

MAPPING THE INHUMAN TRADE: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF THE DATABASE ON TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

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Abstract

Most of the traditional methods of collecting data cannot be applied to new forms of crime such as trafficking in human beings. The present article examines the qualitative information in the database of the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The database includes information about all aspects of such trafficking. The data collected are comparable between countries and regions and are divided into three main sections: country reports, characteristics of the victims of such trafficking and of the traffickers and trafficking routes. The article illustrates the complexity of the data entry process.

Analysis of the data confirms that trafficking in human beings is a gender-specific phenomenon, a sad manifestation of the rampant violence against women and girls. The results may be used as a basis for setting priorities for international cooperation and for gaining a deeper understanding of the profile of a given country.

INTRODUCTION

Trafficking in human beings has been one of the most heated topics in international criminological discourse for some years. Many issues have been debated, such as the definition of trafficking in human beings, the differences between such trafficking and smuggling of migrants, its connection with prostitution and the legal significance of the consent of victims, to mention just a few. On many of these issues experts hold widely varying opinions. However, the international community, government officials, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and researchers are all agreed on one thing: there is a dearth of reliable data on human trafficking.

A global database on trends in trafficking in human beings was established under the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings of

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the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in order to systematically collect and collate open-source information on such trafficking. A broad range of sources is scrutinized for information on trends in such trafficking and the routes used, characteristics of victims and offenders and criminal justice responses. In the present article the preliminary results of the analysis of the database will be presented, focusing mainly on the qualitative information entered into the database. A global overview of the countries of origin, transit and destination, as well of the victims and offenders, will be provided.

What is trafficking in persons?

The first international document on trafficking in women was the International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, which was adopted in 1904 and has been ratified by 12 States. In 1949 the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others was adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 317 (IV), annex) and has subsequently been ratified by 49 States. However, these legal instruments do not provide a clear definition of trafficking in human beings.

In November 2000, the General Assembly adopted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex II). For the first time, the international community has adopted an agreed definition of human trafficking. The Protocol against Trafficking in Persons aims at preventing and combating trafficking and strengthening international cooperation against trafficking.

The definition of the term “trafficking in persons” in the Protocol* includes three elements: (a) recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons; (b) the use of improper means, such as force,

*Article 3, subparagraph (a), of the Protocol reads: “‘trafficking in persons’ shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of 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.”

abduction, fraud or deception; and (c) the objective of exploitation, such as sexual exploitation, forced labour, servitude or slavery. States that ratify the Protocol are obliged to enact domestic laws making those activities criminal offences, if such laws are not already in place. The Protocol also requires States to take steps to protect and support victims of trafficking, who should be entitled to confidentiality and protection against offenders. This should include general protection as well as specific forms of protection when a person is providing evidence or assistance to the police or is appearing as a witness for the prosecution. Social benefits, such as housing, medical care and legal or other counselling, are optional requirements.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (General Assembly resolution 55/25, annex I) is also supplemented by the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (resolution 55/25, annex III). The definition of “smuggling of migrants” in that Protocol includes procurement of illegal entry of a person into a country of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident in order to obtain direct or indirect financial or other material benefit.* It is important to note the difference between the definitions of “trafficking in persons” and “smuggling of migrants”, even though in reality it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between the two. According to Kelly and Regan [1], Murray [2] and Salt [3], smuggling of migrants is usually limited to illegally transporting the person to the country of destination, after which the relationship between the smugglers and smuggled persons terminates. In trafficking, on the contrary, persons are delivered to organizations or individuals who have paid for their delivery and the trafficked persons must, after the delivery, repay their debt to the organizers through prostitution or forced labour.

Problems of data on trafficking in human beings: availability and reliability

There has been a boom in recent years in information on trafficking in persons, although the reliability of that information remains a problem. New reports, manuals, articles and books seem to be published every week. However, most of the information is reporting on individual cases or is

*Article 3, subparagraph (a), of the Protocol reads: “‘Smuggling of migrants’, shall mean the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.”

prepared for advocacy purposes. If figures on such trafficking are given, they are usually based on published estimates of the level of trafficking and in most cases there is no explanation of how those figures were calculated [4].

Reliability of data remains a problem with most of the data sources. Because of the difficulties in data collection, reliable data are difficult to find. Even though some high-quality research exists in the field of trafficking in human beings [1, 5-7], most of the data are based on “guesstimates”, which, in many cases, are used for advocacy or fund-raising purposes.

The question of whether global estimates of the scale of trafficking in humans serve any serious policy purposes should be posed. For other serious crimes, such as homicide, assault or rape, global estimates are usually not given even though there are considerable problems with the data in some regions of the world [8]. The global estimates on the numbers of persons involved in trafficking are always vague and cannot serve as a reliable knowledge base for policy planning. Thus it remains questionable whether this type of information is needed at all. For this reason, in the present article, no global estimates on the scale of trafficking in humans will be given.

Global mapping, based on the identification of the main countries involved in trafficking in humans, might be useful for planning and evaluation purposes. Mapping “hot spots” can give valuable information on the nature and situation of such trafficking, such as origin, transit and destination countries, as well as involvement of organized criminal groups in different countries and the main routes used. That knowledge can be used when developing cooperation between practitioners in the field of prevention, victim assistance and criminal justice responses and monitoring the impact of those actions. In addition, carefully collected and analysed national and regional data might yield profiles useful for developing regional cooperation in the fight against trafficking in humans.

The database of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has been designed to include information dealing with all relevant aspects of trafficking from open sources. The main sources include official reports from Governments, information disseminated by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, research reports, conference material and media reports. In order to assess the level of reliability of sources, the database includes a field for the confidence level for each one, on a scale of 1 to 5, the default value for confidence being in the middle. For each

source, the minus and plus factors influencing the confidence level are reviewed. For example, factors reducing the confidence levels include the fact that the figure is based on an extrapolation of a small sample. Factors increasing confidence include, for example, figures on real cases dealt with by the police.

Comparability

Some existing data collection initiatives gather information either globally or regionally (see annex). Such initiatives usually collect both quantitative and qualitative information on legislation, victim assistance, trafficking routes and other related information. Because of the nature of the information, in most cases the data are not comparable. One of the main objectives of the Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings database is to collect data that can be compared between different countries and regions. There are well-known problems that are common to all efforts to gather comparative data on crime, such as imprecise definitions, inaccurate classifications and differences in units of count used. Even crimes that might be considered to be covered by more or less similar definitions such as homicide are difficult to compare between countries [9]. With new forms of crime such as trafficking in humans, most of the traditional methods of collecting data cannot be used. Major problems with a comparative analysis include some of the following drawbacks:

(a) The lack of specific legislation on trafficking in persons resulting in the absence of official criminal justice statistics on cases involving trafficking in humans, such as number of police-recorded cases and number of persons prosecuted and convicted. Where legislation on trafficking in persons is available, the legal definitions vary considerably from one country to the other. For example, the legislation may address only some forms of trafficking in persons: such as trafficking in women for sexual exploitation or trafficking in children. In such cases official statistics include only some types of trafficking crime;

(b) In some countries, there is no clear distinction in the official statistics between cases involving trafficking in humans and those involving smuggling of migrants. This is also usually based on the lack of clear legal definitions of the two crimes. In other countries, the crimes are clearly distinguished by the legislator but not in law enforcement practice: the police might prefer to investigate some of the human trafficking cases as migrant smuggling crimes because often collection of evidence is easier. As a general rule, migrant smuggling investigations lead to successful prosecutions more often, since the testimony of the trafficking victims, which is usually difficult

to obtain because of the fear of retaliation by traffickers or deportation by authorities, is not needed. For that reason human trafficking cases are often entered as migrant smuggling cases in official criminal justice statistics;

(c) There are very few countries that provide official statistics on cases involving human trafficking. The *Bundeskriminalamt*, the German criminal police, has published a comprehensive yearly report on crimes involving such trafficking since 1999 [10]. The first report of the Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings [5] gives detailed information on the national situation and includes figures also on victims, investigations and prosecutions. A national rapporteur on trafficking in women also operates in Sweden, submitting yearly reports on the situation in that country since 1998 [11];

(d) It is generally understood that statistics on the number of police-recorded crimes, prosecutions and convictions do not reflect actual levels of crime but rather give information on the operations of criminal justice systems. When action by the relevant authorities is increased, more cases are registered in the crime statistics. For crimes such as assault, rape or robbery, victimization surveys give more reliable figures on the true level of crime. In such surveys, samples of people are asked about their victimization experiences over a certain period of time [12]. General victimization surveys cannot be used to collect data on the number of trafficking victims because the crime is not common enough to be represented in a small sample of the population. However, a focused victimization study on trafficking experiences could be carried out among, for example, young women from developing countries returning from abroad. Several analyses have been made of data collected by service-providing non-governmental organizations on their clients. However, such data are usually not collected with standardized instruments and their reliability is difficult to assess.

The International Organization for Migration has systematically entered information on trafficking victims assisted by it into a database, using a standardized methodology. It includes both qualitative and quantitative information on numbers of victims assisted, their country of origin, age, trafficking route and the method in which they were trafficked [13-14].

The Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings has, together with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, developed a questionnaire for the systematic collection of data on the experiences of victims. The study will be repeated in different countries, yielding comparative data on victims' experiences. Instruments have also been developed to collect data from criminal justice practitioners in different countries. A pilot test in the Philippines [7] revealed that the fact that cases involving migrant smuggling and trafficking were not clearly

separated in the legislation had an impact on, for example, non-governmental organizations that provided services to victims. During the data collection phase it became obvious that most of the persons who had been assisted had been repatriated after their illegal immigration into a foreign country through a smuggling operation. However, they were introduced to the researchers as trafficking victims. Interviews with the criminal justice practitioners also suffered from the same problem. Practitioners questioned about trafficking in humans mainly provided information on cases that involved smuggling but not trafficking.

Collecting data for the database on trends in trafficking in human beings

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime database on trafficking trends has been designed to collect a wide range of open-source information on trafficking in human beings. The information may come in the form of official government statistics, reports of research institutes or of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, but may also be drawn from newspaper articles and news agency bulletins.

As with other, more traditional types of crime, more data are available in developed countries than in developing countries. This is also reflected in the collection of data for the database. To date, information from 284 sources has been entered, most of it originating in developed countries. Many of the sources include data from different parts of the world, especially those published by international organizations. However, the predominant use of data from Western sources is likely to have introduced a bias in the data set and more efforts must be made to collect information from other regions of the world.

The collected data were entered into three different sections of the database:

(a) *Section 1. Country reports.* Estimates on the volume of human trafficking in a given country, including trafficking to, within, through and from the country; trafficking for sexual exploitation or forced labour; and persons encountered and ultimately cases dealt with by the criminal justice system;

(b) *Section 2. Profiles.* Characteristics of victims of trafficking or the traffickers: nationality, sex and age distribution;

(c) *Section 3. Trafficking routes.* Information on countries included in the routes used for trafficking in humans.

The information obtained under sections 1 and 2 is primarily of a numerical nature, even though some of the victim characteristics may also be entered in free-form text fields. This ensures, at least to some degree, that the level of detail is not compromised by the emphasis of the database on quantitative data. The information gathered in the section of the database on trafficking routes is mostly non-numeric. However, numerical information can also be entered in that section. For the purpose of analysis, the data can be combined with data on the volume of human trafficking in a country obtained from section 1.

The database has been designed so that it is possible to include as wide a range of source material as possible in the final analysis. The flexibility of the database to incorporate a variety of information complicates extracting data from the database, because the same type of information can potentially be entered into more than one section. For that reason, in the reporting phase, the data stored in different sections of the database can be combined. For example, the number of persons trafficked to a country can be retrieved both from the country report section and from the section on trafficking routes.

As mentioned earlier, the database collects both qualitative and quantitative information about human trafficking from a variety of different sources. Those sources usually provide several “cases” about which information can be entered into the database. The cases can include information about different numbers of individual victims, offenders or police responses. The following example illustrates the complexity of the process of data entry:

Case

In July 2002, the Guatemalan police liberated nine El Salvadoran girls who had been trafficked in the same year from El Salvador to Guatemala and sexually exploited in a Guatemalan brothel. The rescued children were between 14 and 17 years of age. Two Guatemalan men, aged 25 and 30, who had allegedly exploited the girls were arrested.

Information suitable for the sections on “country reports” and “profiles”:

- (a) Trafficking to a country: Guatemala;
- (b) Trafficking from a country: El Salvador;

- (c) Reference year: 2002;
- (d) Purpose of trafficking: sexual exploitation;
- (e) Victims' profile: nine girls, aged between 14 and 17 (children), nationals of El Salvador;
- (f) Offender's profile: two males, aged between 25 and 30, nationals of Guatemala;
- (g) Criminal justice response: nine victims encountered (by the authorities), two suspects encountered (in the database, this type of "case study information" is separated from more general information on criminal justice action and is not used for national estimates).

Information suitable for the section on "trafficking routes":

In general, the route can be given a name and a number of stages depending on the number of transit countries. If there are no transit countries indicated, the route consists of two stages, origin and destination. If one transit country is indicated, this is referred as a three-stage route.

In this case, the country involved in stage one, the country or origin, is El Salvador. Stage two, the destination, is Guatemala. As regards stage two, the following information can be inserted: the number of trafficked persons was nine, they were girls and they were trafficked into the country. There is also a check box to show that they were sexually exploited. Even though the information can be entered into two different sections, at the analysis level, it is referred to only once.

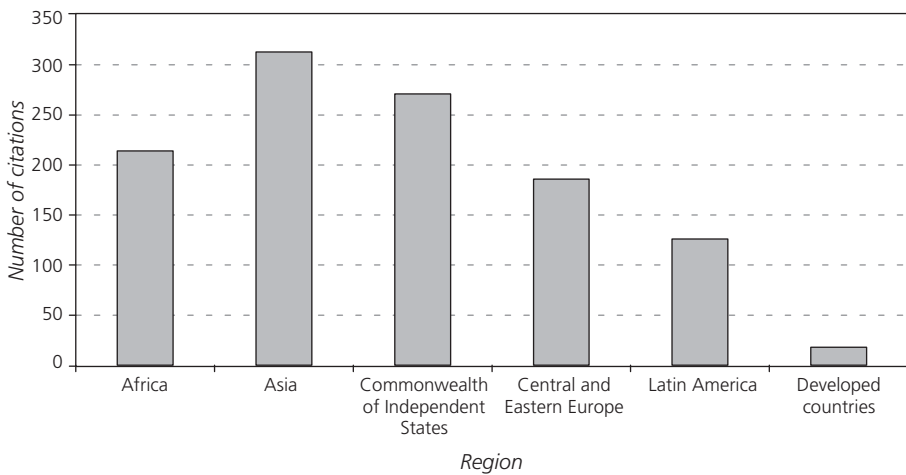
Source: Report of the Guatemalan Police, 2002.

In the analysis phase, different types of information can be retrieved for a comparative analysis. The following are some preliminary results based on the 284 sources (reports and so on), and 3,671 cases included in the database so far. The preliminary results, which are presented below, focus on qualitative information and estimates of the size of trafficking flows are not included. They will be analysed at a later stage, when the number of sources and cases has been increased. Criminal justice responses such as number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions are also not discussed because more systematic data collection in that field is required.

Countries of origin, transit and destination

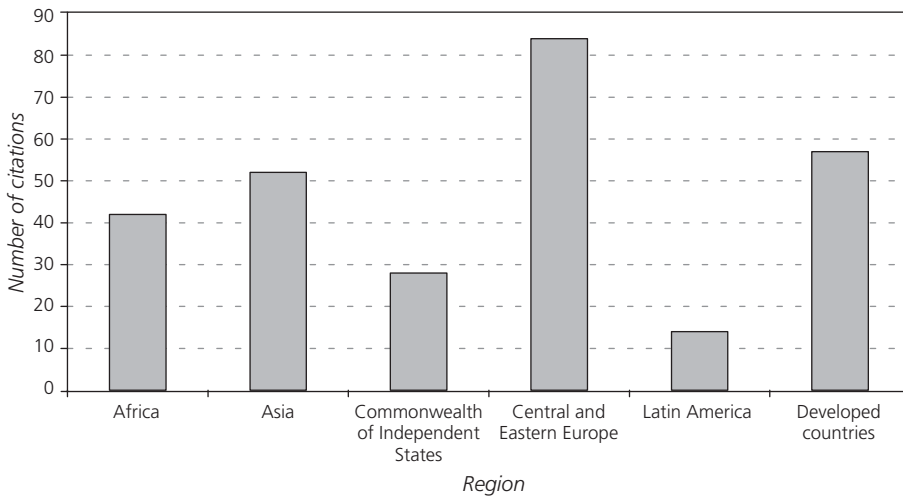
To assess how much a country is affected by the trafficking phenomenon, the number of citations as country of origin, transit or destination can be counted. In total, 147 countries are mentioned, at least once, as a country of origin. Among the most frequently cited countries of origin, in descending order, are the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Nigeria. If data are examined by region, it can be seen that countries in Asia are most frequently cited as countries of origin, the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and African countries being cited second and third, respectively (figure I). Central and Eastern European countries were cited less often as countries of origin. There was a relatively small number of citations in Latin America and only a few citations referring to developed countries.

Figure I. Number of times a country was cited as a country of origin, by region



Citations referring to transit countries are much fewer than references to countries of origin. In total, 96 countries were mentioned as transit countries and the most frequently cited countries were in Central and Eastern Europe, as shown in figure II. The CIS member States and Latin American countries are less frequently cited as transit countries.

Figure II. Number of times a country was cited as a country of transit, by region



In total, 150 countries were cited as countries of destination by different sources (figure III). The most frequently mentioned destination countries included in descending order, the United States of America, several European Union countries and Japan. Regionally, the main destination countries were found in the developed world, Asia being the second most cited region. Central and Eastern Europe and Africa were also cited as destination regions. Citations referring to Latin American countries and CIS member States were relatively few.

When comparing the data globally, some regional characteristics can be found. Considering the global inequalities in affluence, it is not surprising that Africa, Asia and the CIS member States were the main regions where victims of trafficking were recruited. It should also not come as a surprise that developed countries found themselves at the end of the trafficking route. However, less obvious were the results concerning Central and Eastern Europe, indicating that this is the major transit region. Interesting also was the fact that Asia figured equally as a region of origin and of destination, as shown in figure IV.

In considering the Central and Eastern European countries as transit countries, it must be kept in mind that the number of sources mentioning them as transit countries was relatively low. A country has been indicated as a transit country only if this was explicitly stated in the source. A fictitious example might be information saying that children were trafficked from

Figure III. Number of times a country was cited as a country of destination, by region

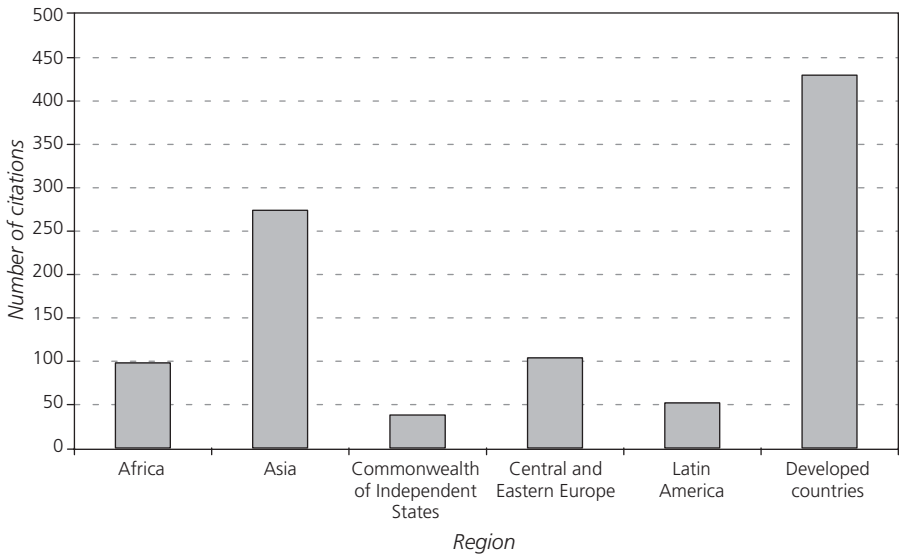
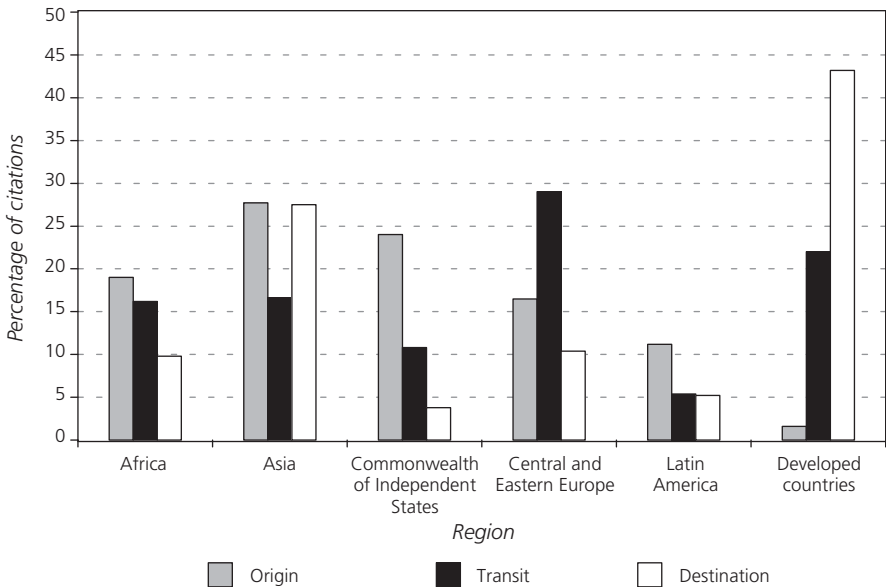


Figure IV. Number of times a country was cited as a country of origin, transit or destination, by region (as a percentage of all citations)



country A to countries B and C and then to country D. In this case, A is entered into the database as a country of origin, D as country of destination and B and C as countries of transit. Keeping this in mind, there is reason to believe that the Central and Eastern European region is indeed a major transit area. The first reason is, of course, its geographical position between north and south and east and west. In addition, the situation of countries of the region with economies in transition, where the control of the authorities might not be as strict as in Western Europe, may attract traffickers to look for safe routes. High levels of corruption among customs and police officers may also facilitate criminal activities. In many Western European countries, current visa regulations allow persons to stay in a country without any other authorization for up to three months, which facilitates final entry from Central and Eastern Europe into Western Europe.

The emerging picture of Asia as a region of both origin and destination is also worth examining in greater detail. It should be noted that Japan, as one of the top destination countries, was not included in the Asian region, but is included in the category of developed countries. If the region is again divided into subregions the picture becomes clearer, as presented in figure V.

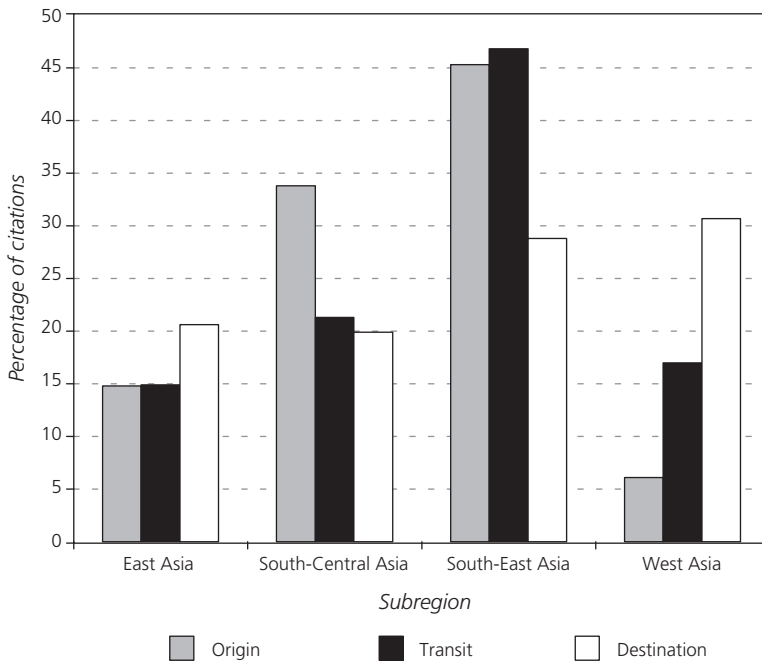
The main countries of origin were found in South-East Asia and in South-Central Asia.* The main countries of destination were in West Asia and in South-East Asia.** South-East Asia was also the main transit area in the region, so the subregion seemed to combine all phases of the trafficking process. East Asia was mentioned slightly more as a receiving area than as a region of origin or transit.*** Each subregion thus showed a distinct profile in terms of the different stages of trafficking.

*Countries cited as countries of origin in South-East Asia were: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam; countries cited as countries of origin in South-Central Asia were: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

**Countries cited as countries of destination in West Asia were: Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen; countries cited as countries of destination in South-East Asia were: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

***Countries and territories cited as destinations in East Asia were: Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Macao Special Administrative Region of China, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and Taiwan Province of China.

Figure V. Number of times a country was cited as a country of origin, transit or destination, Asia, by subregion^a (percentage of all citations)



^aThe division is based on the composition of macrogeographical (continental) regions and component geographical regions used by the Statistical Division of the Secretariat (see www.un.org/Depts/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm, accessed on 11 November 2003).

Profile of the victim

The data collected on victims concerns their nationality, sex and age, as well as the form of exploitation through which they are victimized. In total, 95 countries have been identified as home countries of victims of trafficking. The most frequently mentioned countries are, in descending order, Ukraine, the Russian Federation, Nigeria, Albania, Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Bulgaria, China, Thailand, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Poland, Belarus and Latvia. As can be expected, the list of home countries closely paralleled that of countries already identified as countries of origin.

Where such information could be obtained, women were reported to be victims of trafficking in 83 per cent of the cases entered into the database. Men were reported to be victims in 4 per cent and children in 48 per cent of the cases. The total percentage does not add up to 100 because any one case could include combinations of women, men and children as

victims. For example, a case could include information about a group comprising women and children trafficked from one country to another. Because the information was based on the number of cases in which women, men or children were mentioned as victims, the case in question would emerge twice, once in connection with women and again in connection with children.

Information was also collected on the type of exploitation suffered by the victims in the country of destination after their recruitment and transportation. It included information of two main types, namely, on sexual exploitation and on forced labour. The analysis was based on 3,671 cases. Of those cases for which the information was available, more than 80 per cent were for purposes of sexual exploitation and 19 per cent for forced labour.

If one examines women, men and children as separate groups of victims and how those groups were exploited at the end of the trafficking process, it can be seen from figure VI that, of all the cases in which sexual exploitation was reported, women were by far the largest group of victims, followed by children. Cases in which men were reported to be victims of sexual exploitation were rare. Cases of forced labour reported are presented in figure VII. Children constitute the largest group included in the cases of forced labour, followed by women. Again, men were seldom reported to be victims of forced labour. The latter may, however, also reflect a bias in the sources consulted.

If women, men and children are examined separately as victims of trafficking, the following results emerge (see figure VIII):

(a) In 85 per cent of cases where women were reported to be the victims, they were said to be trafficked for sexual exploitation and in 2 per cent of the incidents for forced labour, while 13 per cent of cases included both types of exploitation;

(b) Of cases where men were reported to be the victims, 16 per cent involved trafficking for sexual exploitation and 24 per cent for forced labour, with 60 per cent of cases including both types of exploitation;

(c) As regards cases where children were reported to be the victims, in 70 per cent of the incidents children were said to be trafficked for sexual exploitation and in 13 per cent for forced labour and 18 per cent of cases included both types of exploitation.

When the focus was on the number of citations as country of destination for the purpose of sexual exploitation, the most cited country was Italy,

followed by the United States and Germany. With forced labour the picture was somewhat different and the most cited countries were, in descending order, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire.

Figure VI. Number of cases of sexual exploitation of women, men and children

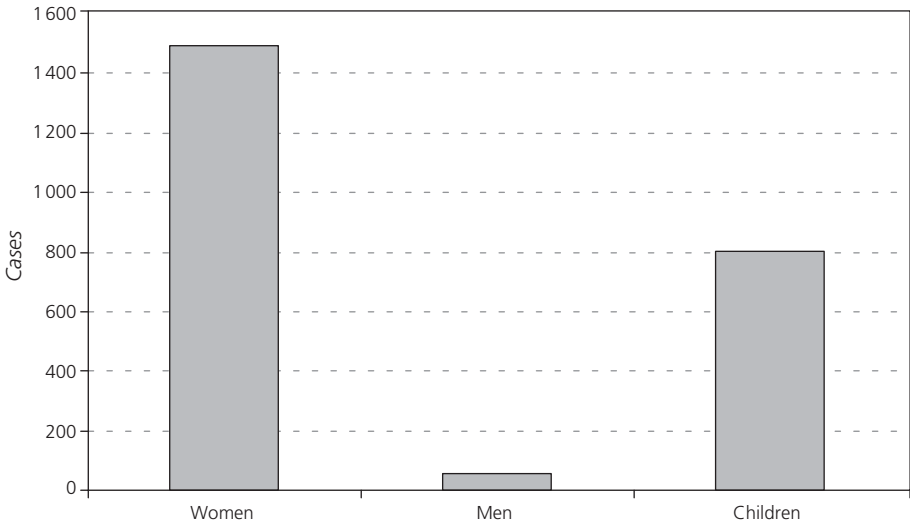


Figure VII. Number of cases of forced labour involving women, men and children

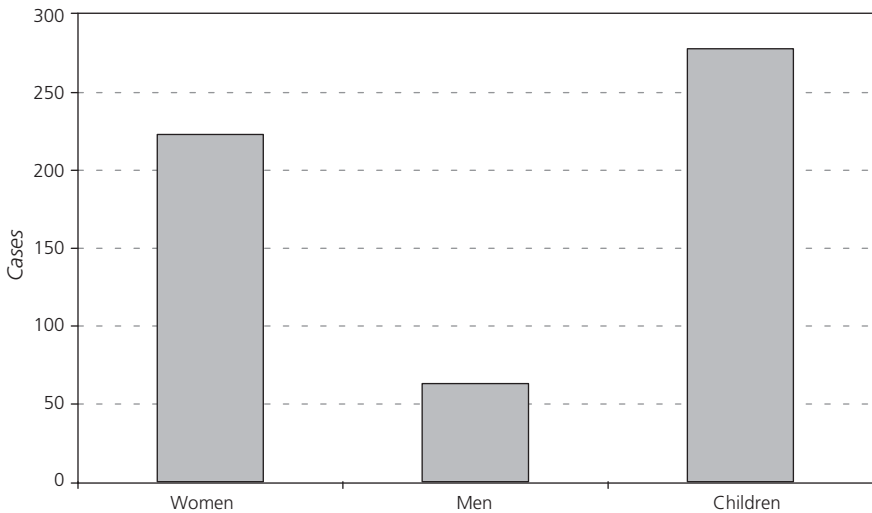
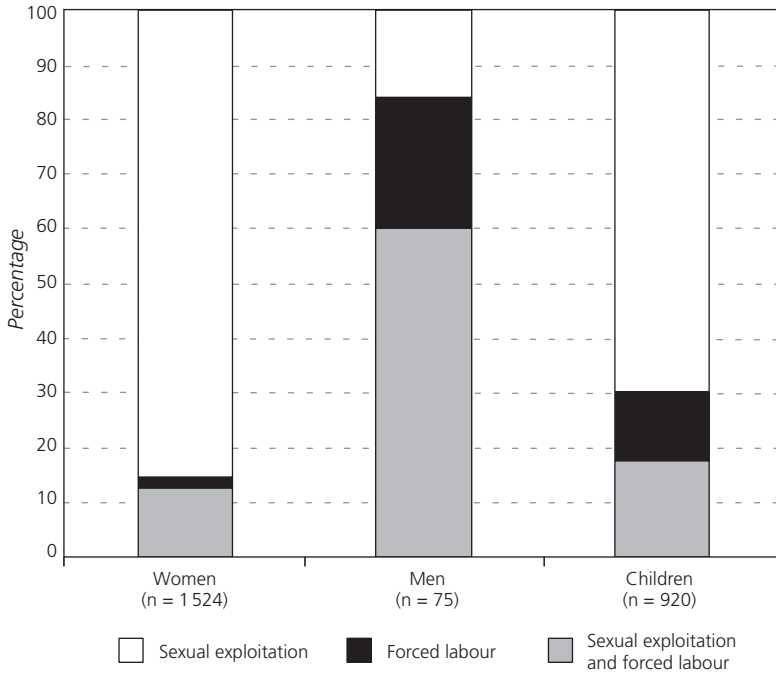


Figure VIII. Type of exploitation of women, men and children: percentage of cases including information on the type of exploitation



n = number of cases referring to women, men or children as victims of sexual exploitation or forced labour

Figure IX. Citations of trafficking involving sexual exploitation into a country, by region

(Percentage)

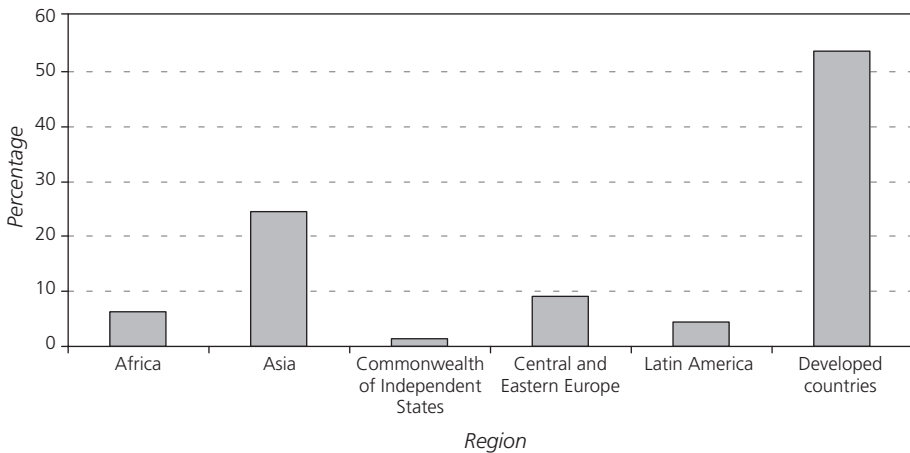
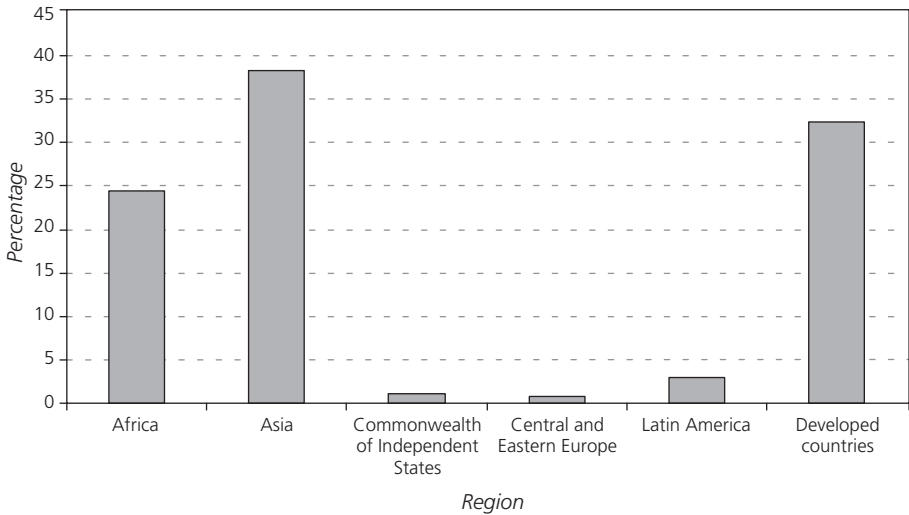


Figure X. Citations of trafficking involving forced labour into a country, by region

(Percentage)



When exploitation patterns in countries to which persons are trafficked were viewed regionally, the picture became better defined. As can be seen in figure IX, sexual exploitation was most frequent in developed countries, followed by Asian countries. Exploitation through forced labour is more common in Asian countries, the developed world and African countries than in countries in other regions (figure X). However, it should be kept in mind that, in general, countries, especially the CIS member States and States in Latin America, were rarely mentioned as countries of destination, so their low numbers in relation to sexual exploitation and forced labour at the end of the trafficking process were to be expected.

Profile of the offender

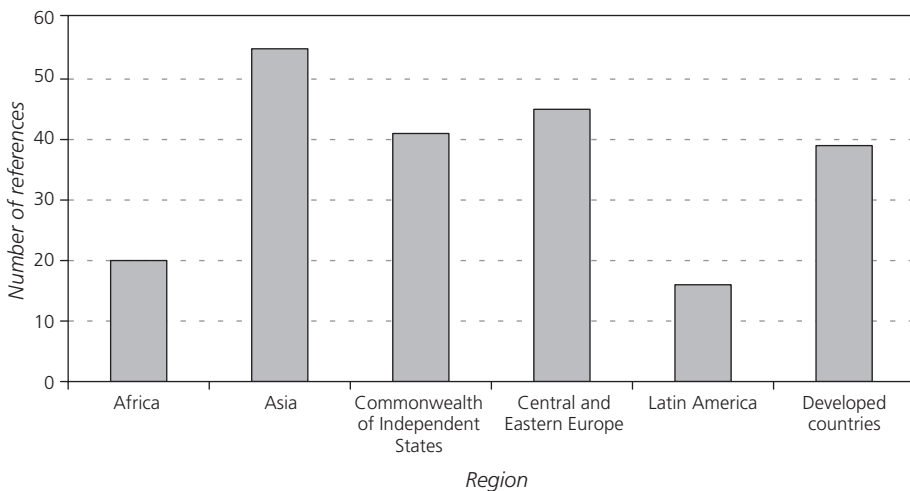
Considerably less information can be found on offenders than on victims. Data on offenders included information about those who were suspected of being involved in trafficking as criminals and those who had been found guilty. As regards the nationality of offenders, a total of 76 countries were referred to as home countries of offenders. The countries most frequently referred to were the Russian Federation, Nigeria and Ukraine, in descending order:

Country	References ^a
Russian Federation	13
Nigeria	9
Ukraine	9
Albania	8
Thailand	7
Turkey	7
China	6
Poland	6
Bulgaria	5
Germany	5
Italy	5
Lithuania	5
Mexico	5
Romania	5

^aBecause of the low number of references the information should be treated with caution.

When the references to countries were examined from a regional perspective, it was noted that Asia had the highest number of references, followed by Central and Eastern Europe (see figure XI).

Figure XI. Number of references to the nationality of the offender, by region



Conclusion

Even though there are a number of difficulties in collecting and analysing data on trafficking in human beings, the first results of the database of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on human trafficking are encouraging. The systematic documentation of open-source data was able to yield information of importance for both policy purposes and theory formation.

Many results confirmed the received wisdom on human trafficking. Persons were typically recruited from poorer countries, transported through countries that provided geographically expedient and relatively safe routes and faced exploitation in more affluent parts of the world. The majority of victims were indeed, as expected, women and children and sexual exploitation was the most common form of exploitation, often combined with other forms. Obviously, then, trafficking in persons is a gender-specific phenomenon, reflecting the special vulnerabilities of women and girls in poor, post-conflict or badly governed countries. It constitutes a sad manifestation of the rampant violence against women and girls across the world against the backdrop of unmitigated gender inequalities in the global village.

Some specific new insights have been gained, such as that Central and Eastern Europe currently acts mainly as a transit area for trafficked persons and that Asia, even excluding Japan, is now as much a source as a destination region.

The results of the database can be used to set priorities for international cooperation. Special attention is due to countries that featured high in the rankings and where domestic capacity is still underdeveloped. A ranking of countries most in need of technical assistance seems feasible.

Trafficking profiles of the various regions and subregions showed great differences. Since different policies are required to tackle trafficking in origin, transit and destination countries, technical cooperation needs to be based on a sound understanding of the unique profile of the country, subregion or region in question. The database is a reliable source for that purpose.

As mentioned, this article presents preliminary findings. Some information could not yet be analysed at the present stage because sufficient data were not yet available. In the future, more data will be added, allowing more detailed analysis of different aspects of human trafficking.

Annex. Examples of collections of data on trafficking in human beings

The Protection Project at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C., has established a comprehensive database on human trafficking, which includes a collection of international conventions as well as domestic legislation that address issues of trafficking in persons; charts comparing the laws on trafficking for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and other forms of slavery; a set of maps on legislative approaches and national and international trafficking routes, as well as other related information; over 50 testimonies of trafficking survivors; and updates on the status of investigations, prosecutions and convictions, as well as other stories, events and activities relevant to trafficking around the world. The Project publishes an annual *Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, which includes a summary of laws and the scope of the trafficking problem in over 190 countries. The first report was published in March 2001 (www.protectionproject.org).

Based on the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, the Department of State of the United States of America has been mandated to submit an annual report on the status of severe forms of trafficking in persons in different countries. The first report was published in 2001 and the second in 2002. The report includes brief country narratives from 90 countries containing information on the trafficking situation and the Government's efforts to combat trafficking.^a

The International Organization on Migration has established a database, which collects qualitative and quantitative information on trafficking victims assisted by the International Organization on Migration. The database includes data on numbers of victims assisted, their country of origin, age, trafficking route and the method in which they were trafficked.

The Innocenti Research Centre of the United Nations Children's Fund has initiated a data collection mainly on trafficking in children in African countries. The focus is on collecting quantitative and qualitative data on the phenomenon on action against trafficking in all African countries.

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union have set up an online service, Legislationline. It compiles international texts and domestic legislation from its member States, including 55 countries in the Caucasus region, Central Asia,

^aUnited States of America, Department of State, Under Secretary for Global Affairs, *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000: Trafficking in Persons Report* (Washington, D.C., 2002).

Europe and North America. It deals generally with the rule of law and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and also includes trafficking legislation in many countries (see www.osce.org/odihr/).

Under the framework of the Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the Regional Clearing Point was established in order to ensure standardized regional data on victim assistance and protection, to support the further development of a network of shelters, and of national referral mechanisms throughout South Eastern Europe. The data collection has been initiated simultaneously in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (see www.osce.org/atf/).

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