviet child” (I15) or as a “normal family” (I16), and others not wanting, or finding it emotionally difficult, to talk about it:

Why do you ask about parents, if it does not concern the matter?! Father is a soldier, mother — an engineer (I17)

The family was unsuccessful [cries]... parents drank... we lived on our own (I18)

Very often the women talked about their families' and parents' economic problems and addiction to alcohol, which resulted in constant poverty:

All I can remember from my childhood — my mom was drunk and didn't pay attention to

VULNERABILITY: PERSONALITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Factors putting a woman at risk of getting involved in prostitution are both development of personality and psychological traumas, as well as social factors – social situation, isolation, dysfunctional family.

us, our hair was never made... We never had money, we didn't have any toys, we went to school as ugly ducklings. I always thought — when I grow up, I will have everything and I will be independent! (I19)

Such stories were revealed by women who have lived in the most economically depressed regions of the country. In Estonia, the region of Ida-Virumaa was once industrially developed but was influenced by the collapse of the USSR more than other regions, causing a high rate of unemployment and poverty. Currently, a relatively large number of Russian-speaking people live in this region, and have difficulties entering the labour market due to a lack of knowledge of the State language. Families in this region are characterized by low income levels and limited opportunities to join in the economic and social life of the State.

Poverty is a common experience in families of informants. Financial resources have always been limited, which has caused problems in relationships between parents, between parents and children, and in relationships with peers:

We were not allowed to take food from the fridge. Everything was divided in portions for each day. We couldn't get another loaf of bread, sausage or cheese, because it was for dad to take to work for lunch. Of course, we were hungry, therefore we went to other girls, where parents didn't prohibit eating. (I22)

When we had fried potatoes with bread, it was a paradise! (I19)

Other informants living with five people in a single-bedroom flat or in a cold room without windows; a multiple indicator of poverty:

I was ashamed when other children were modern and well dressed, and they laughed at me. Later when I started to go to Tallinn to "work", I finally fulfilled my dream — my own room! (I19)

At the same time there are instances (rather rare exceptions) in which the economic situation in the family has been secure:

I was born in a wealthy family. My mom was a shop department manager in the capital; she was an influential woman. We were three children, I was the youngest, but mom could provide us with everything we wanted. She had so much potential... (I24)

As we see, poverty is not the only condition that "drags" women into prostitution; however, experience of various extreme conditions (hunger, cold, etc.) have indisputably formed their perception of life and influenced their subsequent decisions.

The typical experience of interviewed women was growing up in a large or a divorced family, in which they were raised by their mother or grandmother, or they have had a

VULNERABILITY:
FAMILY SITUATION

- Uncommunicative families with low income, often on the move, various experience of poverty
- Addictions in the family
- Physical abuse among family members, especially towards children
- Emotional abuse, social exclusion

foster-father. This can cause conflicts in relationships and psychological vulnerability. Growing up in a dysfunctional family, in which parents are addicted to alcohol or gambling and violence or marginalization occurs, can precipitate painful and traumatic experiences and thereby increase the possibility of involvement in prostitution or acting in an otherwise inadmissible manner.

In their interviews, several women disclosed experiences of physical and emotional violence both between parents and between parents and children:

Parents quarrelled a lot. Father was drunk and these weren't good times. I tried to defend mother, but sometimes it [quarrel] lasted all night long. (116)

Father started to beat me when I was 12 years old. Then I had long hair. He dragged me by my hair and beat me... (125)

Some women also revealed an experience of **sexual violence when they were adolescent**. It can be difficult for women to talk about this issue; **during conversations rapists were revealed to have been their foster-fathers, family and other friends**. Studies have been conducted in Estonia¹ showing that 20% of women involved in prostitution have experienced sexual violence in childhood or in adolescence. Interviewees also revealed connections between instances of early rape and engagement in prostitution:

I was raped at the age of 16. After that I realized that all men are [censored] and I have to take advantage of them. I have to have revenge on all of them! (119)

Psychological studies have characterised such a reaction as revictimization², in which a woman instinctively repeats the experienced trauma, and this vulnerability is used by recruiters, souteneurs and customers. One of the women says that she was first raped at the age of 13 by a man who visited her parents, and at the age of 15 she was raped three more times. Following this, an acquaintance involved in prostitution suggested that she do it for money:

The first time I got into the car, the man took me to a hotel, paid money, gave me champagne... I just felt — why can't I do it for money, if I get raped anyway?! (17)

For this woman, the attitude of the customer was perceived as a positive change after previous experiences; therefore she comes to believe that if she is treated badly anyway and seen only as a body to be exploited, then why not benefit in some way? In this way, the exploitation of women as sex objects results in an acceptance of the kinds of situations described above, and a decision to gain some benefit. In another interview example, a woman was subjected to sexual interest from her stepfather when she was 12 years old, which led to prostitution on the streets.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

means deliberate physical action aimed at hurting another human being. It manifests as pushing, hitting, pulling hair, kicking and other actions related to using force against another human being.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

may manifest as both physical and emotional violence – molesting the other when this person does not want it, involvement in sexual behaviour and direct sexual contact, as well as calling somebody sexually coloured names.

1 Pettai I., Kase H., Proos I., 2006. Prostitutsioon Eestis: ülevaade prostitutsiooni kaasatud naiste olukorrast. Sotsioloogilise uurimuse materjalid. Eesti Avatud Ühiskonna Instituut, Tallinn (http://www.tai.ee/failid/Prostitutsiooni_kasatute_uurimus_2006.pdf, 30.11.2007)

2 Finkelhor, D.; Ormrod, RK.; Turner, HA. 2007; Van der Kolk, Bessel A. 1989

I started to run away from home and live by myself...then I was selling fish...then I got married, he took me here, to Riga...then he left me and I didn't know where to go. I was 15 years old (I1)

These women have experienced and witnessed violence in their families during childhood and adolescence.

As psychologists and psychotherapists show, such experiences influence further cognitive and behavioural processes.

Women also confirm the issue of marginalization in their stories, in which they feel themselves to be unwanted and unneeded, and do not receive support from those closest to them:

My parents divorced when I was three years old and I was raised by my grandmother. Mom didn't participate in my life, she came and went away... (I15)

I didn't see very much [positive] of my mother. She wasn't addicted to alcohol, but still we never had money — cigarettes, soap operas (I26)

Mother left me when I was 17. She was, I would say, wild. She always searched for a man, wanted to get married. And she found it — he was born in the Ukraine and she went there with my brother. She called me and said that I must pack my things and go wherever I want. (I27)

In some cases, the main carers have died early or moved. In other cases, parents have changed their place of residence, denying their children the opportunity for social contact with other people. In some cases, parents have shown disinterest in the lives of their children either materially, or emotionally. Several stories highlight different attitudes of parents towards their children:

EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE

means deliberate emotional actions aimed at hurting the other. It manifests as calling somebody names, mocking, humiliating, abusing, ignoring and bullying, etc.). Emotional abuse may manifest in words, text messages, paper notes, hate mail, emails, etc.).

I had a younger brother, who was beloved both by mother and grandmother. I resembled my father and I was frequently reprovved because of that — you are not of our family, it would be better if something bad happened to you... (I19)

When I was a child, mom loved my older sister more than me. I was always punished, beaten. I had to wear my sister's clothes, even shoes, despite my shoe size being larger than that of my sister (I22)

Careless and emotionally distant attitudes from adults towards their children impact seriously on self-esteem and self-appraisal. This later results in difficulties relating to peers, and fitting in at school and the labour environment.

It creates behavioural problems during adolescence: running away from home, leaving parents' homes at an early age, leaving school and caring for themselves at an early age. Such problems limit opportunities for adolescents to acquire necessary knowledge and skills, and to develop their talents:

From the age of 8 to 12 I learned ballet. The teacher said that I had good qualities, but money was needed to pay for classes. My mom did not pay, because she was not interested in it. The teacher told me that I can learn for free. She bought pointe shoes, gave money for a costume and asked whether I wanted to learn in Tallinn Ballet School. I wanted it so much! I told it my mom, but she... I couldn't decide it on my own at the age of nine. I learned until the age of 12, but then... Probably, I was ashamed. All girls were normal, except me... my parents also hadn't come to see any of my performances. All the other parents came [cries] (I22)

From a psychological view, childhood and adolescence are very sensitive periods that influence the further course of life. Marginalization in childhood and adolescence significantly inhibits the development of skills, creativity and further achievements. They are forced to solve complicated problems at an early age and deal with physical, emotional and psychological difficulties. They feel unattended, unsafe, underestimated and unsupported, without connection to one particular place and particular people. Such a situation can result in various addictions, casual sex, debts, lack of life goals, loneliness and isolation. As revealed in the next section, women of exactly such psychological structure are the most suitable for recruitment for drug addiction or prostitution:

**The most defenceless are those who don't have family to protect them (IL)
A woman at a deadlock — it is a woman without family. In a broader sense — it is a woman without social support. If she is needed by someone, she won't be at a deadlock (IB)**

It [prostitution] is their choice that is determined by conditions. They are not forced by souteneurs, but by conditions (LK)

Experts also show that the majority of women involved in prostitution come from socially disadvantaged families. Family situation contributes to prostitution in the sense that women learn a particular lifestyle and models of behaviour. For example, an interviewee was influenced by her mother's example selling drugs, and did not consider other alternatives for her own life:

I looked at my mom's example and that's it! (I2)

Painful experiences induce women to try to leave their parents' home as soon as possible to look for emotional connection and support, or doing things that have been previously forbidden:

Previously I was afraid to try, because my stepfather was quite evil. But after that I gave freedom to my soul. (110)

Psychologists describe this as breaking limits: if adolescents are forbidden to break limits, they find a solution in deviant behaviour, and for girls it can be expressed through testing their sexual limits.

Upon leaving home, however, most women are not ready for an independent life. They still need support to heal the harm experienced previously, and to learn social skills. Solutions for existing problems are frequently found in a relationship with a man, to whom the woman has a strong emotional attraction and who can exert influence over events:

I left home at the age of 14 and lived with my husband. In the beginning we lived very well — he worked, I worked and learned. Our first child was born. For three years everything went very well (128)

I left home and started to live with my friend at the age of 13. He was slightly older and involved in the criminal world. A few years later he was imprisoned and I returned to my mother (125)

First he started with slot machines, then casino... Husband got into debts, large debts. When these people took our flat and it was not enough to cover his debts, I entered the sex industry for the first time. To cover the debts of my husband (128)

Interviews reveal that reliance on a man can lead to prostitution. A lack of education and job experience or the influence of divorce can result in prostitution being seen as almost the only way of survival:

I had everything! I am not used to work! I have no education! (18)

As we can see, women become dependent on the men with whom they live. They lack a support system, control over their own lives and self-determination. In most cases, their situation only worsens and creates complex problems and depression. Thus, these women become a target for recruiters for drug and sex services.

In some cases, the determinant precondition for prostitution is any sudden, tragic incident that significantly changes the life of a woman:

Then me and my husband moved back to Estonia, everything was perfect. We had a business, we developed one thing, then another. We bought a flat, our son grew up, he also started to earn good money. We were wealthy. And then my husband and son got in a car accident [cries]. It was the worst thing that has ever happened to me. And I started to drink... (124)

**GENDER ASPECT:
WOMAN'S DEPENDENCY
ON MAN.**

Stereotypes and gender roles aggravate occurrence of woman's psychological and economic dependency based on asymmetric power balance between genders.

Conditions related to personality, family situation and life events can force women to become involved in prostitution. However, none of these conditions make involvement in prostitution obligatory and inevitable. These aspects have to be regarded as serious risk factors and trends for further discussions.

4.2.2 Economic conditions

Experience of poverty and a lack of skills necessary for education and labour market participation suggest low status and low paid jobs, which lead back to poverty. At the same time, there are several examples where women have had sufficient knowledge and skills to enter the labour market in the Soviet period. The collapse of the USSR brought new labour relationships for which women were ill-prepared/untrained; therefore, macro-economic factors must also be recognised as conditions that promote prostitution.

As mentioned above, economic vulnerability can also be caused by dependence on care and protection from a man:

At the age of 18 I got married, then I got pregnant. We lived together for five years, but my husband came from the orphanage, and it was very difficult to live with him. We divorced. After the divorce I couldn't find a job, I had a little child, who was ill all the time. I had no money; debts started to accrue... (I19)

Such stories show a marked sense of responsibility for their spouses, for their children and for solving money problems, paying debts, etc.

It is this sense of responsibility for those closest to them which forces an engagement in prostitution to earn money.

Raising children alone also acts as a very strong motivator:

I had a little child and I had to provide him with some foundation for life. Now he has grown up, but I have four cats. I can't drown them. I have responsibility! (I5)

In the majority of cases, prostitution is used to meet the basic needs of children. However, there is another example in which a woman used money earned through prostitution to materially support her sisters, so that other children would not mock them at school. Women can take significant risks to provide for their children; for example, working at night whilst their children remain at home alone.

One of the saddest stories told within the scope of this research came from an adolescent girl who took responsibility for children that were not her own, but had been left without care. She worked in a market as a seller and used the earnings to sustain these children, but it was insufficient and she engaged in prostitution.

If I bought something, I bought it for the little ones. Of course, older ones were immediately there and asked, but I fed the little ones first. Then if something was left, I gave it to the older children. I was simply so sorry for them (I12)

Prostitution is also a means for meeting the individual's basic needs. In a situation of crisis when a woman has no resources for living and shelter, prostitution is chosen as the most suitable alternative:

I wanted to survive. I didn't want to do anything criminal and get in jail, because I had been there already. I don't want to go there for a second and third time (I1)

The most frequently observed economic conditions are the so-called situational conditions, which are conditions that have been present shortly before a woman enters prostitution. Interviews show a period of time in which women can deal with traumatic situations; however, this is difficult without external support. As a result, an emotionally significant event becomes "the last straw":

My husband kept me and our daughter locked in the flat for approximately a month. He took everything — keys, telephone, sometimes he beat me. Then once I hid the mobile phone from him and called one of my friends. He came and pulled me out through window. He owned a "club" and offered to stay there. After all that had happened I consented (I28)

At that time my husband beat me very hard. He had done it before, but this time it was especially hard. He broke my nose and did it in front of the children and his sister. Then I decided to leave him and responded to the announcement searching for prostitutes (I22)

I had nothing to eat and didn't have a job. Soup brought by my mother was not enough to survive the entire week. I was 16 years old. I had a friend who already "worked" in Tallinn. Previously she had called me several times and asked me to join her. Usually I refused, but when my stepfather once more tried to rape me, I agreed. On the next day a car was sent to pick me up (I25)

It can be concluded that engaging in prostitution is not a sudden decision or end in itself. Repeated attempts are made to overcome challenging conditions in a 'socially acceptable' manner. When this fails, prostitution becomes the last attempt to find a solution, reflecting defeated hopes and disappointment.

Our evidence shows that for most women involved in prostitution, sex services are a tool to earn money for drugs, because a distinct majority of those involved in street prostitution have a drug and/or alcohol addiction. Several stories from women regarding their

VULNERABILITY: SITUATION FACTORS

These are factors which characterize circumstances and issues encountered by a woman at the specific time and affecting women's freedom of choice. For example, acute need for money, death of a relative; availability of prostitution infrastructure in the nearest vicinity (massage parlours, brothels); advertising in media and public places which each individual and all together are underlying determinants of woman's behaviour

involvement in prostitution begin with a confession that drugs were tried first. Drug addicted forces women to find a route to earning quick money, and often this is prostitution:

I can't steal. And this is how I can earn money more easily. There are, how to say, bad people, but what can we do? By doing it we can earn fast... (I3)

More than a half of women work to buy drugs (I10)

70-80% are addicted to drugs, psychotropic drugs, alcohol (ALo)

Addiction leads some women to attempts at stealing; working on the streets follows as a last chance to earn money and support their addiction. Drug addiction can also lead to imprisonment.

As post-socialist countries, economic circumstances in Latvia and Estonia are crucial to understanding women's involvement in prostitution. It is especially pronounced during periods of economic recession when a high rate of unemployment, low wages and debts incur a range of social problems. Economic conditions affect the opportunities of individuals and families to meet their basic needs; therefore, addiction or involvement in prostitution can be seen as an understandable reaction to such conditions.

4.2.3. Social and cultural aspects

The interrelation of such conditions can lead those with low levels of education, weak social skills and social isolation to addiction. This set of psychological and social conditions can prove favourable for recruiters.

In a larger sense, the social environments in Latvia and Estonia are not favourable to those with the experiences described above.

Women are considered as objects:

Since starting to preen small girls in their childhood, we already teach them that the most important quality and role of a woman is related to her appearance, reproductive function and dependence from a man. To be attractive to a man, she must be pretty and obedient (NDz)

Such ideas lead to self-objectification and the realisation that she has few options for improving the quality of her life other than selling her body. For example, when one of the informants was asked how she came to know about prostitution, she answered:

It seemed to me that I knew about it already since my early childhood. Wherever I looked, sex was used everywhere. Already since my childhood I knew that a woman can achieve a lot through sex. If you allow many things to be done to yourself, you can achieve everything (I13)

GENDER EQUALITY

involves a principle that all human beings, irrespective of their gender, may freely develop their skills, professional career and make choices without restrictions set by stereotypes and gender roles, and everybody has equal access to resources and possibilities to use them provided. It is a situation when a woman and a man have equal social value bestowed, and contribution of women in common good of the society and problems they face are perceived as tantamount. It is crucial to discern between the notions of "equality" and "sameness". Equality of genders means ensuring equal rights and opportunities to both genders, and not to perceive men and women as one and the same.

This understanding is significant: from childhood it is clear that her body can be a product.

The former recruiter also observed typical relationships between men and women by:

A woman is a whore in her life. If she consents to have sex, she is a whore. If she refuses, she is also a whore [in the assessment and attitude of a man] (I14)

Although expressed bluntly, this expresses the essence of the matter — a woman in this society is considered an object to satisfy the needs of a man.

Society cultivates an ideal of femininity which encourages certain models of behaviour — obedience to her husband, taking care of her family and her own appearance:

There are also women who are geishas in their nature — a woman who enjoys giving joy to men. And they feel good about it. Geishas were also kept as princesses. They were trained to give pleasure, to get pleasure, have good manners, develop talents, femininity... In Moscow there is also a school of geishas. We also have a school of good wives, schools of femininity... (IB)

Girls are also taught that their value is determined by the existence of a man by her side. A man is depicted as a saviour, protector, carer; this can leave the woman unable to provide for herself in the absence of her 'saviour'. One expert states that when girls are raised based on the idea of "who will buy it for me?", prostitution is implicated in the very basis of upbringing. Experts also emphasise that we live in a consumer society, where everything can, in theory, be bought and sold:

If our society has the perception that buying sex is normal, it cannot be changed by implementing laws (VN)

This means that the values of consumer society support the selling of a woman's body (and a man's), and prostitution is a quick and readily achievable option.

One expert recounts a story in which an under-aged girl tried to earn some money on the street in order to buy a birthday present for her boyfriend. Among other motives, experts also point to a desire amongst women to shop "in Sky&More, instead of Maxima", namely, personal ambitions and social aspiration. However, this is more typical amongst women who provide sex services in clubs and flats:

A person from a well-situated family. Parents have bought (in the car salon) a new BMW 3 Series as a present for graduating secondary school. Considering that parents are working people, they said — you have a car, but you must earn money for gas yourself. Study

and work! This person figured out — why spend money? I am young and pretty, I need the time for parties and I need money for the gas. In the group of similarly thinking persons she was offered — let's go to the hotel, have fun, there are well-situated customers... If you will like, it will be fun and you will earn money. Can we say that in this case for this person it is vitally important, for survival? Totally excluded! (VN)

Such examples show that prostitution as a method to earn money for living or additional income is accepted by society. Poverty or other social/individual problems influence genders differently. Men do not usually consider prostitution as an option for earning money, whereas for women it is among those available for consideration. This is determined in large measure by societal mores regarding the social roles of men and women. In addition, if state legislation permits a suitable infrastructure (advertisements, “massage salons”), it has legally sanctioned the consideration of women as objects and the exploitation of their bodies. This analysis of conditions which influence prostitution conforms to the research on the portrayal of women in the online environment. Mass media play a decisive role in determining whether women will view their body as a product and consider involvement in prostitution to be normal.

Table 2 is a supplement to Table 1, developed following the results of the research conducted in Estonia and Latvia. The research affirms all theoretically-established vulnerability aspects, revealing them in greater detail.

Table 2

Vulnerability aspects that influencing involvement of women in prostitution (supplemented with results of the research)¹

Psychological vulnerability	Economic vulnerability	Social (cultural) vulnerability
Experience of early childhood (sexual exploitation, violence)	Unemployment Poverty, especially long-term (hunger, cold, bad living conditions) *	Family conditions (dysfunctional families — addictions, violence, carelessness of parents, divorced families, large families, frequent change of residence)
Psychological traumas (low self-confidence, self-esteem, broken personal limits, weak ability to control emotions, high tolerance towards chaotic lifestyle, mental illness, insecurity, sense of being unwanted)	Unemployment	Influence of family members, friends (if they are involved in prostitution and support it)
Drug addiction	Low wages	Lack of support from relatives, friends and other figures of support, marginalization (satisfying needs, in case of crisis, preventing development of talents and skills)
Early leaving of parents' home, pregnancy	Losing domicile	Limited social skills, weak social contacts, lack of connection
Sudden crisis, painful losses	Possessing skills unsuitable for labour market or lack of skills, low level of education	Prostitution expansion (the number of women involved in prostitution)
Ambitions, desire to "achieve more"	Taking responsibility for a spouse, children	Existence of infrastructure for sex services (souteneurs, "massage salons" advertisements)
Desire to avoid routine job	Lack of state language knowledge	Demand for sex services
	Residing in economically depressed region	Dominant attitude of the society towards prostitution, normalization of prostitution, objectification of women

¹ Supplements to theoretical aspects of vulnerability mentioned in Table 1 of empirical material are highlighted in bold.

4.3. Current tendencies of recruitment for providing sex services

4.3.1. General mechanism of recruitment

During the research process, a very similar recruitment mechanism was revealed by women involved in street prostitution, former recruiters and experts. The main conclusion is that a recruitment process involving physical violence has not been observed. This is confirmed by studies conducted elsewhere. At the same time, the lack of physical violence does not exclude the existence of other types of violence, and it can serve as a counter-argument for the legalization of prostitution.

The scheme and methods developed and used by recruiters do not involve physical violence, because this may increase the responsibility of recruiters. Rather, responsibility for all activities can be placed on those being recruited:

This scheme is so elegant and manipulative that victims don't even have a clue [what is going on]. Rather they have a question after that — how could I allow this?! (NDz)

One expert described a typical recruitment scheme, in which the standard victim is a girl in late adolescence (18±5 years):

Mostly they have cold relationships with their parents...or they are unattended. Anyway, they are alone. They don't have any support system, for various reasons. Most typically, they have experienced sexual violence in their childhood, at least touching or a sexual moment, which is not discussed. And then these girls somewhere and somehow meet someone... They find a friend or a man, who undertakes the function these girls greatly need — to take care of them. There are instances when they are given food and a place to sleep, but there have also been instances when these people give some extras, which this child is not able to obtain himself/herself. He wants, but he can't. There is some function of care — material or emotional. (NDz)

Examples described here conform to information provided in the section on causes for involvement in prostitution. Women are vulnerable in many ways and so are accessible for drug distributors and organizers of sex services.

For the most part, recruitment for prostitution is not institutional or formal, but rather proceeds through personal relationships. In stories from interviewees, friends are mentioned as the main support. “Friend”, in this case, has an extensive use, describing both girls known since childhood and random acquaintances. A friend is considered to be someone to whom a woman shows emotional trust. In any case, a friend is the most frequently used synonym for a recruiter:

RECRUITMENT METHODS: “FRIEND” AND “MULTI- LEVEL MARKETING”

Persons who win trust of potential prostitute, provide her with emotional and other kind of support are called “friends”. These can be either childhood friends or friends obtained in other walks of life known a long time, or recent acquaintances. These “friends” play a role within a kind of multi-level marketing “come yourself and bring another one along”, or, in case of human trafficking, do not receive their share of pay before a new person is engaged.

RECRUITMENT METHODS:
“YOU WON’T HAVE TO DO
ANYTHING”

Violence is seldom used in recruitment; therefore, the role of “friends” and getting used to the idea of selling oneself is part of the recruitment process. Initially, no sexual acts are required from the person, thus allowing getting accustomed to the environment and the idea that prostitution is “normal” routine.

Each story about why they start is different, but in most cases some girls bring another girl, a friend brings a friend, and this girl realises that here she can earn money... (I12)

Recruitment can be considered as network marketing – “come yourself and bring your friend with you”. Under the influence of a souteneur, or by their own initiative, women already involved in prostitution involve others in their network.

Frequently, acquaintance with a “friend” occurs in critical situations when there is no shelter, food or support:

I remember it very well — I am sitting and a girl approaches me. “Why are you crying?” she asks. I reply: “I don’t know where to go, don’t know what to do.” (I1)

As mentioned above by the expert, recruiters undertake this significant function of care; offering crucial physical and emotional help by which they acquire the woman’s trust.

The process of drawing someone in to drug addiction or prostitution can take time, depending on how successfully the recruiter obtains the individual’s trust. At this stage, the recruiter appears to be welcoming and sympathetic, and women feel that they are finally understood and supported. Force is not used in the recruitment process which, of course, helps to lower defences and promote trust:

So we started to be friends. Sometimes she offered to buy a beer: “Let me pay for your beer. Stay, I am sad being alone.” Okay. Without any suspicions I stayed there, we talked... after some time she invited me to come with her, saying that I won’t have to do anything and she will give me half the money for that. Later Liene invited me to live with her... We lived like this for approximately five years. (I12)

The most typical phrase during the recruitment period is “You will not have to do anything”.

No one is forced to get in a car; rather, there is an invitation to go for a walk:

A car stopped and it left such an impression on me! How isn’t she afraid to go there or do anything else! I was in the capital for the first time in my life, you know. She said: “Stay here, don’t go anywhere. I will be back right away!” Now I understand where she went and what she did there, but then?!” (I1)

Later, “beginners” are taken for a ride and told that they “won’t have to do anything”; they feel detached from this world. Customers are also very sensitive and careful towards beginners:

A car stops and there is an elderly man... He gets out of the car, approaches me and says: "Why didn't you come?" "Why should I?" "Oh, it seems that it's your first time." "What first time?!" "So you are here for the first time here. Maybe we could go to a café?"... What a meal! Plus he gave me money! (11)

This initial phrase "You won't have to do anything" seems incongruous; why would someone give me half of his/her money for nothing? However, this is a rational action for recruiters, who will be compensated later for this initial investment. Furthermore, these words are highly effective:

Initially it all looks like a funny event. There are polite men around, there is sex and suddenly financial support appears. Actually, these girls very often don't understand that this money is a payment for sex services. And this scheme starts to repeat itself as a party. When there has previously been sexual violence, it may initially cause revulsion, but it can also seem to be a self-evident action. If this child has permanently suffered from sexual violence, it doesn't mean anything for him/her anymore. There is neither a moral, nor physical component. It is a part of what he/she is used to. (NDž)

Gradually, this woman grows used to this lifestyle and the values of the people she meets.

Moreover, she often does not have other alternatives and judges that she can earn money in this way, and so possible resistance gradually disappears. There is also a sense of shame that people have helped her, but she cannot repay them:

How can I ask for something from everyone all the time? However, in reality it was very difficult to do it ... to get over it ... after that I started stealing (11)

The combination of unemployment and a lack of knowledge and experience means that prostitution can become a real and seemingly the only solution. There can also be the belief that it will not be difficult (especially when they receive encouragement from those around them) and that it will be easily-earned money. Recruiters promise a wealthy life and an opportunity to live better than others with no personal penalty. The realisation of what is entailed comes later:

I thought that it would be an easy occupation. Actually, it is not. Here you have risks, you get beaten, cut. Police hurt us. (15)

I have been working as a prostitute for a long time. My life took such a course. I have neither mother nor father, I had to eat something, to live somewhere. On the street I could get money, get acquainted with girls ... the street has crushed all my life, but without it I would have starved. I didn't have any choice, I endured all humiliations, all monsters ... there are a lot of sick people, many girls have died. (16)

Only after arriving abroad do these girls start to realise what have they got into. And then the survival instinct switches on (NDž)

Contact with people already involved in prostitution or drug addiction plays the main role in the recruitment process. Experts call it “the second wave” of recruitment. Recruiters use the place and time (situation) proficiently in order to succeed.

In their stories, women also reveal the role of souteneurs, who are less familiar with them than their friends and likely to be without the emotional connection. However, they too exhibit a positive and understanding attitude in the beginning:

At that time souteneurs were on Čaka Street. And then she [gypsy] approached us. She asked whether we want to earn money. Of course, I had nobody to buy clothes for me. We were told to dress a bit more revealing. We knew what we would have to do. We just said that we haven't slept yet with anybody, but we were told that there are many other ways to do it. We were taught everything and we didn't have any problems (I13)

An expert from Estonia reports that there has been an instance in his practice in which all the girls in a small village, except one, were involved in prostitution through a local woman who owned a brothel.

RECRUITMENT METHODS: PROCURERS

Soliciting into prostitution is a slow process, which is usually orchestrated, without physical coercion. Procuring means intermediary function and arrangement of prostitution which is subject to criminal penalty in Latvia. Nevertheless, the role of procurers is often played by spouses of the person, drug dealers, or in the hidden prostitution (on the premises) – representatives of the highest level organized crime (in massage parlours, apartments, bars, etc.).

It can be a slow and gradual process of growing familiarity with this environment before the recruited woman agrees to engage in prostitution. However, in all instances engaging in prostitution is managed in an extremely careful and persistent manner:

Here and there everyone talks about one and the same thing. Does the entire city think only about it?! (I1)

One of the informants revealed that at the age of 10, while walking in the park with her friends, she met men who paid 1-2 lats for doing certain things (“to look, to work with a hand”):

In the beginning they hid it from me, they thought that I would tell someone because I was from a quite good family. After about a year I realised what was going on. At the age of 13 I ran away from home. We were sitting in the park, had a beer, we needed money ... at that time I earned only by accompanying my friend and standing to the side. Later that man asked me to look and touch some parts of his body for extra money. (I12)

Personal contact with people involved in the sex industry is therefore an efficient method of recruitment. Furthermore, recruitment for prostitution is a gradual process, and so women have time to become accustomed to it and internally “normalize” the situation and their involvement.

It is important to emphasize that exactly the same recruitment mechanism also works when involving someone in drug addiction. Women may be offered drugs by people to whom

they are emotionally close or whose lifestyle they find attractive:

My mum was addicted to drugs ... she sold them ... and I got interested [at the age of 13] (I2)

The main role is again played by an understanding friend acting carefully and imperceptibly to create familiarity with a particular manner of thinking and behaving. It can be difficult to distinguish which goal is primary – prostitution or drug addiction.

From the perspective of a recruiter, drug addiction gives more of a guarantee that involvement in prostitution will follow. Conversely, drug use may follow involvement in prostitution as a coping mechanism.

Nevertheless, the two are very closely related, and the physical infrastructure is developed in such a way that one can earn money for drugs through prostitution and purchase them in the same area (street). The former bartender in the massage salon admitted that the infrastructure is always well-considered:

Premises were exploited very efficiently. The bar was open twenty four hours a day, so it always had utilised capacity. There is a solarium, massage, customers can have a drink before or after ... and then I already knew – that customer goes for a massage, comes back and orders 50 grams of cognac with lemon ... it is a system (I32)

To some extent, it can be said that the drug addiction of women in prostitution decreases the amount of organised crime on the streets, as one expert who has worked with women for two years reported. This means that there is also no souteneurism – women work to earn a living and they must not be forced to do it anymore. In some instances, the partner of a woman acts as souteneur. In the majority of cases, the partner is also addicted and women earn money both for themselves and for their partner. It is debateable whether street prostitution in such instances involves organised crime: some experts state that this does not represent organised crime because there are no third parties organising prostitution, whereas one can argue that separate organisation is not necessary at this level, because these women do not have any other choice.

What we see is a lack of hope, that there is no other option. The street is the lowest possible situation (LK)

In the case of street prostitution, the third parties who benefit are drug distributors.

More direct and focused recruitment for prostitution takes place at higher levels, although it is also true that at this level it is not necessary to lie or use physical enforcement. Most women start with the goal of earning money for material things that they could not afford previously. In comparison to other alternatives, earning money through prostitution can appear to be a rational choice:

Flats of European standards ... she says — why should I work in Maxima for 200 lats? Here I earn such money in one week and I can work when I want (ALo)

Such a choice does not suggest that prostitution is a “dream” profession for women. Statements from interviewees rather show it to be a rational, normal and, compared to other methods, more profitable way of earning money. In which there is the possibility to meet individual and family needs. Furthermore, interviews with women in Latvia and Estonia show that their needs are not extravagant, comprising a separate room or flat, and financial and material stability.

Consequently, this research reveals a key recruitment method in which recruiters use a woman’s vulnerability; demonstrating care and support until they have obtained a customer for drugs and a resource for prostitution. However, another recruitment mechanism is revealed very clearly both in the interview with a former recruiter and during the content analysis of websites conducted by researchers. Provision of sex services has become institutionalized in Latvia and is considered to be like any other job. Recruiters no longer consider it to be a deviant or secret activity. Rather, it is depicted as a job with career development, flexible working hours and so on. In all probability, these tendencies have to be considered as an attempt to normalise and strengthen (legalise) prostitution.

In the late 1990s, the former recruiter and his wife were engaged in recruiting sex services for a Swiss club network. They recruited more than 10 women; however, they believe that several thousand girls were recruited and sent abroad at that time:

RECRUITMENT METHODS: JOB OFFERS

Job offers may be direct (work at a brother, bar, “massage parlour”), usually abroad, or indirect and misleading – offering a seemingly legitimate job, for example, at a model agency, whereas in reality other services are required in the working environment. Irrespective of whether the person agrees to sexual exploitation, or is sent on false pretexts, it will be considered to be human trafficking.

They were taken to Switzerland. Girls were offered money to ... how to say... in short, vodka in Switzerland is enormously expensive and they have to obtain it from their customers. Later they can sleep with these customers, if they want. It is not forced, but they were told clearly. They were instructed in Latvia. I searched for them by using the announcement “job offer” ... also hunted for them on Čaka Street (I14)

These recruiters were themselves brought into this occupation by a sister-in-law. She was a “leading employee” in a recruitment network in Switzerland:

At the beginning she provided sex services herself. Then she married an old senior and raised her living standards, didn’t work anymore, but supplied and controlled (I14)

Women involved in prostitution were recruited on Čaka Street, whereas women without prostitution experience were sought through announcements. Recruiters’ attitudes towards these two groups of women were different. Women involved in prostitution were informed about the implications of this work in full and directly, with the difference in profit between Latvia and Switzerland highlighted. In addition, these women were protected from souteneurs, because they “take away money from girls”. The recruiter acted confidently, carefully, and also built rapport with the women, thereby obtaining their trust:

“She already thought that she would come with me” (I14)

The recruiter remembered a case when one of the recruited girls was “a sister of an influential Criminal Police officer”. She went to earn money abroad in full awareness of the situation. Inexperienced women were recruited through announcements:

An announcement was posted in a newspaper offering a job abroad. She called and we arranged to meet in a café ... this café cost me a lot of money!!! We met, I explained what she would have to do, how much it would cost, how much she could keep...she agreed and went away (I14)

Sometimes it was difficult to persuade women without experience:

There were some whom I had to brainwash a little bit longer [to emphasize all the benefits they get, to console them]... some needed new teeth, pretty clothes, a hairdresser; that is to say, we made an appropriate appearance and she was ready (I14)

Stories told by recruiters confirm that a recruiter tries to gain trust in different ways, showing care to a woman with the intention of entrapment. Nevertheless, the term “brain-washing” as mentioned above was used rarely. Mostly, the nature of the deal was explained clearly, without lying or embellishment. As stated by recruiters, the group of women was diverse – unemployed and indigent, along with women about whom nobody would suspect their involvement in prostitution - from rural areas and from cities. He asserts that it was the free choice of these women; proven, for example, by the participation of economically secure women:

I don't know what they are missing, but they are ready to go, that's it, goodbye! (I14)

Recruiters think that a similar system is also used currently. Speaking about why women agree to become involved, it is alleged to be the desire to earn “fast money”, “to sit in a bar with men, instead of weeding beets on the field”.

In general, the attitude shown by recruiters indicates that they consider women as objects responsible for their decision.

For example, recruiters describe an instance in which a girl had been sold within Latvia several times, until she went abroad. Descriptive words used by informants exclude the idea of a free person capable of self-determination; she is only an object:

My neighbour brought her to me and said that he can't bring her to his home and show to his wife. He couldn't throw her out of the car either. I put her to sleep, and the next morning we bought some clothes on the market and then they took and sold her. They drove around and sold her. For 10 lats, 15 lats ... they also had discounts ... In the forest, all

forest workers in a row ... she was allowed to keep all the money, because they [drivers] only enjoyed themselves. For three days they drove around our district and offered her to people. Then she went to Switzerland (I14)

When asked why he refused to take money in this case, the recruiter said that he received money for sending her to Switzerland and that this business involves huge money, taking into account that he received 700 lats at the lowest level of their hierarchy.

Conflicts with police were not reported during recruitment, because recruiters were not acting violently. This sense of free will excludes the fact that women will go to the police to make complaints.

The recruiter exhibits an ambivalent attitude towards his occupation – he condemns it, considers it to be deviant, but at the same time receives money. He left this occupation because of moral considerations, and are no longer in contact with the sister-in-law.

A similar experience of recruitment is recounted by the recruiter from Estonia. In mid-1990s she became involved in prostitution and for several years was “a girl”, later becoming a brothel administrator. When police closed the brothel, she got married and moved to Germany. She has opened a “club” in a small provincial town which complies with the local jurisdiction and where customers receive erotic massages and sex services. She reports that there are currently three women “employed”.

By using her personal contacts, as well as announcements in newspapers and on the Internet, the recruiter invites women from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to Germany.

Mostly I take women from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. 90% of Estonian women who come to me are calm and hardworking. There are more problems with those from Vilnius and Riga. (I31)

The recruiter also describes the social and demographic profile of women who respond to the announcements:

The most responses come from 36-38 years old women. They all have problems — financial, psychological, family problems. They run away from the violence at home, from their husbands. They are all afraid. They talk with me for hours, ask many questions, sometimes call several times a day ... those who come to me are in a very bad mental condition. Sometimes we sit and talk all night long. I calm them down. (I31)

This story attests to the idea above about various aspects of female vulnerability and helplessness, and shows how pliant and easy to subdue they are at such moments.

The recruiter explained that women in her “club” “work” on average 3-4 weeks, which, of course, is not beneficial for her:

Several [women] get tired very soon, 3-4 weeks and they want to go home. Other walk around from one place to another, because at the start “beginners” earn more at any place. (I31)

The recruiter asserts that violence against women is not necessary and mostly this occupation is not dangerous. They must be cautious of Albanians living in Germany, because they seize documents and sell these women.

Latvian experts state that in recent years one can speak about the so-called “chain recruitment”:

I go somewhere to search for a better job, I work in one specific field, organise a marriage or earn a lot of money in a brothel. I go back, describe it to my acquaintance, a friend or a relative and she follows in my footsteps. The second option — I go to do something and when I have done it I am told that I can receive my money only when I have found the next customer. There are such harsh rules. However, violence is practically eradicated (ALu)

They believe recruitment occurs in private relationships without souteneurism:

Certainly some friends might write in draugiem.lv that I come to Riga, I have a good life, there are brands — Dolce & Gabbana, Armani and everything is perfect. However, it is not recruiting to get any benefit from it. No, it is not so widespread (ALo)

Experts report that a particular group of girls is selected; for example, girls with elementary education or mental retardation are chosen for fictive marriages:

They don't select girls according to the same principles as for prostitution — for prostitution they have to be pretty. These girls just need a passport, have to be unmarried and ... not very smart. (ALu)

Also the former bartender indicates intelligence as an inexpedient quality:

I was too smart. You know, the division of work was the following — I worked during the day with my intellect, whereas my colleague worked at night with her charm (I32)

The most striking conclusion obtained from interviews with recruiters was that for most recruitment methods, persuasion, lying or physical violence are not necessary, which supports the idea that women are exercising free will. There is transparency in the process of recruitment, therefore prostitution is institutionalised. Other forms of abuse and manipulation are used instead of physical violence, taking advantage of different aspects of helplessness and vulnerability — lack of money and social support, consequences of sexual exploitation and so on.

Therefore, the relative lack of violence is not a sufficient argument for the legalisation of prostitution or putting all the responsibility only on the shoulders of women involved in prostitution. Street prostitution is not a form of organised or managed prostitution. The situation is different in the recruitment process for clubs in Latvia and abroad, as well as for fictive marriages.

In the research, special attention was paid to whether engaging in prostitution can be considered to be the exercise of free will.

After summarising the information provided by informants and opinions from experts, it was concluded that the component of free will does not appear during the process of involvement in prostitution.

Psychologists explain that some people have structures of behaviour in which any action (“to steal, to use drugs”) seems normal and admissible, and it is not considered as deviant behaviour. Similar behaviour, at least theoretically, can be observed in nymphomaniacs who consider such types of sex to be a necessity, rather than dictated by conditions. As expert observations show, both instances mentioned above are rarely seen:

Surveying the same individuals again, maybe I have seen and talked to one or two in my experience who say — yes I like this job! The rest do it because of something that forces them to do it — drugs, loans; there can be many reasons. Whereas men do it only for a better life, because male sex is rarely offered, consequently, prices are much higher, money is the only motive. (ALu)

The fact that sexual relationships are not their goal is also affirmed by stories from informants. Interviewed women separate their occupation from their feelings very strictly:

Customers are customers, whereas love is love! (I3)

As stated by an expert, it may be that special pleasure from such sexual relationship can be derived by that small “layer” of women in prostitution who can choose their customers themselves:

They may mostly work with their regular customers, who are “real” men, to whom it is a pleasure to offer these services (BM)

On the contrary, another expert notes that such desire should rather be regarded as a specific peculiarity of personality and is not usually related to integrity of a person and maturity of the personality. He emphasises that if a woman does not derive pleasure from sexual relationships, it can be regarded as a legal rape.

In general, research participants declare that despite the wide range of motives and conditions for women’s involvement in prostitution, the specifics of this “job” mean that it cannot be considered a vocation.

Empirical material from this research does not provide evidence that prostitution is the end in itself for these women:

Was it a voluntary decision?... No, it was a forced decision (I18)

Prostitution is regarded a legitimate, publicly accepted method for women to use in achieving other goals. This behaviour is mostly dictated by conditions accompanied by acute psychological or social problems; decisions made by women in such situations can hardly be considered as a manifestation of their free will. We cannot talk about psychological stability and readiness to accept a rationally-made decision.

During the past three months I was in a state of shock. I had completely lost any borders between good and bad, acceptable and inadmissible (I21)

In a psychological sense, a woman has suffered traumas at a time when she was unable to make an independent decision. These traumas have not been treated and she has no personal resources to protect herself, therefore she is still vulnerable and conforms to the psychological and social profile of “ideal victim”. In this sense, prostitution is one of the forms of human trafficking.

Despite these conditions, arguments of free will and the absence of violence are used frequently in political and public discussions, thus justifying the necessity for legalising prostitution. However, this should be regarded as political irresponsibility and the non-recognition of prostitution as a social problem.

The opinions of experts interviewed during the research do support placing responsibility on women involved in prostitution:

They indeed have some part of responsibility in this situation. These girls are so immature and uncritical ... for mature people there is some internal criterion that says — it is bad, dangerous, and it allows assessment of the situation. If this criterion has not developed in these girls at any stage of their development and there is only a concept about the world, in which this person does not see herself as a part of the world, then it is difficult for them to understand this responsibility. These girls are not able to understand that moment of charity. They want benefits — emotional warmth and love, and they believe very foolishly that the person who gives them food and drinks and, as they think, behaves with respect towards them, is a good man. When we look at it objectively, yes, she has consented. But is she able to assess what she has consented to, because of the peculiarities of her personality? Therefore, I think that it is very easy to manipulate a person with addictive tendencies towards relationships. As a result, the free will is quite indefinite (ND3)

FREE WILL AND PROSTITUTION

Free will (freedom of choice) depends on psychological maturity and stability of an individual, rational weighted decision-making ability, awareness of consequences of one's own decisions. In case of prostitution it is mostly an act motivated by circumstances accompanied by acute psychological or social problems, which are hardly a manifestation of the freedom of choice.

The expert believes that for women with such a psychological structure, it is difficult to recognise manipulation. Furthermore, such psychology is accompanied by a material stimulus – debt, or any shortage which leads to consent to engage in prostitution. It is not a fully conscious action:

They are manipulable, they are objects. Consequently, there is a question – is it the free will of a person? And what determines this free will? And then we create such second-class people, third-class people, who are used by other people to build their own comfort (IL)

Interviewed women do not blame anyone for the existing situation (neither their mother, friends or souteneurs), but admit to a free choice:

All my friends take drugs, of course, I will take drugs as well! [did your friends encourage you to do it?] No! I did it myself! I have my own brain, so I did it myself! My brain simply doesn't work! Normal girls won't do it – if someone takes drugs, you will take drugs as well, because you think that it is cool! They understand that it is not for them and they don't need it! I knew that my friend abused heroin, but I thought, ok, everything will be all right! She won't do it [won't give heroin]! (I3)

This example clearly demonstrates self-blaming, a naive desire to trust other people, an inability to distinguish real friends from false, and a carelessness towards oneself; namely, lack of maturity in their personality.

Frequently, manipulation occurs by using arguments that prostitution is a simple job or provision of services, and comparing it to any other job. However, from a psychological position, it is a more profound phenomenon:

What I am selling is within the limits of my body. If I sell what I have inside of me, it is a completely different reality than when I sell candies, for example. The body absorbs everything that has happened to me in my life – emotions, traumas, completely everything! When I have sexual intercourse, the emotions of that man and my emotions stay in my body. Therefore, feelings and emotions are qualitatively different from those when I sell candies. Then there appears the question of what should I do with it? If it satisfies me, I like it and I choose it, and it is all right. If the emotions and experiences are satisfying and pleasant, it does not do any harm, it is ok and nobody from outside is allowed to say that you are doing something bad. (IB)

A woman must know herself in order to make such a decision – her talents, potential, strengths and weaknesses, and options to earn money at all:

Maybe I am suitable for doing something else? Maybe I lack some kind of knowledge, skills or information to be able to choose something else? (IB)

When a woman is able to assess all such options and chooses prostitution, it is her free will. If prostitution appears to be the only way to earn money or a woman is not able to make a deliberate decision, it cannot be called free will. Psychologists believe that prostitution is mostly the result of a low level of education, lack of knowledge and insufficient self-knowledge. By applying this assessment, we can conclude that none of the interviewed women have engaged in prostitution freely, because none have described their choice as a free alternative. Other experts assert that prostitution cannot be considered as a fulfilment of dreams:

To systematically become a prostitute... to graduate from school and go to Riga on the street? It is not so easy! You get information through acquaintances. For example, I earn 100 lats in one evening (ALo)

From a psychological point of view, an answer to the discussion about free will is given by a woman herself, when she honestly and without force answers the question of why she does it. The difficulty is how to get to this honest answer?

When a girl is already involved, this system has influenced her a lot emotionally. Therefore, to find emotions and a critical attitude, there is an entire wall, a concrete plate... (NDž)

It is likely that the choice is more conscious for women who work at relatively higher levels of prostitution; namely, in flats and massage salons. For them, prostitution is not a question of survival. However, experts believe that the previously mentioned “concrete wall” may be the strongest in these cases:

If within a year after the trauma [sexual violence] this person does not receive any help, adaptation problems [permanent, unhealthy stress, sexualised behaviour] start to appear... after two more years — personality disorders. What we see on the streets afterwards and which is used by our opponents. Women say: “Just leave us alone with your help! I earn more than you and feel completely satisfied.” There we can observe new personality disorders; the concrete wall has grown to the extent that destroying it during her lifetime... I don't know how serious psychotherapy and motivation must be... (NDž)

This expert opinion is also confirmed by the fact that women deny their occupation in conversation with other people. This means that

despite efforts by recruiters to make prostitution a legal occupation, women involved in prostitution do not regard their occupation in the same way as other forms of employment:

I do not do this and that, I do only that. Is it something crazy? It does not differ significantly in what way to do it. (ALu)

Those who are in clubs and flats don't believe that they are prostituting. (ALo)

In addition, women do not disclose their involvement to social workers or representatives of other institutions whom they encounter in the course of addressing other problems:

They disappear for several hours and say that their mother is sick or they are going to meet the older son ... We also solve employment issues, we help to find a job. I have never seen co-operation. No, they don't want such a job, they will have to work fixed hours, get up every morning ... I think that they have also some sort of advantage in that. (ZG)

In interviews, women were asked about other alternatives in their life; opportunities, dreams, desires. Answers to this question also denote the exercise of free will:

I don't know. I think I would be living a normal life. My mother lives a normal life. My daughter lives a normal life. Daughter studies, mother works, brother works as well. I am the only one with such a life... (I1)

I surely wouldn't be on the street! I don't know what I would do. I guess I would be living somehow, I would be a chef. (I10)

These women do not wish their daughters to have such a “career”. It is also clear that members of their families are not informed about this engagement and they try to conceal it from their children. However, this means that they cannot be with their children on a daily basis:

My daughter visits me, but otherwise she lives with her grandmother. She studies and has friends there. And she doesn't need Riga! (I1)

It is likely that concealing their occupation is related to a sense of shame or guilt. Those involved in street prostitution do not consider their life to be normal. In several interviews about future plans, thoughts of death as a salvation from the existing life appear:

I will die. Then it will be better. It is difficult for me (I3)

We don't live. We exist! (I6)

I don't know what will happen with me in five years. But I would like to be in a grave. (I10)

These quotes show that involvement in prostitution has not happened in a manner (psychologically acceptable, characteristic to a mature personality) described previously. This points to another mechanism:

If this intervention in my body causes suffering for me, it is a psychologically and physically destructive process. It leads to extremely disruptive consequences — psychological, physiological, medical, emotional, namely, all systems are destroyed (I8)

Other experts stress that those involved in prostitution are characterized by helplessness and distrust of any public authority or other people. Physical and psychological traumas have serious implications:

After she has been exploited by a man by force or otherwise... It is hard to foresee how this system will collapse, but it will collapse anyway. This system starts a self-destruction process at emotional, physical and mental levels. And if it is not repaired, this mechanism tries to destroy the woman. She has already sowed within her that she is completely useless; the worst thing possible has happened to her. It is very complicated. If it is done against her will at an energetic or mental level, this woman completely loses the sense of existence and a powerful internal defence mechanism switches on. She can protect herself without feeling anything, for example. She can feel a pathological hatred with an internal desire to kill or destroy somebody. It is then that these defence mechanisms start to work. If they don't, this woman can become insane, start to drink, use drugs and live permanently in another state of mind. This is the reason why the majority of prostitutes use various intoxicating substances. They just are not able to endure it anymore. It results in a collapse — body collapses, mind collapses, spirit collapses (1B)

All the aspects referred to here can be observed during interviews with women involved in street prostitution. Interviewed women do not have high self-esteem. They consider themselves to be guilty, evil and demoralised:

I have a mother, my father died. And then there is me. I have also three brothers and three sisters. All of them are adults, living with their own families. I am the only such exception. As they say, there is a black sheep in every flock. (13)

Street destroys people! I have become completely ruthless. (12)

They realise that their lives are not successful and try to comfort and protect themselves:

Of course, not everything is so bad. I am such a person. I have got used to it. Actually, I have a good family, a normal family. I am a good person, I have a good soul, but I do these bad things [prostitution]. Actually, it is such a shame! Shame to my family! (11)

. Their behaviour shows that they do not make such statements lightly, but sincerely believe them to be true. One woman justified her involvement in prostitution with possession by an evil spirit; she visits a priest, prays and hopes that by doing so she will exit prostitution. However, in the majority of cases women console themselves by using drugs and alcohol:

Drugs, plus I drink some cocktails... plus clonazepam... It is a nerve medicine... It is impossible to work without these things. With a clear mind... I already have a mental breakdown every two months. I have a feeling that one day my skull will open and my brain will explode. (112)

CONSEQUENCES OF PROSTITUTION

Prostitution as a form of violence leaves emotional (low self-esteem, sense of shame, etc.), physical (injuries, health issues, etc.), perceptive (denial of trauma, distorted perception, etc.), sexual (fear of intimacy, aversion, etc.), and social (isolation, difficulties in building relationships etc.) scarring on persons involved in it. For more detail please see website of the National Police: <http://www.vp.gov.lv/?id=527>

JUSTIFICATION OF PROSTITUTION

Effects of emotional abuse and inferiority complex force persons engaged in prostitution to seek justification of their situation, and these arguments are caught on by the general public also. The most common myths are perception that prostitution is socially beneficial function, prostitution as a “social worker”, deflecting violence from the “normal society”.

At the beginning they maybe drink a little. But they admit freely that they cannot bear it and then they start to drink more. Later they start using drugs to calm themselves down. And then it becomes like a vicious circle. (D)

Another justification which women make is that they do a job which is necessary to the public and is functional:

What would happen if all of us left the streets? Children and teenagers will get raped! These men are insane! We have so many single, unmarried people coming. It is crazy! Married men come seldom. Do you know when married men come? When their wives are pregnant, then they are coming. When they have had a quarrel. Let them quarrel, so we have more money! (14)

The woman working as a masseuse revealed a similar variant of situation normalization; namely, by considering that men are mentally sick or, at the least, people with problems, it is morally easier to offer the respective services. The informant adds that this is explained to beginners by women with experience. As a result, the culture of the existing environment (opinions, convictions, views) helps to normalise the situation:

You go there every day, then you start to talk about customers, laugh at them, and then it seems normal! (130)

Why didn't I ask questions for so long? It was completely acceptable, you see that she [masseuse] is working — always pretty, decent, smart, she knew her value, she knew that she is necessary to the owner, that she can afford to leave with her client network. She was conscious of her appearance. And I understood, ok, she earns money in this way. And I accepted it. Agreement with myself was successful. (132)

Gradually, women find some justification for their actions. As a result, they perceive their occupation to be normal and self-evident. One expert defines such a judgement as a position of victimhood:

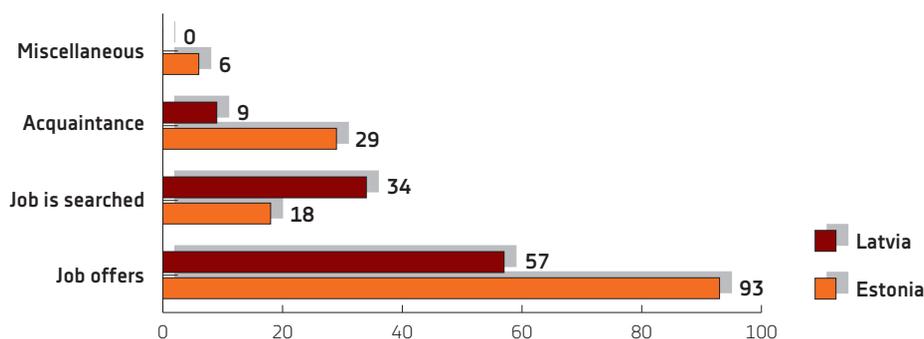
It is similar to the situation in which a woman says the following about violent men: "Better he beats me, instead of my child." There is no such thought that he could beat neither of them. It is a method ... Somehow you have to make an agreement within yourself. In massage salons it is more difficult to make this agreement. On the street ... I am here now and I have to find a sense for it. However, it is a part of a victim's behaviour when she explains her activities with the idea that she has deserved it and she has a special mission. I am bad, I have got myself into a mess and I can't see any way out or how to live with it either, therefore I must punish myself emotionally. This punishment includes drugs and alcohol, plus awareness — my life is useless, but I do it to make you feel better. (ND3)

Methods of consolation and justification of the situation may somewhat slow the process of collapse mentioned above; helping her to endure such a life.

However, having heard these women’s stories and with the help of experts who work to understand the reality in which these women live, it cannot be asserted that prostitution was and is their free will. The moment of involvement may have been easy, pleasant, and hopeful of earning money and living a better life. However, the development of events precludes the presence of free will.

4.3.2. Recruitment tendencies in online environment

Following the above methodology, a content analysis of the most popular announcement websites in Estonia and Latvia was conducted. The analysis shows that most recruitment announcements are found in the category “Job offers” (see Picture 1), followed by the category “Job is searched” and “Acquaintance”, whereas recruitment announcements in the category “Miscellaneous” were not found in Latvia.



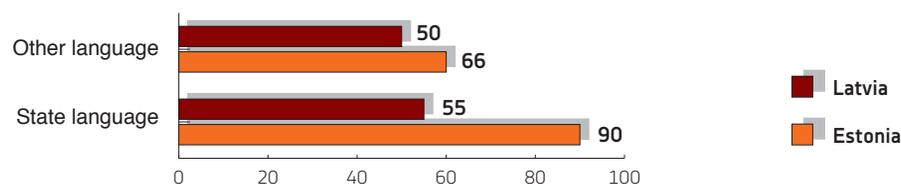
ONLINE RECRUITMENT

Online recruitment for prostitution and human trafficking is carried directly and indirectly through job classifieds (seeking job/ offering job), dating sites, and marriage proposals.

Picture 1 Category, in which announcement is added

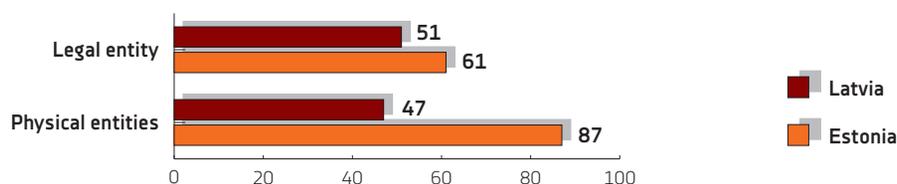
Announcements were selected in the section “Search job”, which included statements indicating a readiness to do anything, ‘will consider all offers’, and a sexually loaded photo included with the announcement.

In terms of the language of announcements (see Picture 2), in the case of Latvia, it appears that there are the same amount of recruitment announcements in Latvian as in other languages. It can be concluded that recruitment announcements are not addressed to any particular national/language group of the Latvian population. Most likely, it indicates the desire to address as large an audience as possible. In the case of Estonia, the use of the national language is more pronounced; however, this can be explained by the national structure of Estonia.



Picture 2 Language of announcements

The results of the analysis of announcement submissions showed that in Latvia, recruitment announcements are submitted slightly more by legal entities, whereas in Estonia there are more from physical entities. This distinction is probably due to different legislation and the relative limitations of offering sexual services in both countries.



Picture 3 Division of announcement submitters

The fact that legal entities conduct unconcealed recruitment must be considered a sign that offering sex services is institutionalised and that they are seeking to strengthen their position.

Moreover, in the case of Latvia, the relationship between data “Announcement submitter” and “Recruitment object” shows that sex services are the second most frequent offer by legal entities (for example, EM Agency. Hostess abroad. Travel expenses are deducted from the first wage; Meeting at the airport and further accompanying).

The most frequent offer in advertising announcements is “exotic dancers”. Considering the amount and content it can be assumed that the number of such companies is rising:

A night club opened recently in the Old Town of Riga and offers vacancies to girls older than 18. GoGo or show dancers, can be without experience. Excellent working conditions, flexible schedule, high wages (in Russian).

In the case of physical entities, the most frequent recruitment objectives are announcements with the text “I will consider all offers/I will do anything”. It is possible that some of these announcements, in which people offer their services and themselves, are the result of awkward

phrasing or language style. However, such announcements are very often supplemented by photos of announcement submitters in sexually suggestive poses, which could indicate that “will do anything” implies sex services. Also, the text of advertising announcements can indicate that the individual offers themselves for recruitment (see Picture 4 below):

“I will do any job for your money (in Russian); I am looking for a job for holidays or nights; I am looking for a job for evenings. I will consider all offers; I am looking for a job abroad, in Austria, Germany, I will consider absolutely all offers.”

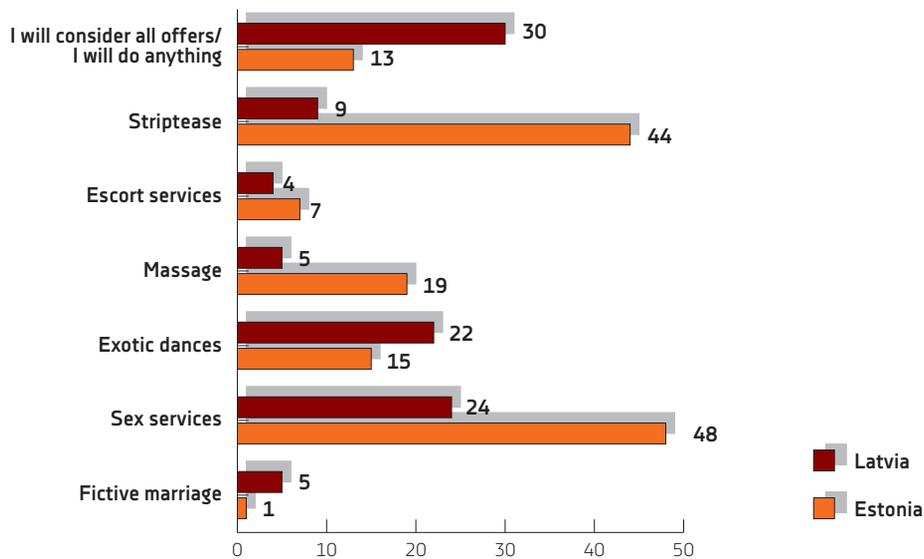


Picture 4 Photo added to the announcement (Source: ss.lv, 29.04.2013)

**RECRUITMENT:
“SEEKING A JOB”**

In the job seeker category the prospective prostitution solicitation shows in texts like “will do anything”, offering striptease, massages, “will consider all offers”, and other; and in photos – in sexually charged postures.

Summarizing the information gathered in the category “Recruitment objective” led to the conclusion that “I will consider all offers/I will do anything” is the most frequently used advertising announcement of recruitment in Latvia (see Picture 5). It has to be repeatedly emphasized that, in all likelihood, a proportion of these announcements is the result of awkward phrasing or language use.

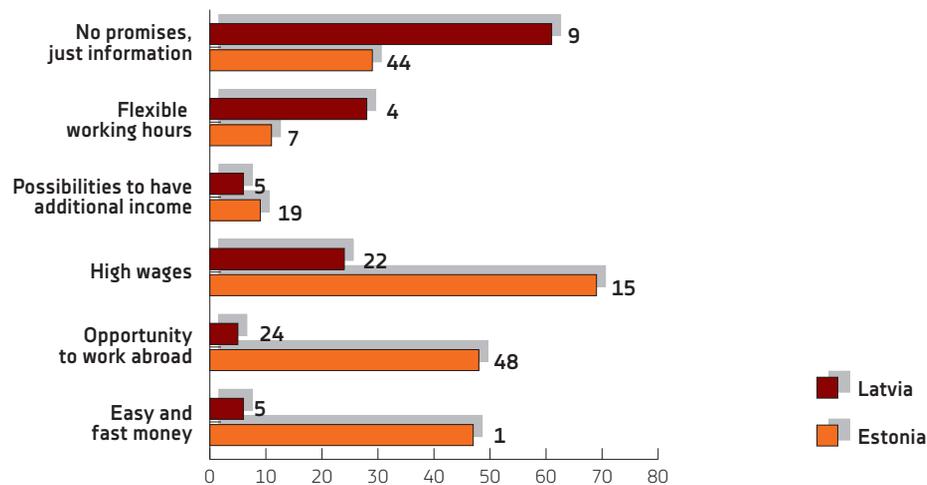


Picture 5 Recruitment objectives

In Estonia, a pronounced majority of announcements offer sex services and strip-tease. This is evidence of active recruitment processes in which the recruitment objective or “job specifics” are not hidden. Offers for fictive marriages are not very widespread; however, there are separate instances:

Offer for at least 18 year old girls with Estonian citizenship to earn money. Fictive marriage in Ireland – in total five flights, receive 300-500 euros for each + shopping! Everything is legitimate!

Meanwhile, the analysis of promises made in advertising announcements indicates that nothing is guaranteed in Latvia (see Picture 6).



Picture 6 Announcement promises

**RECRUITMENT:
“JOB OFFER”**

In job offer classifieds fictitious marriages, sex services, erotic dancing, model services are used. Interestingly, the offered criteria are “professional improvement”, “flexible working hours”, high pay, possibility to combine work and studies, work at nights, etc.

This aspect can be considered as one of the most significant discoveries of this research. **It was concluded that making promises is neither necessary for recruitment, nor to seduce people with different benefits.** A simple and informative notification about a “job” and “working conditions” is the dominant feature. Therefore, an assumption can be made that people are sufficiently informed about the meaning and manifestation of such a “job”. “The Promised Land” is not offered. The promise of “professional growth” is rather misleading and can be found in several recruitment announcements. In its turn, the most infrequently made promise in such announcements is “opportunity to work abroad”, which, it can be concluded, is no longer an effective argument. In advertising announcements, which make promises of different kinds, the most frequently used are “flexible working hours” and “high wages”:

Nice, young colleagues, excellent working conditions, flexible schedule. Possibility to combine with studies or another job. Good working conditions and friendly colleagues (in Russian)

Old Town of Riga, excellent working conditions, experience is not required; Riga, job in the centre of the city, option to work at home! Professional growth.

In contrast, in Estonia recruitment announcements are dominated by promises of high wages, the chance to work abroad and earn easy money, all of which are traditional features of recruitment. It is hard to identify the reason for such differences, but it is most likely that recruiters use methods which have proven to be the most effective. In any case, the range of recruitment methods is wide. Announcements can contain either particular information or promises:

Highly paid job offered for at least 21 year old (21-...50) and attractive girls without complexes. High wages, with knowledge of English, Estonian or Finnish – very high wages. Apartments for girls from other cities can be offered (if cleanness and order are guaranteed). Drug and alcohol addicted, smokers – sorry, but we will not contact you. Call, ask your questions, further information only by calling (in Russian).

Specific objectives can also be found in recruitment announcements; for example, an offer to become a mother and wife:

I am searching for a good girl not older than 32, without children, bad habits or headaches, for having children and managing the household. All preconditions for a comfortable life guaranteed. Excluding women with left-behind children, huge loans and bad habits. Please, add a photo. Adequate attitude guaranteed (in Russian).

I am looking for somebody to act as housekeeper and civil wife, 19-27 years old. I have two boys, 9 and 10 years old. The hour from midday is free, can be a student. Can be with children. I am living 200 m from the sea. Saturdays and Sundays are free. Payment can be negotiated. Please, add a photo, with children, if there are such.

Announcements in the category “Student” frequently appear. This category includes the following typical announcement, often offering to provide sex services online:

International Internet communications studio “Sapphire” offers regular job (this can also be an additional job) for attractive young women. Requirements:

- *Communication skills*
- *Punctuality*
- *High sense of responsibility*
- *Computer skills*

We offer:

- *High wages starting from 300 lats*
- *Bonuses*
- *Flexible working schedule*
- *Professional growth*

**JOB OFFERED:
WIFE, STUDENT**

An interesting category of job offers is “wives”, “housekeepers”, and “students”. These ads reflect gender roles and perceptions existing in the society about a woman, ranking in the category of suspicious classifieds.

- *Work in the centre of Riga*

Send your CV and your photo to the indicated e-mail address.

Furthermore, several similar announcements were identified:

EM Agenci, SIA offers a job for girls of at least 18 years old in high-elite nightclubs in Italy, for vacancy "hostess". Hostess is a female profession. Responsibilities include provision of entertainment for nightclub guests, raising sales of club production (food, drinks and other production)

- *Fixed minimum wage in the agreement (1500 euros per month) + bonus system, which can increase your income up to 2500 euros per month;*
- *On-site training is guaranteed (job experience or knowledge of languages is not necessary);*
- *A place to stay in Italy in high quality flats is offered for free (a separate flat);*
- *Agreement is signed in Latvia (term of agreement starting from one month);*
- *Option to depart one week after signing the document;*
- *Flight costs are deducted from the first wage;*
- *Meeting at the airport and further accompanying;*
- *Absolute safety and compliance with all provisions is guaranteed;*
- *Send your CV or a brief outline, phone number and a photo to e-mail;*
- *If you have any questions, contact us by calling.*

Job offer for attractive girls, from 18 to 35 years old. Do you want to earn a lot of money and meet interesting people? If you have an attractive appearance, knowledge of English at the level of everyday speech and you are interested in work in a high-elite club, send your phone number or call me. We offer excellent working conditions and a dignified attitude. We guarantee high wages, safety and independence. Work experience is not necessary. We organise free dance courses conducted by an experienced choreographer. This job offer is not related to sex services.

As we see, the text of the announcement includes a standard job offer, describing the main features which may interest a prospective employee.

Thereby, this job offer is normalised and a priori considered a job similar to others. The formal tone of this announcement lends the job offer reliability. The text conforms to the aspects of female vulnerability mentioned above, namely poverty and life conditions, thereby making the offer seem more attractive:

If you are tired of working for 300-400 euros per month, 10 hours a day without holidays, if you want to feel respected as a girl, respected for your beauty and attractiveness, have a respectable income, try to change your stereotypes for the better! (in Russian)

This announcement plays into a particular role of women in society, and confirms

the hypotheses of objectification theory. It describes economic difficulties and offers opportunities for women to improve their quality of life; at the same time alluding to the need for self-objectification.

There are also announcements that contain counter-advertising for a particular nightclub concerning unpaid wages:

Everything seems very nice there, but they don't pay the agreed money. If somebody wants to work for free, he/she can go to this club.

Announcements submitted by women feature often in the category of acquaintances or job searching:

Hello! I am an attractive, charming brunette, height — 165, weight — 50. I am gentle, kind, without bad habits. I am ready to become a lover for a successful, suitable, generous man, who will provide for me materially and will change my life for the better. I can be not only a lover, but also a friend, conversation partner, and someone who will always listen and support. Dating at neutral territory. I guarantee absolute anonymity. (in Russian)

The content of this announcement reveals common assumptions about the distribution of roles between male and female genders. Typical “market relations” between men and women are characterised — a man is the one who improves the material situation of a woman and improves her quality of life, whereas a woman is the emotional support and provider of sex services.

It is difficult to interpret announcements offering a job for models.

An art photographer invites girls (at least 18 years old) to try out as models. There is the possibility to participate in different projects. Previous experience as a photo model is not necessary, just a desire to participate in the creation of beautiful works, from which to create your portfolio. Works of your choice are processed with Photoshop. TFP conditions.

Models for a German fashion magazine are needed (at the age from 18 to 37 years) for participating in the presentation of a new clothing line. Please, send us your size of clothes + two photos. We will contact you within one week and tell you whether you have been selected for the next round of competition. (company name: Centre models)

An international model agency is looking for new faces (models with or without experience) for various photo/video projects. These projects are carried out in Latvia and abroad. Previous experience is not required, the main quality is the appearance of the model. If you are an 18-45 year old woman with slim, well-cared-for body, this offer is addressed exactly to you! Send information about yourself (body measurements) and 3-5 photos to the accompanying e-mail. All candidates will be considered. And remember — there is something beautiful in every woman. Good royalties. (see Picture 7).



Picture 7 Photo added to the announcement (Source: ss.lv, 19.04.2013)

Recruitment for providing sex services is not directly mentioned in these cases; however, the text has enough indefinite features to be considered as a “doubtful announcement”. Another similar announcement offers a photo session in the surroundings of Daugavpils Fortress, sending the best photos to an international competition. Such cases can suggest potential recruitment for the pornography business.

The occupation of a “masseuse” should also be mentioned, which, as in the case of models, can be regarded as a potential recruitment announcement:

Recreation centre invites masseuses to join our friendly collective, preferable age — 18-30, diploma in the field of massage will be considered an advantage, but there is the possibility of training on site. Working schedule can be combined with studies. Call and come to meet your new colleagues :)

Announcement website ss.lv was monitored once a day, usually in the evenings. Each of the recorded announcements had a significant number of views per day (200-400), which means that the audience was highly interested. It is very likely that a significant number of women respond to these announcements and at least try this occupation. This probability is supported by the interview with the masseuse and the recruiter in Estonia, who stated that staff turnover in massage salons and “clubs” is very high.

During the research, interviews were organised with the owner of local Internet portals and editors of websites in the Latvian and Russian languages. Informants admitted that direct announcements which invite or offer sex services are rare. Furthermore, editors have to delete them. However, there are instances when the same announcements are submitted repeatedly despite efforts to delete them. A job abroad is offered; albeit without a direct offer for prostitution. Editors report an incident in which a husband seeking revenge against his wife submitted an announcement that she “serves customers”. Experts also point to the responsibility of the mass media in instances of online recruitment:

It would be nice if owners of these websites would pay more attention to such announcements, messages, accounts (representative of the Ministry of Justice in Estonia)

Experts involved in the research declare that an individual’s critical approach and responsibility is very important in cases of online recruitment:

I assume that several offences wouldn't have happened if the individual in question had been more critical towards himself/herself and other people. This means asking oneself whether he really is such a good worker to merit receiving such a wage?

We have to remember that a conversation taking place online is the same as on the street. Do we give money to somebody on the street? Do we strip off on the street if somebody asks us to do it? Then why do we do it on the Internet?!

We conduct a huge amount of preventive work in schools and other places, but nothing will change unless people change their behaviour (representative of the Criminal Police Office in Estonia)

Considering that there are no borders on the Internet for countries or regions, the fight against online recruitment requires interconstitutional and interstate cooperation:

International crime groups pay special attention to the Baltic region. Estonia is a small country, therefore, we need really successful international cooperation for effective fighting against online recruitment (representative of the Criminal Police Office in Estonia)

After summarising the results of the content analysis, it was concluded that institutional features of recruitment exist in the Internet environment — the recruitment process is conducted by organisations; they use standardised descriptions of the nature and conditions of the job that is offered. Such actions allow the sex industry to gain stability in the social system and obtain the trust of potential ‘employees’. There exists a more or less structured system of marketing and motivation of individuals in order to involve more people in the provision of sex services.

Results of the research are closely connected to the portrayal of women online through mass media or on the Internet. **According to the views cultivated in the mass media, women are objects for sexual exploitation, which is accepted both by recruiters and women themselves.**

4.4. Conditions that promote women exiting prostitution

In the research, attention was paid to women's experiences in prostitution, in order to understand the reality that they face every day. Interviews with women reveal various problems and aspects of vulnerability.

The main vulnerability for women engaged in prostitution is physical violence from clients:

EXIT PROGRAMMES:

Exit programmes are a body of national support measures to exit prostitution helping people to mitigate risks and impact vulnerability factors and providing support and opportunities to take control of their lives.

WHAT AFFECTS EXIT
POSSIBILITIES?

Lack of support: persons involved in prostitution often encounter deprivation of rights and lack of protection, especially lack of support from police in violent situations effect trust in others.

L..., my friend, sent me her child, her little daughter. When she got into the car... she was captured for a week... by eight people... and me with her daughter... I ran, searched, there was nothing to eat. She returned after eight days and said, good that I found the key. I saw her in the yard through the window — she couldn't put her legs together. Eight people — wherever possible... (15)

Sort of an imposing man drives up. They hit girls in hotels so many times, they have even shot at them! Nobody protects them! Girls lie in their blood, but they only save their skin. You can't complain to the police, they won't help us! (16)

Those engaged in street prostitution represent a particular risk group, since they never know who their next client will be, how much money he will pay and whether and in what condition they will return home. Street life is also dangerous because women are at risk from drug addicts, who demand money:

There is a concrete risk on the street. If you don't know with whom and where you are going, whether he will leave you alive or not....whether he will simply take your money or hit you and then take it...or will rape you for heaven knows how many hours. (112)

The women who engage in street prostitution mostly do not have souteneurs. However, some express a desire to have a protector:

People are stoned, brains are stoned, and they start attacking me as well. It is necessary to have a protector, some man. But where will you get one? I had one! He had all the doodads, a gun... he was the right man in the right place! I paid him 20 lats a day. (14)

Within the prevailing societal view that they have chosen such a lifestyle themselves, it is believed that these women neither need help nor deserve it. Therefore, support mainly comes from each other. For example, in the case described above in which the woman had left her child with a friend and was kidnapped for several days, the friend could not make money herself; therefore, others were bringing food for her and for the child. **When asked whether they have any support, interviewees refer to each other and are reserved in relation to others:**

Conversations with other people can be so tricky. It can't be said that I lie, no! I just hold something back! You won't tell your story to everyone! First of all, it's shameful! (16)

The representatives of both DIA+LOGS and Freedom61 explained that the principal need for these women is emotional support:

A simple human conversation on various topics, without condemning them and trying to teach them how to live. Questions are different — concerning passports, children, declarations. (AS)

Squirts, condoms, tests, instructions, where to go, treatment. About the educational opportunities, the same night school. (BM)

They do not tend to turn to those people who theoretically could give them support (parents, relatives), either due to mistrust or an unwillingness to impose a burden. Interviewees express an inability to return to the former environment, which supports the theory that this community integrates women; isolating them from society:

Mother was looking for me, looking everywhere. But I would have left anyway, I've got used to this life, I have learned the city, I have become independent. (I1)

Mother calls me home. I tell her: "I have grown past the age when you had to help me." (I8)

Interviewees pointed to the café "Jaunatne ar misiju" as a place to receive support and lessen their social vulnerability, where the emotional and human support may be of greater value than soup and a coffee:

It's great that you exist, great that you help us! Even those closest to us don't help this much! Thanks, girls, for nourishing! And above all — we've unburdened our hearts! (I6)

Freedom 61 also offers practical help — how to compose a CV, to learn foreign languages, and provides clothes; although these opportunities have not been much used. However, the most important task of this organisation is to show the alternative:

They should know that they are important and that they do not have to be on the street. They simply must know that there is a different choice. And they can cry their heart out here as well. How long is it possible to live with alcohol.... they themselves say that there is a mental emptiness. The girls do not see their value. (D)

What the women have reported and what has been observed in the café does not testify to a frivolous and glamorous life, as is stereotypically believed. The data about earnings differ — from 200 lats to 5 lats and 1 cigarette a day; however, there are days when no money is earned. It is most likely that earnings are spent on drugs or alcohol (according to an interviewee's report, 80 lats a day is needed for a fix), since they retain few material resources:

I stand in a queue in a soup kitchen. Everybody stands there — children, big families. I stand at 12 o'clock everyday! And what? Once I did not have money for four days. Imagine, I walk through the market, all those smells, I have tears in my eyes... It's nothing, I think, it's only now that I have no money. I will have it again! (I4)

WHAT AFFECTS EXIT POSSIBILITIES?

Isolating is an element of emotional abuse. The person is "dragged" in the community and the connection with the previous environment is slowly severed.

WHAT AFFECTS EXIT POSSIBILITIES?

Lack of support:

- practical assistance: living quarters, work, food, etc.
- emotional support: getting rid of addictions, psychological help

Researchers have noted that some women take care to wrap the food given to them by the female café workers in order to, for example, take strawberries to their mother or eat a cake later. They often talk about the absence of accommodation. High living standards at least can therefore not be attributed to those girls who are engaged in street prostitution.

Economic vulnerability was reported in all interviews with those engaged in street prostitution. Drug addiction means that attempts at employment fail sooner or later. A typical problem for these women is the absence of a refuge, or having to exist in very poor living conditions:

They tell us without reserve that very often they sleep in the stairways, that they do not have anywhere to stay (D)

Social vulnerability is to a great extent exacerbated by the attitude of society. As the researchers have noticed,

social attitudes towards those engaged in prostitution is at once disapprobatory and indifferent, being based on the belief that they have chosen such a life themselves and are the ones to blame:

They are being treated even with disgust, pushed aside. The men who use them sometimes simply see them as nothing. (D)

Issues mentioned by experts support the theory that social attitudes towards such women are hypocritical:

As if pouff, pouff, pouff! But, at the same time, as in Bidstrup's caricature, where a member of the community confesses, and the priest says — where? And both run away [laughs]. (BM)

The girl has very clearly said — as long as these important men, who used me, speak on the television, deliver eloquent speeches, occupy senior positions, and remain unpunished, it won't be possible to get out. Because they don't get punished for this. As long as we allow tyrants do whatever comes into their heads, as long as we award them the orders of the three stars, a victim does not have grounds to believe that intervening on one's behalf will succeed. (IL)

This encapsulates the social value of women and the situation in Latvia. As the expert has observed, among the most prevalent problems faced by Latvian women are violence, absence of social support, and difficulties concerning integration into the labour market.

Prostitution as well. They don't mention it themselves, but such information comes from other services. And addictions — alcohol, drug addiction and relationship addiction or co-addiction. (ZG)

WHAT AFFECTS EXIT POSSIBILITIES?

Stereotypes and social vulnerability: social values and hypocrisy, preconception of prostitution as a free choice, indifference of the society.

WHAT AFFECTS EXIT POSSIBILITIES?

Following the principles of the rule of law, predictability and attitude of government officials, functioning exit programmes for prostitution based on individual needs.

Social problems faced by women change over time. The expert claims that seven years ago (when the Centre for Children and Women “Māras centrs” began its work) the most widespread problem was the lack of accommodation and means of living. Recently, the more visible and topical problems faced by their clients are violence and addiction. Those engaged in street prostitution encounter all of these problems; however, prostitution is not identified as the main reason for women coming to the attention of social services or into the crisis centre. Drug addiction is always the most topical and visible.

The existing Latvian state institutions do not engage with the challenges associated with street prostitution. The task of the municipality police and administrative police is to target the violation of prostitution control regulations; the main task of the State Police Directorate for Combating Organised Crime is to reduce souteneurism:

People ask whether the aim of our department is to combat prostitution. We can definitely answer that it is not. The task of our department is to combat souteneurism and the third person's financial gain from prostitutes. But we do not encourage prostitution as such. (VN)

The police can, to a certain degree, be considered as an institution that helps women:

Combating souteneurs and street robbers, in some sense we provide them security. Therefore, they cooperate with the police, to a certain degree. It doesn't mean that working in this profession she doesn't have state protection in case of robbery. She can also write a police statement... the same as someone who is drunk — in case of being robbed, the person is definitely considered a victim, notwithstanding the condition he was in. (ALu)

The expert claims that women do not write statements about their clients' violent behaviour; in all likelihood because by writing a statement the woman comes into conflict with another Latvian statutory regulation — rendering of sexual services on the street. Therefore, she does not report the client's violent behaviour to ensure that she avoids administrative punishment as well. This example serves as testimony to a controversial regulation of prostitution in Latvia.

The interviewed women do not consider the police as an organisation that provides help, largely because it is formally forbidden in Latvia to engage in street prostitution and the police must impose penalty:

What right have they to jump out of the car and hit me in the ribs?! Take me away from Riga, throw me out in the wood? They stole my phone, took my bag. What did they want to achieve with this? (I4)

The police takes us to examinations, use our services for free. (I6)

RULE OF LAW AND POLICE

The police are the first guarantee of the rule of law in the country upon communicating with persons engaged in prostitution. Attitude, knowledge and providing support on the part of police play crucial role on establishing trust into national system.

There are normal policemen, who understand that different situations can happen, but there are monsters as well. (112)

Despite such penalties, women continue to work on the street, rendering this legal norm ineffective. The Police come to know these women by face, therefore, the relationship between them forms differently:

They [policemen] enter the bar, see me, they already know who I am and impose [a fine]. The police needed reports. Now the fines are 700 lats. Then I did not care, because I was not thinking that once I'll have to [pay fines]. (113)

Our government is not one of the best. Everyone grabs and grabs for their own pockets, takes from retirees, disabled people, orphans, etc. and they don't think about others. Let alone about the prostitutes! They can only introduce those health cards, where you have to pay every month... and I don't have a yellow card, I don't want to be on any lists. One girl has it, the police pull up and tear the card... (112)

It is clear that in legal terms, such a situation should not have taken place. At the same time, it is likely that there are situations in which a police officer knows and helps a girl, meaning that her experience with the police is different. Some report that the police are like their own [like friends], while others do not consider the police to be a protective institution:

It's not enough that the clients hit. They should protect me after all. If I really were a criminal, resisted, such a real criminal. They rob people — those who are more drunk... I've seen it! They are simply using their position! (14)

It can be concluded from the above evidence that those engaged in prostitution on a daily basis faces a number of problems — drug addiction, a lack of accommodation and means of living, physical and emotional violence, discrimination, the lack of physical, social and psychological support.

It is clear from interviews with women and experts that crucial to improving their current situation is to acknowledge and accept it.

For example, offering clean needles if she takes drugs, informing her about possible help, about social care, and so on. A quick “escape” from drug addiction or prostitution is practically impossible:

In the majority of cases I did not manage to achieve any results, because a person has taken something into the head, and taking drugs does not make the mind clear, logical, critical, and judicious. (BM)

As the experts emphasise, punishing women or attempting “to steer them to the right

path” by various means is ineffective. However, they must be aware of the alternatives and the available resources.

It can therefore be concluded that women engaged in street prostitution face severe problems and have insufficient resources to resolve them. Questions can therefore be raised about why they tolerate this environment and why they do not try to leave. During the interviews, women were also asked about attempts to leave and their present chances of leaving.

None of the interviewed women indicated that they definitely and consciously want to remain in prostitution. However, interviewees felt that exiting prostitution after an extended period of involvement would be difficult:

It is accustomed already. I won't be able to do a normal job. (13)

It's like a swamp, it sucks in. I told myself in the beginning — I will just work for a year..., you see, how much time has passed. (112)

It's already too late to change anything. It should have been done 12 years ago! Now I'm spineless. (12)

The principal mechanism that prevents women exiting is habit and the absence of other alternatives: drug addiction drives an acute need for money, and the lack of safe accommodation also limits women's choices.

Significantly, prostitution allows these women to earn money quickly. In both Latvia and Estonia, pay for low-waged employees is not high (as it has been said before, women engaged in prostitution often lack the skills necessary in the labour market), and does not meet daily subsistence needs. As such, women involved in prostitution become accustomed to receiving money quickly.

Even if you do official work, there is an advance on salary, a salary, but you must wait until you get them! But I have a child, who comes from school and cries! (15)

Quick and relatively 'big' money is of significant importance. When the women compare how much they could have earned or how much they did earn while working in the market or being a babysitter, they assert that in prostitution “for two hours you can earn a monthly wage”:

I feel the pull of money. And this swamp sucks you in, and you can't get out from it anymore. (17)

It must be said, however, that the money attested to is not guaranteed. The women spoke about the “fat years”, when the clients' paying capacity was greater, and they “had

earned” more. At present, ‘big’ money exists as something of a myth and a hope that they might have this good fortune again.

Involvement in street prostitution is closely related to the economic situation.

Interviewees report instances of attempted exit from prostitution, in which the need for money compelled them to return. For example, a number of women were occasionally engaged in waged labour (being a bookkeeper, “with certificates”, working in VEF, and doing some temporary paid public works for 100 lats a month); however, upon dismissal or wage reduction they returned to prostitution:

Here you can always earn a crust. (15)

Money! Quick money. They don't have to be nervous about whether there will be a wage or won't be... here they know — well, today there aren't any clients, tomorrow there will be. A 19 year old girl comes and says — I am pretty, but silly, I am not able to do anything else. And you start believing, start conceding, that it is not anything abnormal. (132)

Thus, both entering and remaining in prostitution are the last options which women use in difficult conditions. It is legitimised by society as an appropriate way for women to earn money.

Many of the interviewed women on occasion tried to find a job elsewhere to prevent a return to the street (the longest period of time mentioned in the interviews was two years). However, since they do not have sufficient education and skills, they do the most low-waged jobs and in the case of dismissal, suffer first. This logically leads them back to the street:

I've worked as part of the hundred-lats-programme — I had only 100 lats a month, paid bills for the flat, it was enough for me! But now — my common-law husband is gambling, drinking, I am smoking, the cats are looking me in the eye and want to eat — what shall I do? When I have a job, they don't see me here at all! (16)

Care for family members also keeps women in prostitution:

I sent money to my mother and father by mail; however, they still thought that I was working in the market. I was offered work abroad, I didn't, because I thought that I had to help. (112)

It is difficult to characterise the intonation and attitude with which interviewees spoke about exiting prostitution. The key characteristic of this attitude is doubt about the possibility for leaving, a lack of belief in themselves and a sense of fatalism:

When I was serving time [in prison], I was thinking about many things. When I get out, well... Maybe I would stop doing this? (11)

Women's own ideas about exiting prostitution are illusive and naive. They lack the motivation and inner will to do it, therefore they expect external help. They claim that a man can help them leave; one who would love and take care of them. The theme of a knight in shining armour appears in numerous interviews:

How will I find a normal man who would provide for me, so that I wouldn't need to go on the street? But there are no such men. Maybe I'll have luck, I don't know. Maybe some client will be like that. Maybe he will take me away forever! And many girls think this way! (11)

The one, God has given to me, my other half—I am curious to know who he is! And maybe he doesn't even exist?

Can you do so that I would have a beloved man, who would accept me and my child? [cries] (18)

It is clear that these women are longing for emotional, physical and material support. This statement is, of course, exaggerated; however, one of the reasons for being on the street is that they hope to meet their “other half” or, as the expert has said, “they are waiting for a husband”; someone to solve their problems. Similarly, as noted above in the analysis of conditions that contribute to prostitution, they see a route out of their problems through a man. It can be inferred that whilst these women have gone through a lot, they do not feel strong enough to live alone or to leave prostitution on their own. As such, talk about free will is simply speculative whilst they lack the psychological maturity for consciously choosing one path or another.

If they had freely and consciously chosen prostitution, they would not express a desire to have a family and a life “like everyone has”; rather, they would express satisfaction with their present situation.

These quotations point also to social stereotypes; namely, that a man should provide for a woman, and that a woman cannot live without a man's support. At the same time, when men do feature in their lives, it does not appear to be straightforward to leave their former life behind. The women themselves refute the idea that life without a man's support is impossible:

There is a man... older than me... very good, very kind... is pitiful to me, loves me, but I'm, like this... (11)

I left him, I simply felt sorry for him, that he was doing everything for me, and I did nothing for him... I like him, but I don't love him! And I can't live with a man whom I don't love! (18)

Thus, even with a supportive partner, they do not disengage from prostitution or taking drugs. As such, explanations for failure to exit prostitution should not be sought in the

WHAT AFFECTS EXIT POSSIBILITIES?

Economic vulnerability: opportunities of quick money, additional resources, providing for the family, satisfaction of basic needs and also addictions.

presence or absence of a man. These women lack other opportunities that would enable exit from prostitution and drug addiction.

There are cases in which women live with men who have an alcohol, drug or gambling addiction themselves. This contributes to difficulty in exiting prostitution:

I was a volunteer mother. I was keeping the money saved by parents. My common-law husband was gambling and asked me for 40 lats. He said he would get it at night and give it back. Well, I trusted him, I was living with him after all... They told my son to write in the school diary when the money will be returned. I simply did not know what to do! My son was ashamed to go to school, because he had such a mother. I earned the money myself and gave it to my son, so that he could take it to school! (15)

The habit of using prostitution to solve problems, as well as the absence of other opportunities, inhibits permanent exit from prostitution. As soon as certain plans collapse (for example, a common-law husband found a job for 10 lats a day, has worked for four days and started drinking), the woman must take responsibility for their livelihood:

He doesn't want to recognise his weakness. He is such a "bastard" — I can wiggle out somehow, but he can't! (15)

The environment impedes exiting prostitution; namely, having a relatively narrow range of acquaintances, friends and interests. Women face the same situations and problems every day, and are isolated from wider society.

For example, one woman was surprised when she caught herself thinking that she could go skiing:

Is life going up or what, that I was having such a thought? For the first time in so many years I thought that I could go skiing! (14)

They often do not have people in their lives who could show them other opportunities. Many do not have access to a TV, Internet or other technologies at home. They are not interested in cultural events or the social life around them, because they do not have time and, especially, interest in such engagement. During one interview a woman revealed that she does not understand and cannot explain what she likes to do:

How do you imagine this? [about what she likes to do] I don't know... I don't have a choice. (111)

It has been asserted above that these women consider themselves to be primarily culpable for their present situation. They see it as their responsibility to leave prostitution; using their own will and motivation as the main tools for exit:

At the moment no one can help me. But when the desire appears they shouldn't refuse to help me. It happened like that recently — I went to my mother and said: "I am tired. Help me, put me into hospital!" And she refused. (I10)

I hope that sooner or later some understanding will come, when it must be realised that it's high time to change something. (I12)

I have been tired in recent years, sick and tired of it, having no power. Both emotionally and physically. (I13)

Experts judge that leaving is possible; the key is that the woman herself wishes to leave:

A moment of desire is very important! It is possible to leave, but it makes it all harder! This is because it intensifies that feeling of guilt, that feeling of inferiority and shame that hinder them from leaving. There must be a great willpower, motivation, internal or external, so that a person wants it to end.

It is ineffective to take her away from the street and place her in some rehabilitation centre. It is important that women in prostitution recognise that there are people apart from a client who can help with exiting. And this can take years. First, with coffee, condoms, nail polish. The social system must take care of her. Then, when she begins to trust, only then it is possible to mention the alternatives. The question is whether we have such? The victim is not guilty for getting into such a situation; however, he/she is really responsible for what he/she is doing with that experience, since everyone has a chance to live a fulfilled life. (ND3)

The expert emphasises a crucial moment in enabling women to exit prostitution — the presence of a support system and alternatives. Such opportunities are limited in Latvia.

One of the interviewed women has exited prostitution and is receiving treatment for drug addiction. Her journey towards this goal started in prison, when she took part in a group activity for self motivation:

I knew nothing about myself, what I like to eat, what I simply like. (I13)

After she was released from prison, she started living at Mother Theresa missionaries in Riga, takes part in the Minnesota programme, goes to AA meetings, and meets a psychologist twice a week. She is learning to engage in everyday life, is getting her health in order, and for the first time in her life has "arranged her documents". She also wants to resume studies in the autumn and complete the ninth form.

Leaving prostitution also presents psychological difficulties. Exiting can be difficult even where support is available. The help of a psychologist is essential, as it is necessary to manage emotions that have not been fully realised before. This is supported by expert

WHAT AFFECTS EXIT POSSIBILITIES?

Personal motivation, inner volition, existence of alternatives and social, economic stability, support network and mechanisms. Without help an individual is unable to escape prostitution and, even upon receiving help, it is difficult.

opinion: women tend not to self actualise or engage in personal introspection. As experts observe, many women can no longer remember the events of their life in succession. It cannot be claimed that they consciously lie, confuse or try to conceal, but simply that because of addiction, they can no longer remember the span of events accurately. Regaining what has been lost is a very difficult process. It is not possible for all such women to see this process through to the end:

There is such a process when they want to get out of this situation. And this process is very painful, you are like a butterfly, you are getting out of this cocoon, you are creating your own consciousness, and you understand who you actually are... This is a very sensitive process. I would say, two steps forward, three back... The process of cognition, the process of regaining identity, the process of regaining the integral personality, at some level it is very, very painful. (1L)

In some sense, prostitution can be compared to addiction – women have become accustomed to a restless life full of risk, and it is probable that a peaceful life seems unexciting. Risk, which prostitution implies, is usually negative. However, from their own and others' experiences, they know that they may also get 'big' money, may meet a man and so on; just as a gambler believes that a big win is just about to happen. Women who have stopped taking drugs and have left prostitution admit that the addiction remains; that she has a wish to be "picked up", and that during these months she has also "broken loose".

WHAT AFFECTS EXIT POSSIBILITIES?

There is psychological dependency resulting from being continuously "embroiled" in the environment, low self-esteem, sense of guilt and shame about the current situation.

Psychological addiction is a significant barrier to exiting, and many other issues must be addressed in order to break it. However, after rehabilitation women have nowhere to stay, their social abilities are limited, and they are therefore compelled to return to the habitual occupation and lifestyle.

At this point, self-help groups for women who have exited prostitution are necessary:

For example, at AA I don't tell them that I have an aspiration to go and walk in the park, that I want to be "picked up". Those who know, can share, the same girls as me. (113)

It is difficult for these women to repudiate a familiar survival mechanism and environment. It is determined by both drug addiction and emotional attachment. Leaving the usual environment is a theoretically effective mechanism, although difficult to implement:

Maybe one day... I simply have to leave this city, so that I don't know these streets. But I have this company, this circle of friends... I've got used to it. I'm being dragged into this! Look, I want to see her [points at her friend]... someone else. It's like a family already, understand?! They are my sisters, I want to see them, and they want to see me as well! (11)

Institutional barriers also limit opportunities for exiting prostitution. Daina Stukuls observes that Russian girls in Latvia are especially exposed to the danger of prostitution (they

cannot find employment because of a lack of knowledge of the language). This research supports this claim; the chances of women who are non-citizens or of Roma nationality are even more limited than in other cases. For example, a woman was considering visiting her brother in England, but discounted it because “a different passport is needed there”. This points to her isolation from wider society, since it is likely that she does not know about the naturalisation process. The recounting of experiences about departure attempts demonstrate that there are no real exit mechanisms in Latvia currently:

I tried to get fixed up in a job. Nobody wants to hire me. Only because I was in prison. Therefore, I'm forced to, well, this way... (11)

But how will you deal? Who needs us? Who will help us?! (16)

At the present time, these women do not receive any institutional help. The exit programme planned by government still does not function and there are no alternatives for earning money to offer to such women. There are also few organisations that can offer help with exiting.

The expert mentions the lack of help at both practical and emotional levels as the essential barrier to exiting prostitution. Existing rehabilitation programmes are more focused on detoxification and last only 30 days. This does not provide people with a means to adapt to a different life. Many, having undergone rehabilitation, return to the street not knowing any other way of living:

A 30 day programme is the beginning and doesn't continue beyond that. The addiction isn't overcome in 30 days, the body is cleaned, but not the mind. (LK)

The expert believes that a longer programme is necessary, to include teaching social skills. Many of the women have undergone rehabilitation, some even twice, but return to the former survival strategy. A further negative aspect of the existing rehabilitation system is that rehabilitation centres mostly focus on men:

There are no particular rehabilitation centres for women in Latvia. (LK)

In the rehabilitation centres, labour therapy is adapted to men — hard physical work for 10 hours a day is designed to primarily suit men. Moreover, women are in the men's company in such centres, which can prove challenging for women who have been engaged in prostitution and may neither respect nor trust men, and are placed in a situation where they must learn to find common ground with them.

An interviewee who has left prostitution pointed to some of the difficulties she faced while being among men in the rehabilitation centre:

GENDER/SEX ASPECT

The exit programmes need to be based on detailed analysis of cause, needs and context taking into account different needs of women and men and varied impact of proposed exit measures.

You want to be good for everyone, but for a good word you have to give something in return [sex]. (I13)

The benefits of receiving various kinds of help cannot be overestimated – mental specialists, narcologists, psychotherapists, social workers, self-help groups. According to experts, women who have stopped taking drugs stress the need for a strict support system that must function both in the beginning and after a woman has begun living independently:

Such a mother would need a family assistant, who would come twice a week and make sure that everything is fine. So that they would be within sight. (ZG)

This is possible, but very slowly. The present system can help in critical situations; however, it cannot guarantee that these girls won't be there again. If a girl comes to the social service, she is being told again what to do (and not because the service is bad). She will see – the offer is not big and there are requirements in addition. She must be allowed to choose, starting from a basic level – I want tea or coffee. And starting from that, it is possible to feel that I am being treated with respect. (NDž)

It should be integrated into the educational programmes, public spaces, so that this person is respected, so that a human body will not be exploited (objectified, sexualised, so that a woman will not be in every possible way shown as an item of goods, as a thing that can be bought or sold). (IL)

It is essential to place the range of issues that these women face in a wider context – women's social and gender roles and social value in society:

The women say, well I can write a statement, but it is pointless. We are going around in a circle – a woman writes a statement, nothing happens. For our part we can call three times... Then we sometimes refer it to the public prosecution office, and they say – write, write, nothing will happen without writing! (ZG)

If the state institutions do not or cannot help women who suffer from violence, it is highly improbable that they would help women engaged in prostitution. Indeed, it is a question of social attitudes and political will.

Evidence from both women and experts demonstrate that exiting prostitution in Latvia is highly complex. All the individual and systemic conditions listed above are considered as obstacles to leaving prostitution, and they should be addressed at multiple levels and in various spheres.

In terms of possible legislative amendments, two opposing approaches prevail in Latvia at present – punishment of sex buyers and legalisation of prostitution. Both approaches have supporters and opponents, and numerous arguments have also been mentioned in the interviews for this research.

LATVIA, YEAR 2014, LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF PROSTITUTION

The Criminal Law stipulates liability of third parties for use of prostitution: letting apartments, arranging brothels, procuring, etc. and liability of customers for use of minor persons engaged in prostitution.

Provisions for restriction of prostitution, on their turn, prohibit minors from engaging in prostitution, as well as near schools, churches; impose a duty on prostitutes to obtain health certificates; and prohibit advertising of prostitution. An administrative fine is imposed for breach of these provisions.

This research indicates that the existing regulation is “unfriendly” for women. The experts admit that whilst it is currently unclear when one can engage in prostitution, violation of the rules brings a punishment:

This regulation does not really bring the desired result. The government on one hand invites, says please come in, while on the other hand says — stop, where are you going?! (ALo)

At present, the legislation works to ensure that only the lowest social group bears the responsibility for prostitution – namely, the person engaged in street prostitution. The police have the right to punish the women for not being in the places designated by legislation for rendering of sexual services; however, the majority of the women engaged in street prostitution do not have an alternative to being on the street. They are addicted to drugs and alcohol, and punitive conditions cannot improve their situation. Proposal to introduce compulsory medical cards is considered absurd, discriminatory and stigmatising. It protects the clients’ interests and not the women involved. This policy seems designed to separate prostitution from “normal” society, to protect its honour and values, designating women engaged in street prostitution as deviant and a danger to the health of society. It was described in interviews that a woman was sentenced to compulsory labour in the absence of a medical card. As such, criminalising clients may be advocated as a solution, because if one involved party is being punished, there is a strong case for ensuring that the other also takes responsibility (or, logically, it is necessary to stop punishing the women engaged in prostitution).

In this respect, the present regulation of prostitution may be judged to be hypocritical; protecting the client’s interests, and serving as a barrier to leaving prostitution. The existing regulation is rooted in the idea that the woman is an object, and that prostitution is a ‘natural’ occupation for women.

Having undertaken extensive empirical research in this field, including the development of a detailed understanding of the issues faced by women in prostitution, the researchers categorically conclude that further institutionalisation of prostitution cannot be encouraged. Some interviewees believed that existing legal provisions should be reformed to ensure that there is clarity about whether or not it is legal to engage in prostitution. This implies a clear belief that prostitution is equal to other professions:

If they want to pay taxes like decent citizens do, there will be no such opportunity. Why can’t they register as self-employed, be a decent citizen, receive social security, draw a pension? To have protection, not to be reproached, to be able to file a police statement if a client has not paid. Then they themselves get involved, make sure that there is no discrediting of the profession, that the occupational prestige is maintained. (AS)

Also so that it would be possible to control the engagement of minors. This uncertainty is a cause of women's stigmatisation. The rules are arranged in such a way that they will definitely be violated. And this is completely absurd. (BM)

Research agrees with expert opinion that former regulation is ineffective, contradictory and hypocritical; however, this research has not produced empirical findings to support the implementation of this regulation. **The life stories of women and expert testimonies do not testify to a conscious choice of a “career” in prostitution as a goal in itself.**

A woman cannot be designated as an object, her body a consumer goods item, through legislation. The legalisation of prostitution will subject women to stigmatisation and render them institutional objects.

This will encourage the influx of new girls and women into prostitution, the increase of souteneurs' income, the increase in demand, and will reduce the perceived need for exit programmes.

Clarity is also needed before criminalisation of buyers is considered; namely, establishing what punishment of buyers amounts to in concrete terms, and how and in which cases it should be implemented. It is also important to consider the need of women engaged in street prostitution for an institution to protect their interests.

As both women engaged in street prostitution and experts stress, punishing clients should not simply be another formal norm; there is also the need for adequate support, the creation of effective exit programmes, work with clients, and an increase in societal understanding.

Legal protection of women in prostitution, the availability of exit programmes and a system of social support are what we should strive for:

...so that people could form their lives and careers in accordance with their abilities, what they have been dreaming about. At present we do not have any special purpose shelters, there is a gap between those people who are involved in prostitution and those who are identified as HT victims. We quite cynically assume that for those who are in prostitution it was a free choice, not asking why... (IL)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4. The involvement of women in prostitution is always determined by a combination of subjective and objective conditions. None of these reasons alone implies an inevitable engagement in prostitution; however, all the conditions identified in the research (poverty, a low education level, various kinds of violence, addictions, and social rejection) are considered as important risk factors for such an outcome.
5. Involvement in prostitution is related to various personal and situational issues in which money is needed. Prostitution is considered to be a socially accepted (and an ultimate) way for women to earn money. Prostitution for women is not a goal in itself, but serves as the means for the achievement of other goals.
6. Engagement in prostitution cannot be considered to be a freely-made choice for women. This has been shown by exploring the mechanisms of engagement in prostitution; by the physical, psychological and social consequences of prostitution, as well as by the violence experienced on a daily basis.
7. In Latvia and Estonia, forced (physically violent) recruitment rarely takes place. Recruitment can appear to be seemingly 'friendly'; however, it is classified as emotional violence and manipulation through exploitation of various aspects of vulnerability. Moreover, in public space, prostitution has tendency to "normalize", to become institutionalised (regulated) type of work
8. Recruiters employ various methods, depending on their efficiency and the approachability of the audience. In any case, the Internet provides various opportunities for accessing potential victims, since the referred-to 'friendly' approach and the normalisation of prostitution also manifest on the Internet.
9. Women engaged in street prostitution almost always combine prostitution with drug or alcohol addiction. Those women need exit programmes above all, since at the moment they are economically, socially and physically vulnerable. They also do not receive adequate medical or social help and legal protection.
10. Opportunities to exit prostitution are very limited. Exiting is determined both by the women's situation (survival model), addiction, the presence/lack of motivation, and by the presence/absence of real, all-inclusive and continued support.
11. Prostitution is a highly adaptable phenomenon that can adjust to situational changes. This means that out-dated arguments and ineffective methods of controlling or combating prostitution should be addressed. Latvian legislation in relation to prostitution is not rational; there are contradictions which work to the disadvantage of women engaged in street prostitution.
12. Empirical data in this research demonstrates features of discrimination towards women, particularly those of Roma heritage and former prisoners. The research reveals gender stereotypes in society, traditional gender role division, and women's objectification and commodification.
13. The results of the research provide a number of counterarguments for the reinforcement and institutionalisation of prostitution, therefore any decision in terms of

regulating prostitution should proceed from a perspective that seeks to reduce the spread of prostitution and the engagement of new people therein.

14. Prostitution should be viewed a social problem, which requires adequate solutions – help to those already engaged in prostitution, effective exit programmes, as well as preventative work. Exit programmes must correspond to the complex needs of women (addictions, education, employment opportunities). The preventative work includes the need to ensure basic needs for families, the presence of psychological and social support, the increase of media responsibility and the increase in understanding about the messages expressed in the media on gender.

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ANNEX

Annex 1

The categories of the content-analysis of the recruitment tendencies

1. Advertisements' sections:
 - 1.1 Job offers
 - 1.2 Job is searched
 - 1.3 Acquaintance
 - 1.4 Miscellaneous
- 2 Recruitment tendencies:
 - 2.1 The advertisement does not contain direct/indirect recruitment
 - 2.2 The advertisement contains direct/indirect recruitment
 - 2.2.1 The language of the advertisement
 - 2.2.1.1 National language
 - 2.2.1.2 Other language
 - 2.2.2 Advertiser
 - 2.2.2.1 Physical entity
 - 2.2.2.2 Legal entity
 - 2.2.3 The aim of the recruitment
 - 2.2.3.1 Fictive marriage,
 - 2.2.3.2 Sexual services,
 - 2.2.3.3 Exotic dances,
 - 2.2.3.4 Massage,
 - 2.2.3.5 Escort services,
 - 2.2.3.6 Striptease
 - 2.2.4 "I will consider any offer/I will do anything"
 - 2.2.5 Expressed promises
 - 2.2.5.1 Easy and quick money,
 - 2.2.5.2 Possibility to work abroad,
 - 2.2.5.3 Big salary,
 - 2.2.5.4 Possibility of getting extra income
 - 2.2.5.5 Flexible working hours
 - 2.2.5.6 No promises, only information

Annex 2

Case law on the cases of human trafficking and people's sending for sexual exploitation

Summary of the case law. The Supreme Court, 2006

The summary of case law of the Supreme Court for the year 2006 on human trafficking and sexual exploitation provides an insight into the recruitment practices employed by convicted people (souteneurs).

The analysis of court judgments demonstrates that the Internet has been used as an instrument in recruitment.

The following examples from the court judgments attest to this:

"In the accusation of E.K., such a criminal agency was expressed in the active search for women and their recruitment for sending abroad for sexual exploitation. The accused E.K. was regularly placing advertisements on the Internet with an offer to go to Germany for sex work, he was explaining in detail the working conditions and possible income to women who had agreed to go, was getting in touch with the accomplice, who had to secure the working conditions in Germany, and was paying the travel expenses to Berlin."

"K.R. was recruiting women in Latvia to work as prostitutes in England, that they [K.R. and E.K.] both agreed upon at the end of February 2005 while in London, England. K.R. placed the corresponding advertisements on Latvian Internet websites and after that asked E.K. to phone the woman (S.K.) who had responded to the advertisement, and to answer her questions. Both E.K. and K.R. contacted S.K. by phone and informed her about the work procedure of prostitutes in London and possible income, as well as offered to find other women to work as prostitutes in London."

"In accordance with the agreement on revenue sharing, B.G. got acquainted with women in Latvia and offered them work as prostitutes in Spain, placed the advertisements on the Internet and in newspapers about sex work opportunities, as well as the contact number. In conversations with the women, B.G. explained to them that in Spain they will have to render sexual services in exchange for payment, determined the date and time of departure, bought the bus tickets, assisted them in getting a visa and insurance policies, accompanied the women to Spain, and handed them over to the members of the organized group who fixed them up with the prostitutes' job."

"V.R. and T.B. responded to the advertisement published by N.S. and agreed to work as prostitutes in Germany, in nightclubs."

However, in general, court cases point to direct recruitment, in which a souteneur addresses women and offers them work in prostitution.

The following examples from court judgments attest to this:

“During the meeting, E.K. told both women that the job offer represents rendering of sexual services to men for payment, explained the living and working conditions, the order of payment, as well as the point at which they will have to give K.R. half the money earned for rendering of sexual services. After consent was given by S.K. and N.D. to the job offer, they agreed that E.K. would reserve the plane tickets from Riga to London, which K.R. would pay for.”

“The court also stated that in July 2004 I.A., upon the previous concert with B.K. , phoned D.D., V.V. and T.G. and, upon meeting them in person, invited them to go to Germany and work in B.K.'s brothel as prostitutes, and purchased them the tickets at her own expense.”

“In July 2005, the accused S.Š. offered O.S. a well-paid job in Germany or Austria, explained that the job will be connected with rendering sexual services in exchange for a payment, explained the duration of the working day and the order of payment, as well as offered to cover the travel expenses, so she also did.”

“The 27 February 2006 judgement of the Riga City Court of Latgale Suburb states that I.B. and J.K. looked for women in Latvia to go to Germany and render sexual services, explained the working conditions and the order and the amount of payment, and purchased tickets for the transport from Latvia to Germany for the recruited women.”

“In April 2002, L.G. addressed Ž.S. with a request to send her to work abroad. Ž.S. offered her a job in London and L.G. agreed. In April 2002, on a date that has not been clarified during the pre-trial investigation, Ž.S. and A.S. met L.G. in the café of the “Reval Hotel Latvia”, where A.S. told L.G. about the people “Daniels” and “Lili”, who live in London and in whose flat she (L.G.) will be able to render sexual services to clients, as well as explained how her services would be paid for.”

“In June 2003, the accused I.B. , bought a bus ticket at her own expense for A.V. and accompanied her to the Lithuanian city of Zarasai, where she was handed over to V.I. for an onward journey to Germany. In August of the same year, she was persistently offering Ž.K. and Ž.I. her help in sending them to Germany for rendering of sexual services; upon receiving their consent she introduced them to the already mentioned V.I., and then, upon their agreement, the recruited women left from Daugavpils to Zarasai in September 2003.”

“The responsibility of D.K. was to find women in Latvia and to recruit them for rendering of sexual services in England with their consent, offering them good earning opportunities. She was responsible for their selection, instruction and organisation of the departure to London from “Riga” international airport. On 28 October 2005, D.K. contacted the resident of Latvia E.J. by phone and offered her a prostitute's job in London.”

In many cases the recruitment practices are not revealed, but we can infer that they are referring to the persuasion of women to engage in prostitution. The examples:

“In the accusation of I.B. and J.K., who, upon the agreement with the resident of

Germany named “Vladimir”, recruited D.D. and I.H. for working as prostitutes, and, on 24 November 2004, bought them bus tickets from Riga to Berlin.”

Other citations from court judgements provide an insight into souteneurs’ networks, human trafficking and organised crime practices:

“The court has stated that B.K., a resident of the city of Düsseldorf, Germany, who owned a brothel “Erika’s Team”, organised sending people abroad for sexual exploitation with their consent. Namely, in the summer of 2003, meeting I.A. in Riga, in a conversation with D.D. in June 2004 and with I.L., in October 2004 while both of these people were in Germany, as well as later contacting with I.A., D.D., and I.L., offered to send the women with their consent to this brothel to render social services to clients in exchange for a payment, promising EUR 1000 for every girl that was sent. However, the promised and paid sums of money differed.”

“In the 13 September 2004 judgment it was proved that E.K. had sent people abroad for sexual exploitation with their consent, for the purpose of survival (...). E.K. was complaining that people in Germany had been deceiving him and very little money was left for him, a witness, in his testimonies given during the pre-trial investigation, confirmed that he had been complaining that he, “works as a fool, searches for the girls and sends them to Berlin, but only receives a dab of money in return.”

It must be stressed that such cases of human trafficking testify to women’s voluntary departure from Latvia to engage in prostitution. A situation in which a woman is informed about the prospective occupation is regarded as a voluntary departure. Without doubt, this deliberate choice may be influenced by numerous conditions, which may suggest indirect compulsion – poverty, addiction, family conditions and so on.

The following examples concern cases in which deceptive promises are used. For example:

“In the criminal case on the accusation of the citizen of Finland J.E.I., B.G. and A.K., the Riga Regional Court Criminal Case Court Collegium, with its 25 April 2005 judgement, stated in one of the episodes, that the accused had repeatedly sent the minor A.Č. to Finland, where he forced her to engage in prostitution, misappropriating most of the money she earned. (...) The minor victim was sent to Finland under false pretences, and deceived about the purpose of travel.”

In February-March 2005, an individual not on trial and I.V., being in Spain, agreed upon mutual criminal activities in Latvia – to conduct human trafficking for lucrative purposes, involving I.V.’s brother residing in Latvia, U.B. and his wife V.P., in the criminal activity. I.V. phoned U.B. and V.P. in Latvia and asked them to find some women and offer them the opportunity to go to Spain, promising a job as a bartender or babysitter, deliberately concealing that the job would be connected with the rendering of sexual services in the flat of the person not on trial, in Spain.

Informative notice of the Ministry of the Interior on the results of human trafficking prevention and combating in 2002

In 2002, four cases of human trafficking were detected, as a result of which the State Police identified five victims of human trafficking (five Latvian citizens were deliberately deceived about the actual work abroad), three of whom classified as victims in the criminal case.

In total, three criminal procedures have been initiated in Latvia concerning human trafficking under Section 154.1 of the Criminal Law "Human Trafficking": two criminal procedures concerning the cases of human trafficking to Germany and one criminal procedure concerning the case of human trafficking to Cyprus.

In 2012, during operational search actions in Latvia, one person was taken in custody for the organisation of human trafficking, who had deliberately deceived two Latvian citizens, including one minor, about the real purpose of going to Great Britain. Within the framework of the initiated criminal procedure, the person's surrender for a criminal prosecution in Great Britain was organised.

The most frequent cases of human trafficking are still those in which the recruiters are victims' acquaintances, friends or even family members, who use the trust of those close to them.

Fictive marriage is a deliberate recruitment method, in which a recruiter, most often addressing a particular person in social networks, uses their social vulnerability.

People engaged in recruitment for human trafficking, and those detained for recruiting people for sexual exploitation discovered in 2012, have usually not engaged with recruitment before or were asked to find people in Latvia willing to engage in prostitution in brothels. The recruiters provide a plane or bus ticket to reach the destination country or offer to take the recruited individual using their own transport. This is an interesting aspect because exactly the same practices are described in the report of 2006, which means that recruitment practices have not changed during this period.

The compilation of data concerning the family status and level of education of human trafficking victims started in 2012. It can be concluded from this data that human trafficking victims mostly come from single-parent or large families, as well as people who have grown up in orphanages. In comparison to previous years, the number of such human trafficking victims with secondary (or secondary vocational) education has increased. One of the human trafficking victims identified in 2012 (25 years old) did not have even primary education. Information summarised by the Ministry of the Interior confirms observations from expert Lysette Klop concerning the women's education and family status.

RESEARCH INTO THE IMAGE OF WOMEN IN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT IN LATVIA AND ESTONIA

FINAL REPORT

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Riga 2013

INTRODUCTION

Research into the image of women in Latvia and Estonia is part of the activities organised within the scope of the EC project “Safety Compass: signposting ways to escape trafficking”.

LATVIA,
YEAR 2014, MEDIA AND
PROSTITUTION

The law prohibits media from publishing information soliciting for violence, as well as prohibits from publishing materials of erotic and pornographic nature in breach of statutory provisions.

As evidenced by the results obtained from the research about prostitution, attitudes towards prostitution and human trafficking are rooted in assumptions about social roles and the social value of the sexes. Mass media plays a leading role in shaping both individual and collective opinion. Therefore, if the mass media produce information about a female as a purchasable and saleable commodity, whose most important value is determined by appearance, then prostitution is rendered a normal and publicly legitimate occupation.

The research into the image of women was conducted in 2013, from February until April. Using a content analysis, Part I of the research determined the portrayal of women in Latvia and Estonia in the most popular news and entertainment portals.

The initial goal, theoretical scope, elaborated methodology, and the acquired empirical information of the present research does not go beyond traditional concepts about the role of women in the society. Thus, in point of fact, the research results do not reveal anything new. They affirm that stereotypical concepts about women are being produced in Latvia and Estonia.

The main trends in terms of the portrayal of women in the most popular Internet portals of both countries are included in the final report. A more detailed description of the research results is available in separate reports from both countries.

1. THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF THE FORMATION OF THE IMAGE OF WOMEN

The research is focused on attitudes towards women expressed in articles and photos published online, presuming that the dominant attitude towards women is objectification (viewing women as an object; the term originates from the notion in English – objectification) and related notions – sexualisation and commodification (attitude towards women like a product, object of trade/exchange).

A situation in which a woman is viewed as an object and not as a person (intellect, talents), and is intended for use by and for the pleasure of others, is characterised as sexual objectification. Stereotypical convictions about a woman as an object and as insufficiently

socialised lead to dehumanisation, legitimising the use of women in various ways. Objectification takes place if a person is regarded and used as:

1. a tool for the achievement of goals or as property;
2. someone who is unable to apply self-determination (inertness, prohibition of independence);
3. someone who is allowed to be injured or destroyed;
4. someone about whose feelings, thoughts or experience one should not worry; and
5. someone who may be replaced¹

Female objectification is manifested in various degrees and forms.

A common manifestation of objectification (mass media, interpersonal interaction) is seen in the attitude that only attractive women with a beautiful, desirable body are well-remunerated and favoured .

Research reveals that in comparison to men, women, are depicted more often on TV shows, films, commercials, song lyrics and online sites in a sexualised and objectified manner – provocative clothing, emphasis on particular parts of the body, readiness for sex, and as a decoration. Mostly references to such occupations as exotic dancers, participants of beauty pageants, work at modelling agencies are used in objectification.² However, the sexual objectification of women also manifests in more extreme forms as victimisation – rape, violence and so on.

The theory of objectification stresses that the social and cultural factors referred to above directly and indirectly cause mental disorders for women (depression, eating disorders, sexual dysfunction)³, as well as substance abuse problems⁴.

Nevertheless, women are increasingly internalising (accepting) dominant views in society and are trying to adjust to these demands. As such, they are subjecting themselves to objectification (“self-stereotyping”), adjusting to society’s demands and prioritising becoming a “good object”.⁵ This means constant maintenance of one’s appearance and body to correspond with current cultural standards. Not corresponding to such standards bring feelings of shame, low value and imperfection.⁶

OBJECTIFICATION

It means turning an individual into a soulless object and article without distinct identity.

SELF-OBJECTIFICATION

It is person’s scourge of oneself, adaption to conventional preconceptions about a group harboured by the community, which is objectified, and identifying with these items. The person subdues his or her identity and personality to the imposed opinion.

- 1 Rudman, L.A., Mescher, C. (2012) Of Animals and Objects: Men’s Implicit Dehumanization of Women and Likelihood of Sexual Aggression. In: Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, Vol. 38 (6), 734-746 p.
- 2 Szymanski, D.M., Moffitt, L.B., Carr, E.R. (2011) Sexual Objectification of Women: Advances to Theory and Research. In: The Counseling Psychologist, Vol. 39 (1), 6-38 p.
- 3 Szymanski, D.M., Moffitt, L.B., Carr, E.R. (2011) Sexual Objectification of Women: Advances to Theory and Research. In: The Counseling Psychologist, Vol. 39 (1), 6-38 p.
- 4 Carr, E.R., Szymanski, D.M. (2011) Sexual Objectification and Substance Abuse in Young Adult Women. In: The Counseling Psychologist, Vol. 39 (1), 39-66 p.
- 5 Saguy, T., Quinn, D.M. et al. (2010) Interacting Like a Body : Objectification Can Lead Women to Narrow Their Presence in Social Interactions. In: Psychological Science, Vol.21 (2), 178-182 p.
- 6 Carr, E.R., Szymanski, D.M. (2011) Sexual Objectification and Substance Abuse in Young Adult Women. In: The Counseling Psychologist, Vol. 39 (1), 39-66 p.

As a result of self-objectification, women pay greater attention to care for their external appearance instead of their competences, and accept the expression of male power.

Men also face sexual objectification from media portrayals of a muscular body as the embodiment of masculinity. The research results reveal that although considerably less than women, men feel ashamed about non-conformity of their body to cultural standards. This can lead to substance abuse problems and mental disorders.¹

It may be concluded that objectification of the body has a negative impact on both sexes; nevertheless, women are more subject to this trend because traditionally they have less power and control. Self-objectification is the adaptation of women or a means of survival in the majority of cultures; furthermore, both men and women regard this as natural and self-evident.

A broader explanation of the objectification theory is given in gender theory. Whilst many may regard their sex as self-evident, an individual must learn his or her gender identity and how to be a man or a woman. Societal influence and socialisation processes make the person masculine or feminine.

Gender is formed and enforced in the mutual interaction of people and public activities. Gender theory asserts that gender is socially-constructed and not biologically and psychologically fixed in terms of differences between the sexes.

The definition of gender is influenced by diverse cultural and historical conditions in society, and thus the definition thereof is an ongoing debate.

Gender is learned behaviour acquired through socialisation, which is related to cultural understandings of masculine and feminine. Gender systems in any society and era represent an androcentric ideology or cognitive system based on suppression by hierarchically fixing the categories of gender in a manner that is similar to the relations between classes.²

The following categories are identified:

- sex roles are the behaviour and activities of women and men that are linked with biological differences and reproductive process;
- sexual identity is the awareness and recognition of sex and sex roles. Identities are not universal or fixed realities, but depend on historically and culturally defined language constructions. Thus, identities are cultural and cannot exist outside their representations. Identities are discursive constructions, thus, they are descriptions that help us to identify ourselves and in which we have invested an emotional component. In contrast, Habermas asserts that sexual identities may arise only after being subject to symbolic reproduction, and language is a very important medium in which identity is formed.³

1 Calogero, R.M. (2009) Objectification Processes and Disordered Eating in British Women and Men. In: *Journal of Health Psychology*, Vol. 14 (3), 394-402 p.

2 Pičukāne, E. (2001). (red.). *Mūsdienu feministiskās teorijas*. Rīga: LU Dzimtes studiju centrs. 449. lpp.

3 Squires, J. (1999). *Gender in Political Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press. P. 158.

- gender and sexual identities to a large extent depend on the way that society speaks about femininity and masculinity, rather than biological definitions. Sex is a “regulating norm” that in its turn determines gender. Gender is a social formation emerging from a discourse and physical self-identification.¹
- whereas gender is the behaviour, actions and attitudes of men and women that is determined and is regarded as corresponding by society and culture, these behavioural examples may or may not be related to sex roles; however, they are linked.
- gender role is the specifics of the sex behaviour adopted, and is characterised by the individual’s culture.
- gender identity is a deliberate acceptance of one’s sex role.
- gender stereotypes are psychological or behavioural characteristics typically associated with either men or women.

Understanding about biological sex usually merges with assumptions about gender, therefore it is difficult to establish a separation between the two.

Many differences between the male and female sexes may seem natural, but are in fact rooted in social and cultural traditions that are subject to change. Therefore, clear expressions of inequality are perceived by society as natural.

The division into female and male genders is accompanied by the socially differentiated identification of women and men; that is, with the social representation of biological sex, which is determined by the division of tasks, functions and roles of each sex in society, both publicly and privately. This division has a cultural character and varies depending on the place and time.² A definite aggregate of roles is related to gender identity, and has been created by traditions determined within a culture, moral codes, and economic and political conditions. In social life, individuals form roles and norms that are granted to one or the other sex, and reproduce them in accordance with various expectations towards the relevant sex.

It is crucial to note that gender roles are not “carved in stone”, but rather change in time and space. Contemporary understandings about masculinity and femininity may differ significantly from, for instance, masculinity standards 50 or 60 years ago.

We form our individual behaviour in accordance with existent gender roles that are fixed and supported within society.

Power is also an important consideration — gender is related to power and prestige, thereby creating inequality.

Greater attention and importance are ascribed to men in society rather than women, irrespective of similarities in lifestyle or activities. Politics is the field in which such aspect is manifested the most.

1 Barker, C., Galasiński, D. (2001). *Cultural Studies and Discourse Analysis. A Dialogue on Language and Identity*. London: SAGE Publications. P. 87.

2 Шведова, Н. (2002). *Гендерный подход как фактор политической культуры*. В: Малышева, М. (ред.). *Гендерный калейдоскоп*. Москва: Academia. С. 276.

Unequal gender constructions in society are largely regarded as self-evident and promoted by the mass media, which is now the primary source for information and news.

Theories of mass communication claim that knowledge about the world has been created to a great extent by the mass media. Knowledge about society or the world we live in is obtained from this source. In daily life a person usually presumes that the world is what it is and difference in opinions are the result of diverse “subjective” perspectives, experiences and memories. Meanwhile, the scientific approach asserts that we must regard knowledge about the world as a system that has been created and spread by the mass media.¹

The interpretative (constructive) approach claims that it is not possible to entirely discern the truth, which will be a partial construction thereof, formed through experience. A word assigns meaning to an object, and assignment of meanings is a construction. It is possible to communicate constructed meanings (conceptions) through the exchange of meanings with other individuals, thereby forming an inter-subjective reality.

“The Social Construction of Reality” by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann is a significant step in the promotion of the development of media theory and the promotion of sensible social changes. This work analyses the issue social construction by using the principles of phenomenology: the approach acknowledges that individual perception, and therefore the conception about the external world, are subjective; thus, the world is based on the knowledge about it and knowledge sociology, as well as by taking into consideration psychological cognitions about socialisation, roles, formation of habits, and so on. The authors of the work therefore explain the ways in which social reality is being constructed.

One of the functions of mass media is to serve as a medium for information which carries a symbolic code and includes encoded information that is interpreted by the active audience according to its experience, social context and knowledge about the language of reports to be transmitted in the media.

This allows an understanding of how the recipient interprets the expressed message and the role and relations included in the discourse as the mechanism of symbolic power. This understanding of media functions is connected with the discursive language environment and constructivist approach –our social impressions about truth are formed based on the words in which truth is described.

One of the central media functions in contemporary communication is the creation of language on the basis of similar principles to promote mutual understanding. Social and economic diversity means that groups of people use different media and diverse knowledge is formed, especially taking into consideration the fact that media offer not only knowledge as facts, but also as meanings.²

The media plays a crucial role in providing people with the so-called “mediated information”; the volume of which, compared to personal experience, has considerably increased. It is not possible to personally verify a large number of events, therefore an individual

1 Luhmann, N. (2000). *The Reality of the Mass Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press. P. 76.

2 McQuail, D. (2000). *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*. London: SAGE Publication. P. 427.

subjectively forms knowledge and impressions in large part according to the information basis provided by the media.

Entertainment materials and advertisements also provide us with a take on reality, offering other experiences to the observer who can communicate them as if he/she had experienced them himself/herself.

We watch TV, we read magazines and newspapers, we use online sources, we view advertisements and watch films. It is therefore inevitable that the volume of information received will influence our experience to some extent.

There are many reports on men, women and sexuality in the media content which influence our understanding about gender identity.

Mass media plays a key role in forming public opinion.

Media reports may ensure that norms of behaviour or gender stereotypes are maintained and reproduced in public opinion. Furthermore, the media can promote the occurrence of gender-related prejudice by providing a platform for comments and opinions which may influence/form attitudes in society with regard to gender equality.

Gender display categories elaborated by Erving Goffman provide an explanation for the way that online mass media portrays women. Goffman establishes a concept of “gender display”.¹ Gender is communicated through advertisements which offer known, ritual-like displays to the audience. Goffman asserts that we view pictures just as we view strangers in daily life, in which we encounter various people with whom we do not share any personal contacts. In order to understand the surrounding world and because we do not have knowledge about specific details, we create a shortened/“compressed” impression about reality, in which we group various impressions/objects/people into broad categories. We observe visual representations in the same way as we observe “a stranger in the surrounding realistic environment”.² Gender displays seem familiar to the receiver, because they form rituals that are implemented by members of society. Nevertheless, the media communication effect reaches even further and more profoundly strengthens such rituals. By detaching them from the context and viewing them as a group, we can judge that media content offers an excessively limited vision of the world.

Goffman distinguishes general gender display hyper-ritualisation groups – relative size, the feminine touch, function ranking, the ritualisation of subordination, licensed withdrawal.

- “One way in which social weight – power, authority, rank, office, renown – is echoed expressively in social situations is through relative size, especially height”³. The supreme status of a man over woman is expressed by portraying the man as a higher and larger figure than the portrayed woman.

1 Goffman, E. (1979). Gender Advertisements. P. 1.

2 Goffman, E. (1979). Gender Advertisements. P. 23.

3 Goffman, E. (1979). Gender Advertisements. P. 28.

LATVIA:

time spent by a person in Latvia at TV was 5 hours and 10 minutes per day on average in 2013 (TNS, 2013)

- **The feminine touch** shows differences in the character of the touch of the portrayed woman and man, provides information about the woman who cherishes and caresses, and the man who grabs, seizes and holds. In pictures the latter is represented by a woman's hand that gently touches the surface of objects and a man's hand that firmly clasps the object.
- **Function ranking** gender display portrays a social reality in which through mutual collaboration of the woman and man, the man takes/has/fulfils the leading role. This may be portrayed both by the man giving instructions to the woman, and by the woman receiving help from the man.
- **The ritualisation of subordination** is portrayed as physical lowering of the character visible in the picture. The character whose body and head are raised symbolises superiority; a high physical position reflects high social status.
- According to Goffman, **licensed withdrawal** is portrayed as an image in which women more than men are depicted as involved/participating in an emotional experience that psychologically "removes" them from the solution of the social situation. Women are portrayed as people who do not grasp the situation and therefore depend on someone's protection and good will.

The receiver perceives these gender displays as a reproduction of reality, because he/she recognises fragments of ritualised behaviour based in the gender. Consequently, gender stereotypes are reconstructed and reproduced.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research into the image of women in the online environment was conducted from 11 March 2013 until 30 April 2013. Content analysis was the basic method in the research (technique of text content analysis, including words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, topics or any other information that may be communicated).¹ Quantitative and qualitative content analysis of texts and pictures was selected for the portrayal of women in the online environment.

Qualitative content analysis is an empirical method for systematic analysis of well-defined audio, textual, visual and/or audiovisual media content. This is a non-reactive method that requires analysing the available content either in its entirety or a representative sample, by defining a time period of the sample, material, unit and unit analysis, as well as performance of category code definition. Usually quantitative media content analysis is performed for a large volume of media reports that are examined to create overall forecasts. The goal of such analysis is to show the trends in media content reports, instead of obtaining an absolute understanding about a specific/individual media report.²

1 Neuman, W.L. (2011). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*, 7th ed., p.310.

2 Rose, G. (2005). *Visual Methodologies. An Introduction of the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. P. 54–56.

Categories and sub-categories set forth in the content analysis are determined in accordance with the objectification, sexualisation and commodification characterisations: the topic of the article, the attitude expressed therein towards women, gender role, occupation, relationship status or family condition, characterisation of the woman, emotional condition, relationship between the man and the woman and division of power (see Annex 1).

Image or visual content analysis focuses on visual portrayals of women on Internet portals by using the gender display categories elaborated by Goffman. The receiver perceives the gender displays as a reproduction of reality, because he/she recognises fragments of ritualised behaviour based in the gender.

From 11 March 2013 to 30 April 2013, textual and photo analysis was conducted at www.delfi.lv and www.delfi.ee, which are considered to be the most popular news and entertainment portals in Latvia¹ and Estonia². The Internet portal was monitored every second day, including holidays. Textual analysis was performed for articles that were posted on the first page of the portal. First, all articles on a given day were counted. Articles which mentioned “woman” or “girl” in the title or introduction, or the name or surname of a specific women, as well as other words symbolising women, were selected for a more thorough analysis. Furthermore, all images posted on the first page of the portal were counted, and photos which used an image of women were more carefully analysed (determining the gender display used therein). The obtained data were processed with MS Excel and SPSS software.

3. PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

Analysing the Latvian and Estonian data regarding the portrayal of women in Internet portals, one may distinguish several common trends. These common trends mark not only the understanding of gender roles in both countries, but also provide a testimony about portrayals of women in media in general.

The analysis shows that women are mentioned most often in the topics of articles in relation to “entertainment”, whereas women are mentioned the least in stories/articles related to the subject of “economics”.

The research conducted in both countries shows the focus of online media on the external appearance of women. The research conducted in Latvia shows that the topics of articles in which women are portrayed “with the focus on the external appearance” dominate, whereas in Estonia this is the third most frequently used topic.

In both countries women portrayed in Internet portals are mostly actresses, entertainers and musicians, thus, the topics relate to entertainment (Latvia: actress – 129,

A FEMALE IN MEDIA =
“BEAUTIFUL
ENTERTAINMENT”

1 Most popular online sites among the inhabitants of Latvia, 2012 <http://www.tns.lv/?lang=lv&fullarticle=true&category=showuid&id=3884>

2 Web Information Service Company Alexa, <http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/EE>

musician – 93; Estonia: actress – 40, musician – 38).

Women do not appear as entrepreneurs or involved in physical work on the Internet in both countries. It should be noted that these two spheres are traditionally associated with the expression of masculinity and masculine gender roles. Traditional beliefs hold men as the bread-winner and provider, and support the correlation of physical power and masculinity, which are manifested online.

In terms of the characteristics applied to women in online contexts, “emotional” and “attractive” are the most frequent in Latvia and Estonia. The stereotype about women as “emotional beings” is based on traditional gender constructions and can be individually limiting.

It also implies an instability on the part of a woman and an inability to undertake, for instance, positions of leadership and responsibility. These kinds of characterisations of women in the media can be seen to reproduce and maintain such stereotypes.

The results of delfi.lv and delfi.ee content analysis allow a more detailed reflection on the portrayal of women. Latvian and Estonian versions of the news portal delfi are a joint platform with a common layout. Of course, one should take note that news content in both countries is not identical. Each country has its own political, economic and cultural agenda. As such, the goal of the analysis is not to compare both portals, but to establish joint trends in the portrayal of women.

Entertainment dominates in both countries as the topic in which women are most frequently mentioned.

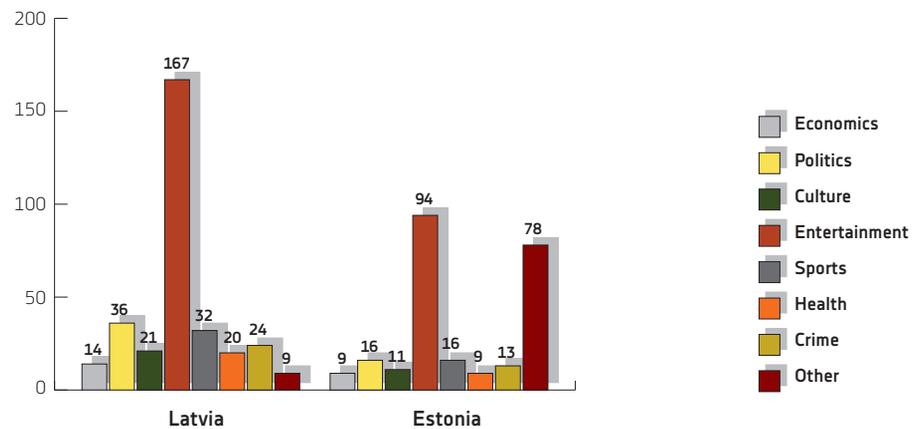


image No. 1. Mentions of women per topics

Women are not involved in determining the agenda of society, but rather are linked in particular with entertainment. Therefore, it may be concluded that women do not participate/are excluded from political, economic and cultural arenas.

Furthermore, data analysis suggests that the image of women is not only being used directly for the illustration of articles related to entertainment, but various gender displays have been used most frequently in articles devoted to this topic.

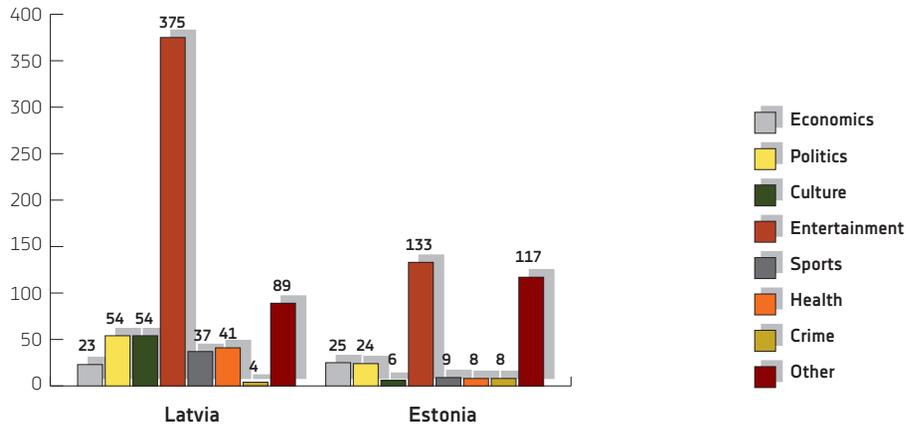


Image No. 2. Use of displays per topics of articles.

The image of women is used not only most frequently for the illustration of entertainment topics, but also by using gender displays that are, in essence, a visual message about women as objects and/or insignificant characters.

Analysing the results of content analysis regarding the occupation of women portrayed in delfi.lv and delfi.ee, it may be concluded that the frequency of portrayal does not have common trends. This should be considered related to the news flow; events in each country differ and therefore mentions of people involved therein differ as well.

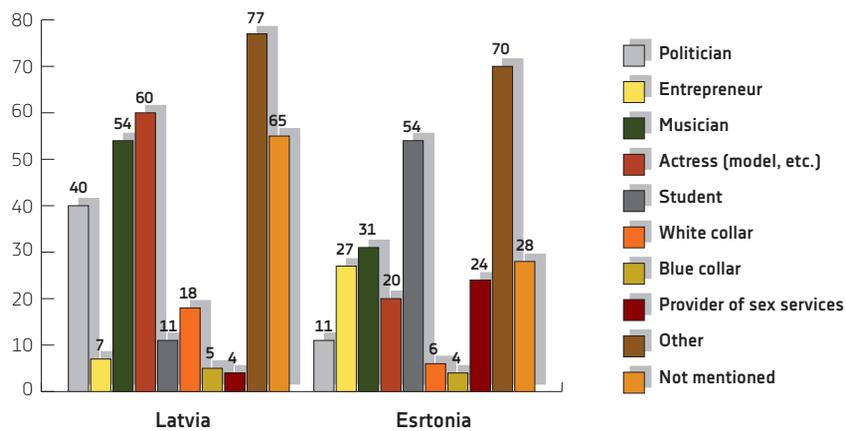


Image No. 3. Professional occupation of the woman.

The following common trend has been observed: women are not involved in physical work, underscoring the discussion earlier about physical power as a characteristic of the male gender role.

“Focus on external appearance” is a high indicator in both countries in terms of the attitude towards women expressed in the online environment. The main differences are a high “focused on intelligence” indicator in the case of Estonia and “neutral attitude” for Latvia.

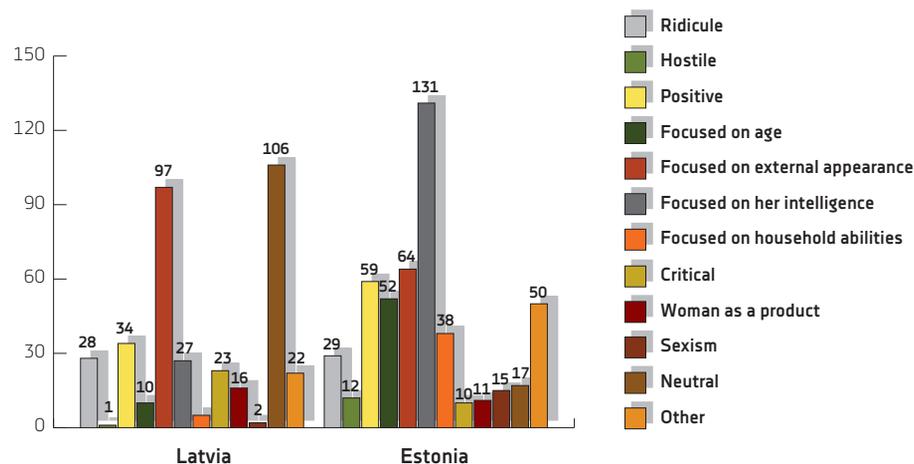


Image No. 4. Attitude towards women.

It should be pointed out that openly and unmistakably prejudiced attitudes towards women do not appear, because such attitudes as “a woman is like a product”, “sexism”, “hostility”, and “criticism” are expressed rather rarely. A significant number of online articles subject to analysis are news materials that present information in a neutral and objective way.

Examining the characteristics attributed to women in articles published by delfi.lv and delfi.ee, it may be concluded that even though there are differences between the countries, in both portals the image of women is formed on the basis of stereotypes.

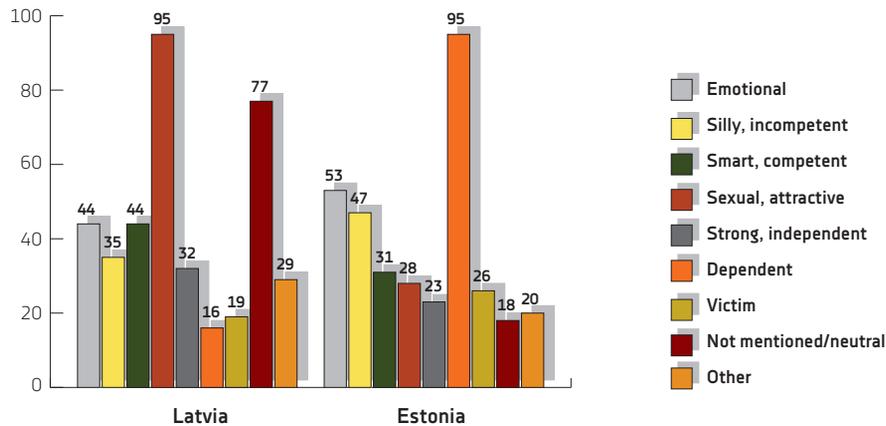


Image No. 5. Emotional characterisation of a woman.

The feature “dependent” dominates in the Estonian internet portal, whereas “sexual, attractive” is the most frequently mentioned feature in the material analysed in Latvia. In both cases, an image of women is being formed based on traditional gender roles by emphasising women’s passive role on the one hand (feature “dependence”), and the significance of women’s external appearance (feature “sexual, attractive”) on the other.

SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION

A situation when a woman is perceived as a body detached from the woman as a personality (intellect, gifts, emotions) and created only for use and pleasure of others.

Characteristics that do not fit the traditional stereotypes of female gender roles— activity, rationality, etc. (features – clever/competent, strong/independent) are attributed considerably less to women mentioned in articles.

The data obtained as a result of analysis of the category relations of power between a man and a woman shows that in both cases, the equal division of power between the male and female individuals mentioned in the article is the least represented category.

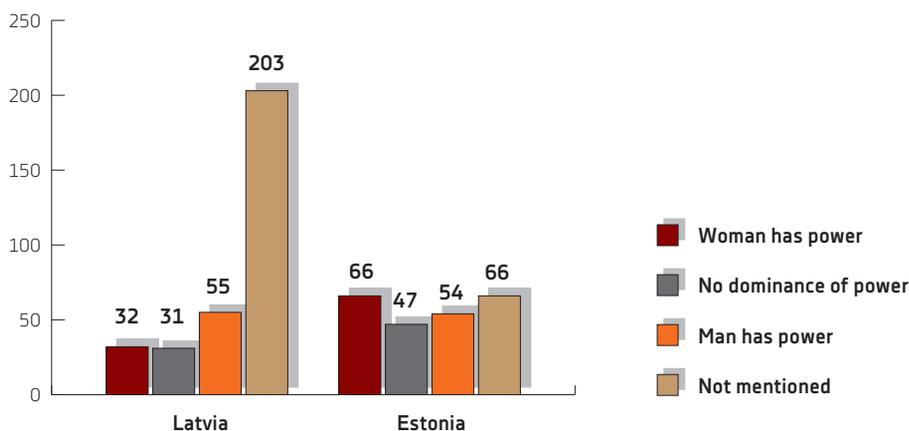


Image No. 6. Relations of power between a man and a woman.

In the analysis of this category, one should consider the specific situation of each country, the news agenda and other circumstances. Analysis conducted within the scope of the research does not provide information about any active expressions of attitudes by the Internet portal itself which might constitute deliberate depiction of women/ men as powerful or powerless characters.

The information obtained about the division of power may indicate both an objective division of power sources, as well as deliberate formation of one or the other sex as a powerful character.

It may be concluded that whilst there are both common and distinct features in the portrayal of women in the Estonian and Latvian delfi news portals, there is not a radical distinction. The data of categories subject to analysis show the dominance of traditional ideas about gender roles. In most cases, women are portrayed as passive, irrational, as a non-leader, and emphasising external appearances rather than achievements.

CONCLUSIONS

In the most popular Internet portals in Latvia and Estonia, women are being depicted as objects, seen to ensure entertainment or corresponding to entertainment. As such, women are being construed as trivial, unpredictable, narrow-minded and unable to make decisions. It should be noted that topics related to entertainment are directed at a female audience and thereby encourage spheres and features that should be possessed by every woman.

Women are not only portrayed as individuals appropriate for entertainment, but the message is also reinforced that entertainment are their field of affiliation and that women are not involved in determining the agenda of society. Therefore, it may be concluded that women do not participate/ are excluded from the formation of political, economic and cultural events. Women are mentioned comparatively little in the field of economics, presumably because it is not considered as a sphere appropriate for women. Professions related to entertainment most frequently mentioned— acting, singing, modelling.

Emotional display is a typical feature attributed to women in Internet portals. The portrayal of women together with particular emotions frequently features. The stereotype that women are 'emotional' further implies instability and an inability to undertake, for instance, positions of leadership and responsibility. The characteristics which the media ascribe to women may be judged to be reproduce and maintain such stereotypes. This is evident in a significant range of articles which focus on external appearance and thus serve to objectify women.

An image of women is created that is based on traditional gender roles, emphasising a passive role (“dependent”) and the significance of women’s external appearance (“sexual, attractive”). Characteristics that do not conform to traditional female gender roles– activity, rationality, etc. (“clever/competent”, “strong/independent”) are attributed considerably less to women in articles.

The data shows that the image of a woman is most frequently being used in the photos of entertainment-related stories. The image of women is being used most frequently both for the illustration of entertainment topics, thereby attributing a low significance to women, and by using gender displays that serve as a visual message about women as an object and/or insignificant character.

The image of women is used very little if it is necessary to depict economics and sports-related topics. The visual presence of women in topics related to power, responsibility, decision-making and action is fragmentary. Licensed withdrawal is the dominating gender display. Visually, the display is implemented by depicting women with a facial expression or grimace that is not typical for the situation, or as “eternally smiling”.

The data of categories subject to analysis shows the dominance of traditional ideas about gender roles. In most cases, women are portrayed as passive, irrational, as a non-leader, and emphasising her external appearance instead of her achievements.

A traditional view of gender is manifested in the text of materials subject to analysis and in visual messages. It should be emphasised that stereotypes may be observed both towards women and men. The difference lies in the fact that men, as evident in the data of the analysis, emerges in stronger positions than women.

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Annex

Categories of analysis for the image of a woman in online media

Images:

1. Date
2. Topic of the article
 - 2.1. economics
 - 2.2. politics
 - 2.3. culture
 - 2.4. entertainment
 - 2.5. sports
 - 2.6. health
 - 2.7. crime
 - 2.8. other
3. Sex
 - 3.1. male
 - 3.2. female
4. gender display:
 - 4.1. relative size
 - 4.2. the feminine touch
 - 4.3. licensed withdrawal
 - 4.4. function ranking
 - 4.5. the realisation of subordination
 - 4.6. there is no gender display

Text:

1. Date
2. Portal:
 - 2.1. delfi.lv
 - 2.2. kasjauns.lv
3. Topic of the article
 - 3.1. economics
 - 3.2. politics
 - 3.3. culture
 - 3.4. entertainment
 - 3.5. sports
 - 3.6. health
 - 3.7. crime
 - 3.8. other
4. Attitude towards women:
 - 4.1. ridicule
 - 4.2. hostile
 - 4.3. positive
 - 4.4. focused on age
 - 4.5. focused on external appearance
 - 4.6. focused on her intelligence
 - 4.7. critical
 - 4.8. a woman as a product
 - 4.9. hate towards a woman
 - 4.10. no attitude has been expressed
 - 4.11. other
5. Gender role of a woman:
 - 5.1. mother
 - 5.2. woman
 - 5.3. "the other woman"/sex object
 - 5.4. other
6. Occupation:
 - 6.1. politician
 - 6.2. businesswoman
 - 6.3. musician
 - 6.4. actress
 - 6.5. student/pupil
 - 6.6. "white collar"
 - 6.7. "blue collar"
 - 6.8. other
 - 6.9. not mentioned
7. Status:
 - 7.1. married
 - 7.2. in relationship
 - 7.3. single
 - 7.4. divorced
 - 7.5. not mentioned

- 7.6. other
- 8. Personal characterisation:
 - 8.1. emotional (sad, angry, happy...)
 - 8.2. foolish/incompetent
 - 8.3. sexy/good-looking
 - 8.4. strong, independent
 - 8.5. dependent
 - 8.6. clever, competent
 - 8.7. in leadership, leader
 - 8.8. neutral
 - 8.9. other
- 9. Emotional characterisation of a woman:
 - 9.1. aggressive, angry
 - 9.2. gentle, sweet
 - 9.3. worried
 - 9.4. sad, depressive
 - 9.5. not mentioned
 - 9.6. other
- 10. Relationship between a man and a woman:
 - 10.1. married/in relationship
 - 10.2. colleagues
 - 10.3. lovers
 - 10.4. friends
 - 10.5. not mentioned
 - 10.6. other

Safety Compass

**Research into the image
of Eastern European women
in the UK, internet recruitment
trends and expert evidence**

Purpose of Research in the UK

The purpose of this research is to explore factors which influence involvement in prostitution, mechanisms and trends of recruitment, and factors which impact upon exiting prostitution.

1. Methodology

In order to uncover evidence to support any conclusions for the research questions, a multi-methodological approach has been adopted, which will be outlined at length below. In brief, internet research has been conducted to explore a) how women from Eastern Europe are portrayed in the British media, and b) to try and discern any evidence of recruitment trends taking place through the internet. Semi-structured interviews with women in prostitution have been conducted by two leading Safety Compass partners in Latvia and Estonia to establish a narrative about trends of recruitment and exit, however this method was not deemed suitable for the UK research contribution. This is in part due to logistical difficulties of recruiting research participants in the UK to be interviewed who are of Latvian and Estonian origin; Metropolitan Police figures show that the numbers of Latvian women with whom the Unit had contact were: 2010 – 13 women, 2011 – 8 women, 2012 – 1 woman, 2013 – 1 woman. The numbers of Estonian women were: 2010 – 2 women, 2011 – 1 woman, 2012 – 1 woman, 2013 – 2 women (figures courtesy of the Met Police SC&O9 Human Trafficking Unit).

Whilst these figures refer only to the numbers of women of these nationalities who came into contact with the Metropolitan Police Human Trafficking Unit in London, it does nevertheless strongly indicate that recruiting sufficient women to constitute a statistically significant sample from which to draw conclusions would not be possible within the given time frame and resources. This is supported by more general difficulties as researchers in the destination country of reaching women who have been trafficked: 'While exploited they may be secluded and isolated or be fearful of contacting authorities and even service providers. After exit, they may fear arrest and deportation at the hands of authorities or abuse by traffickers.'¹ Moreover, UK researchers have also based this decision on ethical concerns about a high level of 'over-researching' (a constraint encountered by other researchers in the study of prostitution in the UK ²) of women involved in prostitution in London. As Miller and Bell argue, researchers need to continually consider the ethical implications of researching people's lives.³ They note that, 'researchers must continually reflect upon access routes in order

1 Brunovskis and Surtees (2010), 'Untold Stories: Biases and Selection Effects in Research with Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation', *International Migration* 48:4, 13

2 Melrose, M (2002). 'Labour pains: some considerations on the difficulties of researching juvenile prostitution', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 5:4, 340

3 Miller and Bell, 'Consenting to What? Issues of Access, Gate-keeping and 'informed' consent, in Mauthner et al (2008), *Ethics in Qualitative Research*, p54

to address complex issues around representation of individual voices; ethical concerns over “consent” to participating... and activities of those acting as ‘gate-keepers’ who may perceive some potential interviewees as “vulnerable.”¹

Advice from colleagues and experts in positions as ‘gate-keepers’ to women in prostitution, a wish not to in any way coerce/pressure women to recount or re-live painful stories that have been recently and extensively researched,² and methodological difficulties in finding women of relevant nationality for this study therefore led the researchers to conclude that interviews with women in prostitution is inappropriate for the UK research contribution. Rather, two recently published reports which draw extensively on semi-structured interviews with women in prostitution offer narrative evidence for this study.³ Moreover, correspondence and a meeting was conducted with the SC&O9 Human Trafficking Unit of the Metropolitan (Met) Police, to explore what they perceive to be trends and mechanisms of recruitment, particularly in relation to Latvian and Estonian women, and to discuss any figures that they were able to draw down from their operations of relevance to the study.

To understand the wider context for the existence and extent of the trafficking of women from Latvia and Estonia to and within the UK, it was deemed important to explore how women of these nationalities are portrayed in the British media. As such, a search of the websites of leading national and regional newspapers was conducted at regular intervals over the course of 10 months. The newspapers surveyed were spread across both left- and right-wing political sympathies, and included tabloids and broadsheets. The full list of news outlets surveyed will be listed below; the most references were to be found in the Daily Mail, an ideologically right of centre tabloid daily newspaper. A survey of news stories was undertaken to create a picture of what image of Eastern European women exists in the UK cultural mindset (as mediated through the press), and so to contribute to an understanding of the wider context of trafficking for prostitution into the UK of women of Eastern European origin (with a specific emphasis on Latvian and Estonian women where possible).

2. UK Context

The UK has a set of legislative mechanisms for addressing prostitution and trafficking, and this serves as an important context for considering the research questions of this project. Among the most significant and recent at the national level are: establishment of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in 2009 as a mechanism for potential trafficking victims to access services and support; publication of the Home Office review into effective practice

1 Ibid: 67

2 See Brunovskis and Surtees (2010), ‘Untold Stories: Biases and Selection Effects in Research with Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation’, *International Migration* 48:4, 19-20, for discussion of the impact on trafficking victims of being re-interviewed and possible feelings of obligation to participate when service providers have enlisted their help

3 Bindel et al (2012). *The PE:ER Project: A Study of How Women Exit Prostitution*; Bindel et al (2013). *Capital Exploits: A Study of Prostitution and Trafficking in London*

in responding to prostitution and its report Human Trafficking, The Government's Strategy (October 2011 and July 2011 respectively); signing of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive and publication of a trafficking strategy (2011). As this UK research contribution has a focus on the London area, it is also important to note a number of London-specific mechanisms: the formation of a new specialist unit to tackle trafficking and prostitution (SC&O9) and the creation of a multi-agency Human Trafficking and London 2012 Network.

There were 447 trafficking for sexual exploitation offences reported to the Met Police in 2012/13, a significant increase from 32 offences five years ago (2007-08)¹. Data from the National Referral Mechanism shows that 2077 potential victims of trafficking were identified in 2011, of which 54% were female. Sexual exploitation was the most common form of exploitation recorded.² In the recently updated Mayoral Strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls 2013-2017, 1,186 potential victims of trafficking were referred to the National Referral Mechanism in 2012, of whom 786 were female; with London as the largest region for referrals.³ Indeed, as an economic and transport centre, London acts as a hub for both international and internal trafficking of women and girls.⁴

3 Internet Research: portrayal of Eastern European women in UK media

A process of quantitative and qualitative content analysis was conducted using online UK media outlets. Searches were conducted using a number of designated phrases, including 'Latvian/Estonian women' and 'Eastern European women'. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the at times highly charged debate about immigration seen in the tabloid print media (discussed below), stories involving Eastern European women featured most regularly in the tabloid press, with the highest number coming from the Daily Mail. The key themes around which Eastern European women featured are immigration, crime and prostitution.

In terms of the immigration theme, a number of tabloid stories centred on fears of an expected Bulgarian and Romanian immigration 'influx'. These include coverage of a Romanian website's claims in response to British anti-Romanian sentiment that 'all our women look like Kate [Middleton]',⁵ and stories about Roma families, with particular focus on women.⁶ In addition, the discussion of Eastern European women principally as immigrants 'taking' British

1 Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) (2013). Consultation for the second London VAWG Strategy

2 UKHTC (2012). A Baseline Assessment on the Nature and Scale of Human Trafficking in 2011 SOCA

3 Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) (2013). Mayoral Strategy on Violence Against Women and Girls 2013-2017

4 Mayor of London (2010). The Way Forward: Taking Action to end Violence against Women and Girls. Final Strategy 2010-2013

5 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/romania/9841572/All-our-women-look-like-Kate-Middleton-Romanian-ad-campaign-claims.html>

6 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-truth-about-romanias-gypsies-not-coming-over-here-not-stealing-our-jobs-8489097.html?origin=internalSearch>

welfare featured several times in tabloid newspapers; for instance, one piece focused on a particular town in northern England with a community of Eastern European immigrants, and made reference to a Latvian woman with 10 children and alleged to be receiving £34,000 in annual welfare payments.¹ Another story claimed that the UK tax payer is financially responsible for sending pregnant Polish women home to give birth.² Eastern European women therefore appear to feature in the British media as part of a larger anti-immigration narrative; 'taking' British jobs or welfare benefits and fundamentally transforming local communities.³

Eastern European women therefore fit into an anti-immigration rhetoric,⁴ in which incoming communities are seen as a drain on British welfare resources and jobs.⁵ However, there is also an aspect of gendered discourse within the welfare debate. There is a hostility in parts of the British press to the social welfare system and supportive of the current Government's retrenchments in this area, with aspects of women's portrayal relating to 'unfit' teenage mothers, having high numbers of children to 'cheat' the benefits system and so on.⁶ Reporting about Eastern European women, particularly in relation to immigration, therefore fits into a specifically gendered aspect of the discussion about welfare.

Alongside stories relating to immigration and Eastern European women as beneficiaries of British welfare, the majority of stories tied Eastern European women to criminality, either as perpetrators or victims. A number of stories referred to reports of women of Eastern European origin or 'appearance' involved in petty thefts, shoplifting and pick-pocketing.⁷ A greater number of stories tied Eastern European women to sham marriage networks or internet bride sites – for instance, a story reported that the latter were on the rise in the USA,⁸ whilst another reported on networks recruiting women from former Soviet bloc countries for marriages in the UK and Pakistan.⁹

A significant number of stories dealt thematically with trafficking in relation to Eastern

1 <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/4547280/Give-me-a-bigger-house-says-Latvian-mum-of-10-who-gets-34k-benefits.html>

2 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2283699/NHS-foots-1m-Polish-expectant-mothers-living-England-return-home-birth-thanks-bizarre-EU-laws.html>

3 An example of this rhetoric can be seen here: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2272195/The-town-thats-We-visit-town-countrys-biggest-influx-East-Europeans.html>, and <http://www.express.co.uk/comment/columnists/leo-mckinstry/442943/Mass-immigration-was-a-mistake-Come-off-it-Jack>

4 <http://www.economist.com/category/print-sections/britain>: anti-immigration rhetoric is broadly supported by all main parties. This article minimises immigration through trafficking, emphasising instead the purportedly large numbers of illegal immigrants who have come to the UK voluntarily.

5 <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/27/migration-row-government-panicking-labour>

6 There are numerous examples that could be drawn upon; two most recent are: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2435931/How-Britains-brazen-benefits-cheat-finally-got-just-deserts-swindling-taxpayer-94-000-bragging-jobless-lifestyle.html>, and <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2465973/Benefits-cheat-spent-16-000-Spanish-holidays-banned-going-weekends-stop-flying-ABROAD.html>

7 http://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/10415741.Appeal_for_help_identifying_woman_involved_in_distraction_thefts/; <http://www.henleystandard.co.uk/news/news.php?id=1288445>; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-23711992>

8 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2306900/The-mail-order-bride-boom-The-rise-international-dating-sites-offering-U-S-men-significantly-younger-women-untouched-feminism.html>

9 <http://www.barnet-today.co.uk/news.cfm?id=11298&searchword=parking%20charges>; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2264112/Members-international-sham-marriage-gang-sent-Czech-women-Pakistan-wed-immigrants-bound-UK-jailed.html>; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2280583/Sham-marriage-gang-jailed-35-years-murderers-drug-lords-given-entry-UK-industrial-scale.html>

European women; referring to police raids primarily across London, but also elsewhere in the UK, and breaking up prostitution rings involving trafficked women from Eastern Europe. There is a strong narrative in the British press that frames Eastern European women involved in prostitution as victims of trafficking; for instance, 'once in the UK they were forced to work as prostitutes with the threat that their families would be targeted if they refused'.¹ **The British Press do report on Police operations to combat trafficking for sexual exploitation and seek to disrupt the narrative that frames prostitution as just part of British culture:** 'Ch Supt Paul Rickett said: "Some people say the Soho sex trade has its bohemian side and long may it reign. But they should know the full story. Victims have identified brothels where they have been trafficked for sexual exploitation and raped... We do know a lot of the women are trafficked or are vulnerable so this is about taking the danger out of Soho."'²

There is also a degree of discussion about the means of recruitment and control involved in facilitating trafficking and prostitution of such women: 'Judins, from the Latvian capital Riga, contacted two women via a dating website. The women, aged 18 and 25-years-old, were promised a sightseeing tour to London. But when they arrived in the UK in October 2011 they were taken to the Premier Inn in Ripley where one of them was sexually assaulted.'³ This suggests a generalised awareness, at least in the print media, about the link between prostitution and trafficking.

However, many articles made no connection between prostitution and trafficking in their discussion of Eastern European 'prostitutes' (it is important to note that NAWO's policy is to use the phrase women involved in prostitution and not prostitute; however the latter is commonly used in the media), and seek to challenge that there is any link between trafficking and prostitution; instead supporting the line asserted by the English Collective of Prostitutes and others that women of Eastern European nationality identified as potential victims of trafficking are simply immigrant women working voluntarily in prostitution: 'One 25-year-old sex worker from Romania, who works at a flat in Soho, told the West End Extra: "I'm not a victim and I don't think that's the case for any of the girls. If they were real victims they would come out and talk to police as soon as they come."'⁴

Where women as economic participants were discussed, it was in reference to women of Eastern European origin as strippers.⁵ With the widespread availability of low-cost flights to cities across Eastern Europe, there is also a strong news debate in tabloid media regarding stag parties. Such stories depict Eastern European women in their interactions with British men on stag trips as employees in strip clubs, massage parlours, waitresses and hostesses,

1 <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/sex-slave-ring-in-luxury-flats-is-smashed-by-police-in-dawn-raids-8615416.html>

2 <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/22-arrested-as-met-swoops-on-soho-venues-allegedly-linked-to-sex-trafficking-and-rapes-8984378.html?origin=internalSearch>

3 <http://www.ripleyandheanornews.co.uk/news/local/latvian-man-jailed-for-trafficking-women-to-ripley-1-5582726>; see also <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-24763047>, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-24776423>, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-24945516>, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-24060041>

4 <http://www.westendextra.com/news/2013/dec/sex-workers-anger-riot-police-raid-40-premises-soho-stolen-goods-clampdown>, see also <http://www.newstatesman.com/2013/12/real-problem-sex-work-is-low-waged-work-itself>,

5 <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/local-news/birmingham-lap-dancer-tells-shes-3659228>

and as criminals working to 'exploit' British men; robbing them or exposing them to sexually transmitted infections. **As one headline claimed, British men in Riga are, 'easy prey for mafia beauties who seduce them, spike their drinks and empty their bank accounts'.¹**

The Femen movement featured across the range of broadsheet/tabloid and leftwing/rightwing press, with details given about the movement's origins in the Ukraine. Coverage of Femen in tabloids frequently consists either in part or entirely of video footage of the protests; in one instance in a Daily Mail article, reporting on a Femen protest during a fashion show in Paris with four photos of the protesters, a video of the protest and a photo of the model in her underwear whose catwalk performance was interrupted by the protest.² Other reporting in the same newspaper simply posted videos of the protesters undertaking topless protests.³ Analysis of the issues informing the protests or any substantive engagement with the women involved is absent from these stories; rather, the dominant approach relies upon the visual display of their topless protests. Broadsheet newspapers provide more analysis and give a voice to the women involved: The Guardian features an article by a leading Femen founder/activist herself and others (in this and other papers) consider the issues that have precipitated and sustain this campaign in reference to Ukraine and Eastern Europe more generally.⁴

It can therefore be concluded that the main creator and disseminator of an 'image' of Eastern European women is the tabloid press. As a result, the stories about Eastern European women that are featured reflect these papers' priorities – alarmist reports related to welfare, immigration and criminality.

STEREOTYPES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Women from East Europe "embezzle" or "defraud" of allowances and jobs; they are criminals or brides for fictitious marriages.

4. Internet Research: Recruitment of Eastern European women

The second intention of the internet research was to try and discern any evidence of recruitment taking place in the UK through the internet. Evidence for any direct recruitment in English targeted specifically at Latvian/Estonian women specifically, or Eastern European women more generally, was difficult to identify. Simple search terms were used in internet search engines to try and identify any site-specific recruitment sites, e.g. 'jobs for Eastern

1 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2359095/British-men-flock-Latvia-cut-price-parties-easy-prey-mafia-beauties.html>. See also <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2449053/Sex-Stags-Prague-BBC-documentary-reveals-drunken-Brits-risking-STDs.html>

2 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2433058/British-model-Hollie-May-Saker-PUNCHES-topless-feminist-protester-stormed-Paris-Fashion-Week-catwalk.html>; see also <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/432647/I-just-punched-her-Moment-protesters-storm-catwalk-and-then-get-hit-by-the-models>

3 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/video/topless-protest-femen-campaigners-target-the-davos-summit/video-14482/index.html>, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/femen-stage-topless-protest-outside-tunisian-embassy-in-paris/video-1010622/index.html>

4 <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/apr/10/femen-naked-shock-troops-of-feminism>, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/20/femen-activists-uk-branch-feminism>, <http://www.newstatesman.com/voices/2013/04/white-doesnt-always-mean-privilege-femens-ukrainian-context>, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/the-week-in-books-femen-exposed-the-30000-onestar-jeff-bezos-book-and-a-digital-map-for-bookstores-8959310.html>

PROSTITUTION AS A FORM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Latvia has become the country where victims of human trafficking come from. Social exclusion and economic migration seeking a better life in more prosperous countries are the key factors contributing to human trafficking. Young women are majority of victims being recruited, transported, sold and used by individual customers, pimps and human traffickers for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour and fictitious marriages. (www.cilvektirdznieciba.lv)

European women in London', 'jobs for Latvian women' and so on.

The overwhelming majority of sites which were generated by these search terms were either dating sites or internet bride sites, tailored specifically to 'clients' interested in Eastern European women. These sites appeared as top-listed advertised sites on Google (and therefore a fee has been paid to put the advertisements at the top), in the general search area on internet search engines, and as sidebars on non-related websites. Examples are Single Baltic Lady Dating site ('thousands of beautiful Latvian women are looking for true love' ¹), Anastasia Dating Site,² Alone Angels,³ Top Ukraine Women Dating,⁴ and Lucky Lovers Dating Site,⁵ which promises access to Russian and Eastern European Women already in London who would: 'prefer to find a soulmate and life partner for dating and marriage from London.' City of Brides claims it has been, 'helping single western men find beautiful Russian and Ukrainian wives since 2002'.⁶

The remaining evidence of Internet recruitment targeted at Eastern European women relates to personal and employment advertisements placed on such sites as Gumtree and Craigslist. Any jobs advertised on these or similar UK-based sites looking specifically for Eastern European women were, in the majority, looking for live-in nannies, largely with a Russian background but occasionally for women from Latvia and Estonia.⁷ Many of these online advertisements are placed on behalf of families alleged to live in some of the most exclusive parts of London (Belgravia, Kensington and so on). Adverts can also be found on these sites from men looking for young women of Eastern European origin for 'cleaning'⁸ or offering them free accommodation; e.g. 'free accommodation for HOT Eastern European Girl.'⁹ Women from a variety of Eastern European countries were sought for elderly care duties in North-west London.¹⁰

It is therefore difficult to discern any real trends in terms of recruitment, beyond speculation about the legitimacy of these dating and bride websites as a medium for other kinds of recruitment. It is a hypothesis of this research that these sites are being used in some cases for recruitment of women into trafficking for sexual exploitation, when considered in conjunction with anecdotal evidence from the Met Police Human Trafficking Unit (see below).

1 <http://www.single-baltic-lady.com/?advID=9591798>

2 <http://www.anastasiadate.com/?gclid=CMmL47SOmLcCFU3KtAodFl8Ang>

3 <http://www.aloneangels.com/>

4 www.datingukrainewomen.com/

5 <http://www.luckylovers.net/pg/russian-girls-london.php>

6 <http://www.city-of-brides.com/>

7 Examples include: <http://www.gumtree.com/p/jobs/full-time-russian-or-german-speaking-nanny-needed-in-richmond/1040787598>, <http://www.gumtree.com/p/jobs/russian-speaking-live-in-housekeeper-needed-central-london/1040493239>, <http://www.gumtree.com/p/jobs/chelseabelgravia-live-in-russian-speaking-nanny-req-for-2-girls-under-5-years-old/1039238535>

8 <http://www.gumtree.com/p/jobs/cleaner-room-attendant-required-in-notting-hill-lithuanian-or-russian-or-polish-speaking/1040001469>, <http://www.topix.com/forum/world/latvia/TIFOB5184FJF6S43Q>

9 <http://london.craigslist.co.uk/roo/3790425975.html>

10 <http://www.gumtree.com/p/jobs/eastern-european-females-looking-for-care-work-for-european-clients-in-north-west-london-herts/1040151079>

5. Pre-research on exit/support programme

As stated in the methodology, the decision was taken by UK researchers not to undertake interviews with women in prostitution. An interview was conducted with two members of the Met Police SC&O9 Human Trafficking Unit, DC Karen Anstiss and DS Philip Rashidi, to discuss their recent data on trafficking victims in London and their experiences with victims and traffickers.

Met Police data revealed that the number of trafficking victims from Eastern Europe in the London area has been steadily increasing as a proportion of the whole (namely, in relation to the total numbers from Africa and Asia). The interviewees attributed this in particular to an influx from Albania and Romania, and anticipate this increasing still further when restrictions on the free movement of Romanians and Bulgarians are lifted. **The listed figures in the Methodology demonstrate that the Police have encountered very few Latvian and Estonian women since their operations began as a trafficking unit, further compounded by a lack of clarity from suspected victims of trafficking themselves: ‘a lot of the girls that we come across might be from Estonia or Latvia, but they will say “I’m Russian” for some reason. Actually, it seems to be more attractive to the client that they’re Russian.’** This pattern is repeated for other nationalities, ‘And the Albanians say they’re Italian, and a lot of the Romanian girls say they’re Spanish’ (DS Rashidi). The role of client demand therefore impacts upon the Police’s ability to correctly identify victim nationality. A further possible reason for women claiming to be from other countries than their own was voiced by the police at the conference held in August 2013 in London, as part of the Safety Compass project. This hypothesis is that women do not want their families in their home countries to be at risk, and hence say they are from elsewhere.

Indeed, DS Rashidi pointed to particular circumstances, notably client preference, shaping the high numbers of Eastern European trafficking victims. Whereas trafficking victims from Africa ‘for sexual exploitation see the UK as a landing base for a few weeks, but the majority end up in Italy and Spain’, demand in the UK dictates a higher proportion of women brought in from Europe:

‘Our experience shows that the majority of brothels that we go into – the off-street sex trade – in East London, the demand is driven by the clients that are mainly Asian men going in, and their preference is Eastern European girls’ (DS Rashidi).

This suggests that based on operational experience, the Police believe there to be a particular cultural factor present especially in London, which impacts on the nature of trafficking for sexual exploitation: ‘Culturally, within their communities to have sexual activity is almost forbidden amongst themselves, so they use the brothels – a certain age group; the majority are probably around 18/20 – 35/40’ (ibid).

A key impact of some members of a particular community driving demand in parts of London is the manner of recruitment used to bring Eastern European women into the UK.

RECRUITMENT METHODS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Main channels of online recruitment are dating sites, bride search engines, personal and job classifieds, housekeeping jobs (cleaning, care).

The interviewees highlighted the link between trafficking and sham marriages, noting that,

...their preference is Eastern European girls, and that trend is reflected in the number of sham marriages that are happening between Asian males from India and Pakistan and Hungarian, Czech [nationals]... One of the recent investigations was a Czech organised crime network bringing the Czech girls in for sham marriages, but that would take 5-6 weeks for the process to take place; in the meanwhile they would use them in brothels to make money, so they would pay for the stay.

This therefore points to a link between sham marriages being arranged because of immigration status (non-EU nationals seeking EU marriages to secure their right to remain) and trafficking for sexual exploitation; i.e. organised crime networks involved in trafficking for both sham marriages and prostitution exploiting the same women to meet demand for both: 'A lot of the girls get put in for prostitution and end up doing a couple of sham marriages along the way. It's like an add-on because I think for a sham marriage they get 2000 Euros, and the people that organise it can get up to £5000... the majority of the sham marriages we come across is because we're looking at human trafficking.' This adds weight to the hypothesis that the kinds of dating and marriage websites listed above that advertise for or target Eastern European women may be sites of recruitment for trafficking victims.

The interviewees emphasised the highly transient nature of trafficking in London:

The girls will work 3 days in one brothel, then they change... it becomes almost like a movement so that they have new faces in the premises to entice clients to come back. We have got OCN [organised crime networks] who recruit girls from the Czech Republic, from Poland, from Romania, and all will be sent here and they will all be joined together in a particular network and they will be moved around.

We've come across girls who were in East London for 3 days a week, and they know that the busy time centrally is for 2 days of the week so they come and work centrally in addresses here (DS Rashidi).

They explained that traffickers and brothel owners have responded to a perceived wish amongst clients for change, meaning that not only are victims of trafficking moved from city to city throughout the week but also from country to country: 'Some of the girls we spoke to recently; they work in France for a couple of days, Germany for a couple of days. The girls we spoke to only this week, they were here for 2 weeks – one was here this year 4 times for 2 weeks at a time.'

Alongside recruitment through sham marriage sites and networks, the interviewees pointed to other recruitment trends that bring in women who are entirely unaware of the link to prostitution,

There's the group that's been tricked and coerced into coming – thinking they'll be a cleaner, a secretary or childminder. They come here and the first

thing that happens, they're forced to take semi-nude pictures to put on the escort agency site and they say, "if you don't do what we tell you, we're going to send it to your family". And the thought of shame means that they go along.'

In addition to this group, they pointed to those women who were aware that they would be working in prostitution, but, 'what they don't know is that once they arrive, the conditions they're going to be working in and how they're going to be exploited – expect to sleep with 20/25 men a day and they are getting 100 quid for that. The exploitation is massive because the person who is actually making the money is making 90% and the girl is making 10%. So that amounts to trafficking.' **They also acknowledged the economic inequality and instability that underpins the ability of traffickers to recruit girls and women: '95% of the trafficking victims are here because of their economic situation and family situation back home, otherwise they wouldn't be here** – they wouldn't be so easily coerced or tricked, because they're desperate in a corner and have been offered this road paved with gold... it's not a coincidence that every country that is a source country is in a deprived economic situation.'

Therefore, evidence from the Human Trafficking Unit of the Metropolitan Police does support, anecdotally at least, that there is a link between trafficking for sexual exploitation and sham marriages – suggesting that the kinds of websites listed above may indeed be recruitment mechanisms. The interviewees' operational experience also points to a particular client-driven demand for women of Eastern European origin that is specific to London.

6. Supporting evidence from existing research

Many of these conclusions are supported by extensive research undertaken by Eaves and London Southbank University and published in two reports in 2012 and 2013. The 2013 report refers to Project Acumen, a police-led research initiative, which sought to establish the size of the off-street 'prostitution sector' in England and Wales, and assess the prevalence of trafficking. It found that 96.4% of women in the off-street sector in London were migrants, equalling 5,108 women. The authors found that at the national level, of the 17,000 migrant women involved off-street, 2,600 were estimated to have been trafficked, and a further 9,600 were considered to be 'vulnerable' (defined by the authors to include experiencing financial or cultural factors that can prevent women from exiting prostitution or seeking help to do so). In London this equates to estimates of 766 trafficked women and a further 2,860 vulnerable women respectively.¹

Among their key findings, the authors note that there, 'appears to have been a recent and quite rapid increase in the number of non-British women selling sex on-street

1 Bindel et al (2013). Capital Exploits: A Study of Prostitution and Trafficking in London

in a significant number of London boroughs, many of whom are from Romania'. The authors note that this is a recent change.

It had been accepted that most non-British women in prostitution were off-street, but that Eastern European women (identified but not verified as Romanian) are increasingly found on-street, and appear to be subject to high levels of control, including being driven in groups to different locations. It has also been observed that a number of this group encountered in on-street prostitution appear to be as young as 14 or 15 years old. The authors suggest a level of implausibility to the claim that these women are acting on independent economic grounds, free from coercion

'[One] respondent highlighted: "...they [claim that they] can't get any other work, so they end up on the streets. I don't swallow that at all. I think some of it's true. But to be in the country one day and straight on the streets?..."¹

In terms of off-street prostitution, the report details evidence of Eastern European women encountered by research respondents and service providers across London boroughs: 'A respondent...noted the women present in brothels in that borough tend to be in their late teens to early twenties. There is usually a mix of ethnicities, including women from Eastern European and Africa. A Borough D-based service noted that the biggest change for them over the last few years is the number of 'migrant workers' selling sex off-street.' The researchers were also told about evidence for riskier practices taking place amongst women in off-street prostitution: 'A health professional... reported an increase in the number of trafficked women accessing her service who are pregnant – it is reported that women can earn more money in brothels if they are pregnant. This same service is seeing an increase in the number of young, pregnant women from Eastern Europe and Africa.'²

The PE:ER Project report produced by Eaves consists of in-depth interviews with adult women involved in or exiting prostitution and formerly trafficked women along with practitioners who work with women in prostitution. The research seeks to promote a sustainable, nationwide framework of good practice in policy and practice around exiting prostitution, and to increase understanding of women's lives and motivations for exiting. Whilst the report does not reference particular nationalities, it is concerned with barriers to exiting prostitution and discusses circumstances that inhibit exiting prostitution for trafficking victims. The authors note that:

Nine interviewees had been trafficked across international borders for the purposes of prostitution. After escaping from their traffickers, one woman was involved in off-street prostitution in flats and saunas (for the purposes of this analysis she was classed as predominantly involved in off-street prostitution) and had developed problematic cocaine

1 Ibid: pp28-99

2 Ibid: 30

use, whilst the other woman was involved in on-street prostitution (for the purposes of this analysis she was classed as predominantly involved in on-street prostitution) with problematic crack use and was living in a homeless hostel.¹

The researchers therefore demonstrate the patterns of coercion, addiction, lack of training/qualification, mental and physical health problems, and external inhibiting factors (no recourse to funds or housing) to which trafficked women are subject and which can keep them in prostitution after escaping their trafficker.

1 Bindel et al (2012). The PE:ER Project: A Study of How Women Exit Prostitution, 72

