Trafficking and Prostitution

The Growing Exploitation of Migrant Women in Greece

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ABSTRACT This article concentrates on the rapid growth of trafficking in women from Eastern and Central Europe who end up working in the sex industry in Athens. Such movement of people is constituted around global networks of female labour. The social processes and mechanisms that produce and reproduce the somatic and social exploitation of female migrants caught in the web of the sex industry are analysed. These processes are responsible for a continuation and accentuation of women's loss of power to represent their interests, to seek viable economic alternatives. The living and working spaces of these women rest upon their isolation and individuation and total control of their everyday activities. Ethnicity, age and racialized exclusions all intersect with sexist relations and practices within Greek society and the ethnic communities under study. The interplay of these processes operates differently within different ethnic groups of women to produce different outcomes.

KEY WORDS discrimination ◆ Europe ◆ exclusion ◆ gender ◆ Greece ◆ migration ◆ prostitution ◆ racism ◆ trafficking ◆ work ◆ xenophobia

INTRODUCTION

Trafficking is becoming a major concern of human rights organizations, feminist activists and scholars researching its effects on the lives of women and children. However, the traffic in women[1] is not a new phenomenon associated with what has become known as 'new migration' in Europe.[2] The campaign against this traffic, which started in the second half of the 19th century,[3] took off after the revelations made at the First Congress on White Slave Trade held in London in 1899 (Jeffreys, 1997: 11), namely that

> . . . women, for the most part under age, were engaged for lucrative posts, and then, always in complete ignorance of the abominable lot which

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> awaited them, transported to foreign countries and finally flung penniless into houses of debauchery. (League of Nations, 1921: 3, cited in Jeffreys, 1997: 11)

Following this, the 1904, 1910 and 1921 and 1933 Conventions were signed and a number of congresses took place which resulted in the condemnation of trafficking. The 1933 Convention, for example, obliges the state parties to punish 'any person who, in order to gratify the passions of another person, procures, entices or leads away, even with her consent, a woman or a girl of full age for immoral purposes to be carried out in another country' (cited in Wijers and Lap-Chew, 1997: 21). However, these conventions were limited to the process of recruitment; coercive conditions inside brothels, use of deceit or abuse, were not addressed. In the period between the First and Second World Wars, feminists campaigned extensively and vigorously through the League of Nations against the traffic in women, with the pendulum swinging between abolitionists (arguing that the regulation of prostitution stimulated the traffic and therefore should be abolished) and regulationists (who sought to protect prostituted women from persecution by licensing brothels). In 1949, the UN adopted the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, which also included prostitution as exploitation.[4] Since then, trafficking in women has received considerable attention by the mass media and by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and has been the subject of international conventions and declarations, such as the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1967) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979). In the 1980s, the issue of 'force' re-emerged as an element in defining the crime of trafficking. But what do we mean by force? Does force refer to the recruitment process only? Does it also include women who agree to work as prostitutes but are subjected to force at work? Or is any distinction between forced and free prostitution a false one? Such questions have since dominated discussions on definitions of trafficking in women. Moreover, in the early 1980s the subject resurfaced on the UN agenda. In 1993 we had the recognition of women's rights as an 'integral and indivisible part of universal human rights' by the Vienna Declaration adopted in 1993 by the World Conference on Human Rights. Trafficking in women and forced prostitution is recognized as a violation of human rights.[5] A year later, the UN Assembly adopted a resolution on 'Traffic in Women and Girls'; this condemns

> . . . the illicit and clandestine movement of persons across national and international borders . . . with the end goal of forcing women and girl children into sexually or economically oppressive situations for the profit of recruiters, traffickers and crime syndicates, as well as other illegal activities

> related to trafficking, such as forced domestic labour, false marriages, clandestine employment and false adoption. (cited in Wijers and Lap-Chew, 1997: 22)

In 1995 the Platform for Action adopted during the World Conference on Women which took place in Beijing called for the elimination of traffic in women and 'forced' prostitution – it does not, however, condemn prostitution as such. In 1996, the Draft Programme of Action for the Prevention of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others was adopted by the Commission on Human Rights (Resolution 1996/61). The International Labour Organization has also taken some steps, not so much in the field of trafficking for prostitution, as in the field of women's work in the informal sector. Moreover, a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) all over the world have campaigned against trafficking; for example, the Czech-based NGO La Strada has attempted to create a political platform to deal with the problematics of traffic in women and to influence international legislation in order to strengthen and ensure protection of the rights of women working in prostitution as well as those who have become victims of traffic in women (Butterweck, 1998). Other NGOs operating on an international level include the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), formed in 1994 and the Foundation Against Trafficking in Women (STV) set up in 1987. Their role is of particular importance as they aim at the protection of human rights of women involved and the promotion of the involvement of grassroots women in work against trafficking in women. The STV in particular has campaigned inter alia for developing and refining legislation for addressing trafficking in women; together with GAATW, they proposed a new definition of trafficking which puts emphasis on the conditions under which women have to work (Piper, 1999). STV has also campaigned for organizing social support and practical assistance for victim-survivors; since the late 1980s, STV has given assistance to more than 800 women (Wijers, 1998). Also, a European NGO Network on Trafficking was established in the late 1980s. But in spite of these initiatives, this still remains a subject that needs to be thoroughly researched. This article represents an attempt to examine the trafficking in women from Central and Eastern Europe to one EU member state, Greece.

In recent years, there has been a rapid increase in trafficking in women from ex-socialist and other countries to EU member states (IOM, 1995; Lim, 1997). The European Parliament adopted its first resolution on the 'exploitation and traffic in human beings' (OJC 120, 1989: 352). While this does not distinguish between trafficking and prostitution, two other resolutions adopted since (1993 and 1996) do so and call on member states to provide a clear definition of trafficking and to draw up legislation which

identifies trafficking as a violation of human rights. The Council of Europe took up the issue in the early 1990s; following a seminar on 'Forced Prostitution and Trafficking' involving representatives of prostitutes' organizations, the Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men established a group of experts to 'draw proposals for action to be taken by member states within the framework of the Council of Europe' and consequently a Plan of Action was drawn up (Wijers and Lap-Chew 1997:26). The following definition was adopted:

> There is traffic in women when a woman is exploited in a country other than her own by another person . . . for financial gain, the traffic consisting of organising (the stay or) the legal or illegal emigration of a woman, even with her consent, from her country of origin to the country of destination and luring her by whatever means into prostitution or any form of sexual exploitation. (cited in Wijers and Lap-Chew, 1997: 26)

In 1996, the European Commission organized a conference on 'Trafficking in Women in Vienna'. This resulted in a Communication to the Parliament and the Council on Trafficking in Women for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation (COM[96]). It covers women who have suffered intimidation and violence through trafficking, or are deprived of their basic human rights, irrespective of initial consent. The Commission also runs the STOP and DAPHNE programmes aiming to reinforce cooperation between people responsible for actions against trafficking in member states of the EU. Moreover, the Treaty of Amsterdam includes an article (Art. K1) which makes the fight against trafficking the responsibility of the EU (van Dijk, 1998: 128).

It is estimated that around 4 million women leave their country of origin each year and end up working in the sex industry. It is estimated that between 70 and 80 percent of these women originate from Eastern and Central Europe. Prostitution is the result of a series of processes of marginalization and exclusion that have taken place and have distanced these women from alternatives to prostitution. Some of these processes take place prior to their arrival in the country of destination, such as high levels of poverty (or feminization of poverty) and of unemployment. These have been exacerbated by a number of factors: political and civil unrest, the internationalization of the world economy and the structural inequalities between ex-socialist countries and the rest of Europe resulting from the development of new market economies in former socialist countries and the disruption of old ways of life. Other forces creating this supply are: an eagerness to taste the goods one can find in abundance in western markets; the development of well-organized global networks in the 'leisure' industry along with the lack of adequate immigration controls in the countries of destination.[6] In addition, the creation of well-organized crime has contributed to the creation of a massive prostitution

industry that lives off the decline in the status of women in the country of origin and the construction of these women as exotic and desirable in the country of destination. Trafficking in women on the Internet and the increase in demand and supply of pornographic material via Minitel and the so-called 'pink telephones' have aided the organization of the sex industry and have contributed to the rapid increase of trafficking in women and children from Russia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Poland, Romania, the former Yugoslavia, the Czech and Slovak Republics and other parts of the world into Western Europe. Nowadays, the phenomenon has become a major societal problem in Southern Europe in general (Parsec, 1998) and in Greece in particular, as a once local, small-scale business has become an industry with international connections and huge profits.

This is how Tanya, a woman from Russia, interviewed by the channel Sky in Greece in 1998 described her experience:

> I am 22 years old and I wanted to find a job. . . . You can go to Greece and earn $10,000, you won't have to pay for food or shelter . . . they train us . . . they first sleep with us, they give us to drink vodka, they also give us soft drugs if necessary . . . and beat us up. They took me to Bulgaria. In Bulgaria the bosses wait for you. They take us through the frontiers at night. I ended up 'in the streets' of Salonika.

This article seeks to understand the social situation of migrant women like Tanya, trafficked for prostitution and finding themselves working on the streets in Greece. It looks at their placement in exclusionary spatial, social and economic settings and networks and processes that reproduce their somatic, social and economic exploitation. These processes are responsible for the continuation and accentuation of women's loss of power to represent their interests, to seek viable economic alternatives. The living and working spaces of these women rest upon their isolation and individuation and total control of their everyday activities. The article explores how ethnicity, age and racist and racialized exclusions all intersect with sexist relations and practices within Greek society and the ethnic communities under study. The interplay of these processes operate differently within different ethnic groups of women to produce different outcomes.

DEFINITIONS

A fundamental problem in addressing the issue of trafficking in women is the lack of a clear internationally accepted definition. Various, often contradictory, definitions have been used, which have changed over time. Some equate trafficking in women with smuggling of foreigners, others merge trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution. The

definitional issue was addressed by the IOM; they have stressed the fact that while police and immigration authorities focus on trafficking as an organized crime problem, NGOs focus on abuses suffered by women (IOM, 1995). The IOM puts emphasis on illegal migration and defines trafficking in women as 'any illicit transporting of migrant women and/or trade in them for economic or other personal gain' (IOM, 1995). Other definitions 'include the situation in which women end up, be it by coercion or with their consent, or focus on human rights issues, that is the right of every woman to have control over her own life, mind and body' (Wijers and Lap-Chew, 1997: 29, 34, 38). Wijers and Lap-Chew (1997: 31–7) argue that trafficking must be defined by taking into account the interests of the women involved, and should not apply to prostitution only; they also argue that coercion must be the core element of the definition. The latter can take various forms, such as violence or threat, deception with regard to working conditions, nature of work to be done, abuse of authority (confiscation of personal documents, abusing the vulnerable position of someone who has no legal status), debt bondage (Wijers and Lap-Chew, 1997: 38). Based on this, the following definitions have been adopted by them and are adopted as a working definition in this article: They define trafficking as

> . . . all acts involved in the recruitment and/or transportation of a woman within and across national borders for work or services by means of violence or threat of violence, abuse or authority or dominant position, debt bondage, deception or other forms of coercion.

And they define forced labour as

> . . . the extraction of work or services from any woman or the appropriation of the legal identity and/or physical person of any woman by means of violence or threat of violence, abuse of authority or dominant position, debt bondage, deception or other forms of coercion. (Wijers and Lap-Chew, 1997: 36)

The distinction made between 'trafficking in women' and 'forced labour and slavery-like practices' offers the possibility to differentiate between the act of recruitment and/or transportation for work/services and the actual work (and working conditions). This is particularly important as trafficking does not always necessarily lead to prostitution and prostitution is only one among possible consequences of trafficking. The focus of the article is on the situation of trafficked migrant women upon their arrival in Greece and is limited to analysing the situation of those women who work as prostitutes in Greece, on a part-time of full-time basis. The topic of the transfer across the borders is taken up in future research.

METHODS

Most of the discussion that follows derives from interviews conducted during fieldwork between winter 1998 and spring 1999.[7] Fourteen 'guided' conversations were carried out with key informants working for the Greek immigration authorities, police, government (policy-makers) and academics and nine semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out with NGO representatives. In addition, biographical interviews were carried out with 18 undocumented migrant women from Eastern and Central Europe who had arrived in Greece in the early 1990s, as part of the wider Eastern European flow which emerged after the recent economic, social and political changes in the area. They entered Greece at a time when Southern Europe changed from being exporter to being importer of migrant people. This process coincided on the one hand with the emergence of 'fortress Europe', and, on the other hand, with the emergence of global economic interdependencies which gave rise to: first, the demand for greater labour flexibility, part of which is the provision of personalized services (domestic work,[8] work in the caring professions such as nursing, baby sitting, entertainment) in a growing informal economy; and, second, the so-called 'migration business', part of which is human trafficking.

The women interviewed were a heterogeneous group in terms of age (between 14 and 30 years of age), ethnicity, social and educational background (some, the youngest, were poorly educated, whereas others had acquired a skill or profession) and religion (some were Greek Orthodox, others Catholic and others Muslim). None of these women were working as prostitutes in the country of origin. The 'snow-balling' technique was employed to obtain access to respondents and for selecting people for interview. Respondents were identified by virtue of being part of a network of personal contacts, and so one cannot claim generalizability for the findings of this article (Devine, 1995: 138). What is being reported here derives from the interviewees' versions of 'reality', their views, their subjective accounts and interpretations of events as these were reported to me during the interviews (Lazaridis and Wickens, 1999: 637).

There were problems and dangers in attempting to collect life-span narratives from women who are marginalized, criminalized, stigmatized.

> Researchers are sometimes seen as akin to pimps, coming into the field to take, then returning to the campus, institution or suburb where they write up the data, publish and build careers – on the backs of those they took data from. (O'Neill, 1996: 132)

Carrying out such research involved risks: risks for the women themselves (hassle from pimps, the media, etc.) which make women reluctant to participate and talk openly about their work. It also involved risks to

the researcher's safety, because of the social spaces in which these women work, and professional reputation in a society where female prostitutes are seen as disease-ridden, immoral, dirty, vulgar, social trash – which can be summed up as the 'whore stigma' – and therefore not worth researching. Clearly the 'whore stigma' is central to any understanding of the way in which women 'enter the public imagination' (O'Neill, 1996: 134). Many academics, agencies of public order and people working in NGOs in Greece commented 'why does a nice girl like you . . . want to study prostitutes – can't you find something more interesting and worthwhile to spend your time on; no one can ensure your safety'. As Chancer (1993: 167) put it, 'something about sex work is especially threatening, putting the researcher socially/sociologically at risk above and beyond the dangers attached to the researched activity in itself'. This may be a reason why academic research on the experiences of prostitutes per se in Greece is nearly non-existent apart from a study by Lazos (1996) and his team. There are four books, mainly novels, which deal with the phenomenon of prostitution (Chatzi, 1980; Chronas, 1989; Megapanou, 1988; Petropoulos, 1980). None of these, however, deal with trafficking of undocumented migrant women. Moreover, previous research carried out in Greece was from men, not committed to what Liz Stanley (1990) has called 'feminist praxis', but rather locating and contextualizing these women's experiences within male perspectives.

Finally, there are risks involved related to the quality of the findings:

> Interviews and questionnaires tend to assume that people report to researchers on their (singular) identity, when identity work can more accurately be defined as a process, a situationally based performance, and a mechanism for describing a moral position with respect to society. (Castillo et al., 1999: 390)

Identities are created, used and changed in interaction (Schwalbe and Mason-Schrock, 1996) in a way that allows people to set limits and boundaries in response to who they are, who they choose to be, and who they imagine themselves to be in a particular moment.

MIGRANT WOMEN AND PROSTITUTION IN GREECE

The flow of undocumented migrant women workers into Greece, being part of what is widely referred to as 'feminization of migration'[9] (Castles and Miller, 1993), grew in recent years despite stringent migration controls introduced in the early 1990s (Law 1975 of 1991)[10] and the massive deportations of undocumented migrants which followed (see Lazaridis, 1996, 1999; Lazaridis and Romaniszyn, 1998; Lazaridis and Wickens, 1999). Despite attempts to put in place the Schengen provisions

(see Lazaridis, 1996; Lazaridis and Romaniszyn, 1998; Lazaridis and Wickens, 1999), the estimated number of undocumented migrants Greece has hosted since the early 1990s has increased from around 400,000 in 1993 (Commission of the European Communities, 1993: 16) to around 600,000 in 1999 (Fakiolas, 1999; that is, from around 4.1 percent to 6 percent of the indigenous population). More than half of these migrants are estimated to be women (interview with key officials at the Greek Ministry of Interior). About 50 percent of these women have come from Albania, and the rest from former socialist countries and from Africa and Asia (mainly the Philippines). Because 'illegal migration as a phenomenon can be said to be "statistically invisible", in that the documentation of its nature, rhythm, and impact is incomplete' (Lazaridis and Wickens, 1999: 638), the quantification of this movement in a gendered way is imprecise; these estimates rest more on 'conventional wisdom' than on hard statistics.

With few exceptions, the majority of these women are absorbed mainly in the service sector and in particular in domestic service, tourist-related activities and in various forms of sex-related entertainment, all of which have experienced a rapid growth in recent years. The focus of this article is on the sex industry, an industry representing the commodification of highly personalized relationships and capitalizing on racialized assumptions about the sexual nature of migrant women, their character and morality. These assumptions cut directly into the heart of how men perceive women and how women perceive themselves in a society where their status as undocumented migrants degrades them even further and renders them powerless on issues of control and consent in human relationships. As Phizacklea (1997: 3) argues, 'these women's treatment is conditioned by embodied racisms which cast them as "highly sexed" or submissive and subservient, devices which restore what are considered to be the "proper" relations between genders and "races"'.

As shown in the sections that follow, the mechanisms that produce and reproduce the multiple forms of exclusion of these women result in the rapid devaluation of their life chances, the loss of identity and power to inclusion in the host society. One could argue that those living in the 'margins of the margins' of a society are the 'slaves of the new millennium', fenced in social, economic racialized spaces they cannot escape from (Lazaridis and Psimmenos, 1999).

'Migratory flows do not simply represent an enforced response to economic hardship, but also represent a recognition on the part of the gendered individual actors that migration provides the best opportunity of escaping a repressive environment' (Phizacklea, 1997: 5). But has the actor a choice? This question is addressed within the social, cultural and legal contexts within which this sexual exchange takes place. This article

seeks to explore the phenomenon in its legal and social contexts, that provide the grounding necessary to understand and analyse the 'inclusion' of trafficked women for prostitution into the Greek society and these women's complex experiences within the multiple spaces they inhabit.

The Legal Context: 'Licensed' Houses, 'Labelled' Women

Neither a system which makes prostitution illegal nor the abolitionist system (which aims to abolish the regulation of prostitution) were adopted in Greece. Instead, there is a quasi-regulatory system in place. There is no specific law stating that prostitution is prohibited. It is rather decried as an 'inescapable social evil' serving men's sexual prerogatives, which must therefore be tolerated but at the same time be controlled.[11] This is in line with the Greek Orthodox belief that men's sexual drives are regarded as ' "natural", nobler and stronger than women's' (Loizos and Papataxiarchis, 1991b: 222). Loizos and Papataxiarchis (1991b) identify two forms of male heterosexuality: one in line with conjugal ideology and one motivated by *kefi*. *Kefi*, can be 'a state of pleasure wherein men transcend the pettiness of a life of calculation' (Loizos and Papataxiarchis, 1991a: 17) or 'the spirit of desire that derives from the heart' (Loizos and Papataxiarchis, 1991b: 226). Such desire is spontaneous, ephemeral and individualistic. Women that are available to fulfil such desires are condemned as 'women of the road', which is a metaphor for 'prostitute'. Men's 'natural' sexual drives, on the other hand, are used to justify in public discourse heterosexual erotic expressiveness and liaisons that do not accord with the values of the household and of the conjugal relationship (Lazaridis, 1995; Zinovieff, 1991). Prostitution is seen as a threat to societal order, and prostitutes as dangerous, unclean, vehicles of venereal diseases, but at the same time an unfortunate necessity serving the needs of men who live in a society where, until recently, women were excoriated for expressing sexual desires and where men's sexual urges needed to be served by other than their 'honest decent women'. There is therefore hardly any moral stigma attached to men for consorting with 'prostitutes' in the Greek context. Visiting a prostitute for sexual gratification is a legitimate option and an effective outlet of male sexuality. This attitude is reflected in a number of laws which lay down the terms and conditions under which prostitution can be practised. Whereas such laws make it marginally easier for a woman to practise prostitution, these also include some very significant limitations.

The Greek state wants prostitutes hidden away in registered brothels, which can be subject to health checks. The Greek law therefore requires all women who work in the 'sex industry' to register themselves as prostitutes. Prostitutes who are not registered are, in the eyes of the law, illegal,

and can therefore be arrested and prosecuted. Under the Greek Penal Code, a person who makes a living from prostitution is also liable to prosecution (Articles 348–351 of the Penal Code) and can be imprisoned for a period of up to three years. In practice, however, imprisonment does not exceed one year and, according to a lawyer I interviewed, the number of cases arriving in court is relatively small; he explained this in terms of the small number of women arrested. In 1995, for example, 75 Greek and 474 migrant women trafficked for prostitution and working as prostitutes were arrested in the Greater Athens area; the majority were Albanians (202), Russians (62) and Ukrainians (56). In 1996, 416 migrant women were arrested, the majority Albanians (109) followed by Russians (46) and Ukrainians (42); the number of migrant women trafficked for prostitution and working as prostitutes arrested in 1997 was slightly larger, that is 494, the majority again being Albanians (165) followed by Russians (75) and Bulgarians (60) (unpublished data from Asfalia-Tmima Ithon – Police Department).

In 1981, Law 1193 on 'protection against sexually transmitted diseases' was ratified to 'protect society' from prostitutes. This law concerns a number of issues, including the 'labelling' of a woman as a 'prostitute', the premises where prostitutes work and medical examinations. It stipulates that a woman can register herself as a prostitute provided that she is of Greek origin, 21 years of age or older, not married or divorced. She has to register with the police as a 'prostitute', thus enabling the police to keep lists of prostitutes. She is then called *charactirismeni*, that is, 'labelled'. She receives an identity card stating her 'profession' and twice a week has to get a compulsory medical checkup, otherwise she risks up to three months' imprisonment. So prostitution ceases to be a crime and becomes a 'legal vice', a 'crime more against middle-class good taste than against the social order' (Castillo et al., 1999: 401). The prostitute, however, once 'labelled', becomes stigmatized as 'a woman who sells her body', 'a commodity to be bought', 'a woman not entitled to be a person', 'a woman with no dignity', 'a woman who does not deserve to be treated with respect', 'a deviant' (Goffman, 1974), and, as mentioned earlier, is associated with 'the road', 'an area of dangerous forces and temptations' (Hirschon, 1978: 81). The 'labelling' in other words involves a moral loss that can be irreparable, because of contingent, culturally based assumptions about the bodily submission involved in sex work (Sullivan, 1992: 264).

It is not an offence for a *charactirismeni* to set up or run a brothel provided she obtains a licence from the chief of the nearest police station. Reasons for being refused permission include: the area chosen to set up the brothel being 'saturated', that is there are another 12 brothels in operation – the maximum number of brothels in the area where a police station has jurisdiction is 12 – or close proximity to a school or church.

This is an attempt to avoid the designation of specific areas as 'red light districts'.

Although Law No. 1193 of 1981 makes no mention of prostitution as employment, it does, tacitly, recognize it as work. The law is gender biased in that it does not refer to prostitution done by men. It forbids employing men or women under the age of 50 in a brothel, the aim being to avoid two prostitutes getting settled in a house under the pretence that one is working as a maid for the other, since soliciting is prohibited. In practice, however, this is common. The fact that no more than 12 brothels are allowed to operate within the area of the jurisdiction of a police station and more than one brothel cannot operate in a block of flats drives many women onto the streets.

At the moment there is no policy towards the prevention of prostitution or prevention of the porn business, and the UN Convention (1950) for the aberration of trade in human beings has not yet been ratified by the Greek government. Insofar as the women's movement is concerned, the Adesmefti Kinisi Gynaekon (Independent Women's Movement) is the only group which has voiced its objections to Law 1193, has called for the UN Convention to be signed and has argued that it is men that should be targeted as the cause of prostitution rather than prostituted women. As became apparent during interviews I conducted, most other NGOs have become immersed in inter-agency politics and lost, in my view, a critical perspective which is necessary for the development of effective practice. Despite widespread belief within feminist NGOs that prostitutes are oppressed by unjust laws and corrupt police forces, actions have become entrenched in local politics and feminist arguments which explicitly oppose the 'mythology' of prostitution as a 'career choice' (Giobbe, 1990) and still embrace the feminist argument that, to quote Millett (1975: 56),

> It is not sex the prostitute is really made to sell; it is degradation. And the buyer, the john, is not buying sexuality, but power, power over another human being, the dizzy ambition of being lord of another's will for a stated period of time.

Therefore, no relationship of trust has been built with prostitutes' groups, who see this kind of feminist analysis as hostile, endangering their lives by perpetuating the 'whore stigma' (see Jeffreys, 1997: 65–91).

Greek prostitutes[12] have argued against feminist analysis that prostitution must be eliminated because 'it is not sex that the prostitute is really made to sell; it is degradation' (Millett, 1975: 56). They claim that prostitution is work like any other and that Law 1193 is unjust and oppressive. They argue that it must be annulled, so as not to be obliged to 'be *labelled* as prostitutes'; they have also asked for rights to health care provision and announced that they would be prepared to pay taxes and social insurance

contributions based on their earnings. They have tried, in other words, to transform the way in which prostitution is considered by the Greek state. And there has been some reaction. In summer 1994, there was a discussion in the Greek parliament about the social citizenship rights of prostitutes and about the appropriate body responsible for providing prostitutes with pensions: would this be TEBE – one of the plethora of separate micro-schemes catering for very circumscribed occupational collectivities (see Ferrera, 1996: 19–22) – which deals with the pension schemes of the self-employed, or IKA, i.e. the body responsible for the pensions of industrial workers? Who would be the employer responsible for paying National Insurance contributions, since Law 1193 of 1981 stipulates that a brothel cannot have a manager and the client cannot be considered as the employer? It all boils down to whether prostitution is after all work like any other and whether prostitutes should enjoy equal social rights to those of other Greek citizens.

The Greek state tolerates prostitution and informally condones it provided that the stipulations of Law 1193 of 1981 aimed at the protection of public health are adhered to. During a discussion in parliament, an MP, Mr Gialoumatos, mentioned that many prostitutes suffer from contagious diseases but are unable to pay for private health care and are not eligible for public health care either. This is supported by the findings of a survey carried out in the late 1980s in the Greater Athens area: out of 350 registered prostitutes, 12 were HIV positive (Papaevangelou et al., 1988: 386).[13] Women and girls who are victims of trafficking are at an increased risk of sexually transmitted infection, including infection with the HIV virus. In a survey carried out in the late 1990s, 44 foreign prostitutes were found to be infected with HIV (Kornarou and Roumeliotou, 1997). This, according to Gialoumatos, is a serious reason why the state must consider granting these women access to health care. As a result, educational campaigns launched by the Greek Ministry of Health and Welfare, the media and centres for counselling and screening have attempted to warn prostitutes of the dangers and risks involved in unprotected sex; such campaigns resulted in reduction of the incidence of HIV infection among registered prostitutes (Kornarou and Roumeliotou, 1997). It is believed that a large number of migrant women trafficked for prostitution and working as prostitutes in Greece may be infected, but as there is no systematic research it is difficult to have an accurate picture of the numbers involved (Roumeliotou and Kornarou, 1996).

A new image of prostitution emerges, challenging and gradually substituting the view of prostitutes as ‘deviants’, with the view of prostitution as ‘legitimate work’. An interview with an official in the Ministry of Public Order revealed that the minister has proposed that the ‘labelling’ of a woman as ‘prostitute’ be replaced with a ‘work permit’ which would render it possible for a woman to open a brothel and pursue

this occupation without having to go through the process of being characterized and stigmatized as a prostitute. This decision, if it becomes law, will also apply to migrant women who reside in the country legally.[14] The permit will be granted by the local authority and not by the police, which was the case until now. The number of permits will be determined by the local authorities taking into account local needs, like population, whether there is a military camp nearby, number of tourists and the like. Those prostitutes who work without a permit will face up to two years' imprisonment.

Undocumented Migrant Women Working in the Greek Sex Industry

These are women who have fallen victim of slavery; their protector cuts a deal with the owner of the brothel and receives a profit. The migrant woman receives around 3000–5000 drachmas and the rest is divided between the owner of the brothel and the pimp (interview with police officer).

As there is no central service for the monitoring of prostitution on a national level, no reliable statistical data exist (Roumeliotou and Kornarou, 1996: 147). Hence, with the exception of those women who have become 'labelled', many people (Greek citizens and 'others') who engage in prostitution remain invisible. The figures available from sources like the police and the venereal disease clinics are far below the real numbers of persons who practise prostitution, whereas data obtained from the Ministry of Public Order indicate not the actual numbers involved, but the arrests made by the police (see earlier). Moreover, despite the wide visibility of foreign women practising prostitution in Greece, trafficking for prostitution is not covered by official statistics and, as a result, the dimensions of the phenomenon are virtually unknown. Difficulties of estimation arise because of the high mobility of the women involved, their irregular legal status, their geographical dispersion and the seasonal nature of the phenomenon, especially in the Greek islands. In the 1980s, most women trafficked for prostitution and working as prostitutes in Greece originated from Thailand, the Philippines,[15] Ethiopia,[16] Eritrea and Sri-Lanka[17] (interview with the feminist organization Adesmefti Kinisi Gynaekon). There are strong indications that the numbers of trafficked women have increased since the 1990s with the influx of women from Central and Eastern Europe. According to Lazos (1996: 17), in 1991 there were around 5500 Greek prostitutes and around 1500 migrant women trafficked for prostitution, although for reasons already stated, the number of the latter is just a rough estimate. By 1996, the number of Greek prostitutes decreased to around 4300, whereas that of female foreign women trafficked for prostitution increased to around 6100. Furthermore, according to data gathered by the police, between

1991 and 1995, 13,677 foreign women were trafficked in Greece. A number of foreign men also operate as sex-workers but their numbers are largely unknown. It seems, therefore, that migrant women working as prostitutes have come to dominate the Greek market,[18] especially women from the Ukraine and Russia (53 percent), Poland, Albania and the other Balkan states (around 32 percent); only around 2 percent of women working as prostitutes originate from Asia or Africa and around 6 percent from the USA.

Tastes have changed; the image of the nice subordinate woman from the Third World has been replaced by the relatively educated, white, blond woman from Europe. Crude racist stereotypes that often apply to different nationalities in the migrant domestic workforce (Lazaridis, 2000; Phizacklea, 1997) seem also to apply to different nationalities in the sex industry's workforce. As argued later in the article, clients have overt preferences for certain nationalities.

The trafficking in women is largely illegal and, as already stated, undocumented and often concealed under the umbrella of so-called 'entertainment'. As one woman said: 'I was told that I will work as a dancer in a club; when I arrived, I realised that it was sex I was hired for, not dance' (interview with a 25-year-old woman from Ukraine). Therefore, some women are recruited as 'entertainers' or 'artists', not realizing that when they arrive in the country of destination they will be required to offer sexual services as part of their job, while others 'indebted in their home country may be trafficked as bonded labour' (Phizacklea, 1997: 6), that is, as commodities to be sold for profit in a multi-billion dollar industry which flourishes in today's globalized world economy. As a police officer interviewed in the Asfalia-Tmima Ithon (police) said: 'in Russia there are organised associations. . . . Mafia . . . which recruit women from rural areas, not so much from big cities . . . they tell them that they will work in bars as dancers and will be well paid.' They are, in other words, lured to Europe with the promise of well-paid jobs and upon arrival in the country of destination find themselves trapped into a hopeless situation, heavily in debt to traffickers.[19] As a woman I interviewed said:

> I was approached by a man whom I knew – he was from the same village; he offered to bring me to Europe and find me work. All I had to do was to promise him that I would eventually give him US$5000 for this. I trusted him. When he brought me here he told me the news: the work was to sell my body in the streets. I still owe him US$3000, I have to pay him back. If I don't he and his friends will harm my family. . . . He needs the money to pay off the police who patrol the borders and the men who brought me here.[20]

Only around 20–23 percent of these women know in advance the truth about the job they are to do in Greece (Lazos, 1996: 19); for the majority,

the decision to migrate is rarely a rational choice. Others drift into prostitution 'because it is the only occupation open to them' (Lim, 1997: 10); they either enter the country illegally and, unable to find a job via networking, drift into prostitution, or arrive legally (with a visa of up to 15 days' duration) to work as strippers. When the visa expires, the bar owner is obliged to see that the women return to the country of origin; often they report them missing to the nearest police station and subcontract them to other club owners in rural areas for a weekend, a week. Yet other women work as prostitutes to supplement income earned by working as domestic workers, taking care of elderly or young children, or working as cleaners, cooks, etc. in the tourist industry or in private affluent households. As a 28-year-old woman from the Philippines said,

> I found work as a live-in domestic, looking after an elderly couple . . . the money I earn is not enough . . . I have to send money back home for my children . . . my parents are looking after them but they are very poor . . . I need more money . . . so I work as a prostitute on my days off.

The latter, one could argue, made a rational choice to supplement her income by offering sex services for payment. However, one should recognize that such choices are circumscribed by factors outside these women's control, such as restrictive immigration legislation which cuts these women off from access to the Greek labour market, save in the informal economy. Whatever the biographical story of the women involved, their passports and other documents are removed by the trafficker as soon as they arrive in Greece and hence they enter the realm of illegality. Once they do this, they become subject to the Greek immigration laws. Law 1975[21] of 1991 stipulates the immediate deportation of a migrant who enters the country without proper documentation, provides for the introduction of special patrol squads at the borders and for penalties to be levied on individuals or companies who facilitate entry of and/or employ undocumented migrants (Lazaridis, 1996: 342). As state deportation is likely to be the outcome if the trafficked women were to be tracked down by the authorities, they suddenly find themselves unable to choose between the two beasts, Scylla and Charybdis, the control of the procurers on the one hand and the immigration authorities on the other. The probability of becoming regularized and hence of obtaining residence and work permits is very low. Although Greece introduced in 1997 its first regularization programme (Law 2482), the conditions under which an undocumented migrant could be issued with an initial temporary resident card and eventually a 'green card' made this option almost impossible for trafficked women. To give an example, a migrant who wishes to be regularized must provide the Greek authorities with inter alia, his or her address as well as information on his or her employment (name their employer), health certificate, a criminal record certificate.[22] Most trafficked women have no permanent address

(see later), have no health certificate and if they provide information about the work they do in Greece, prostitution, will automatically be deported as 'undesirable foreigners' (Law 1975 of 1991). Hence, migrant women in prostitution are being caught between the demands of pimps or 'protectors' and Greek immigration laws and requirements for regularization, which makes it almost impossible for them to fulfil the requirements for obtaining a residence and work permit. In addition, acquisition of citizenship is granted restrictively to spouses of a Greek national after five years of residence and to others after 10 years of residence. Conditions of naturalization include linguistic requirements, religious requirements, length of residence, that is requirements which are difficult to be fulfilled by women working as prostitutes in the country of destination (Lazaridis and Romaniszyn, 1998: 16–17). In other words, the dual position in which these women find themselves, that of prostitute and of undocumented migrant, renders them highly vulnerable to multiple forms of oppression, exploitation and psychological and somatic abuse. Moreover, in societies with a strong patriarchal structure (like the Albanian one) where male heads of households yield control over women's sexualities and can be stigmatized and ridiculed in the eyes of the community if their women cannot 'contain' themselves, prostitution is subject to the harshest penalties, including death. This makes the prospect of returning home unfeasible and aggravates the situation of entrapment in which these women find themselves.

The women trafficked range from girls aged 12–14, to women in their late thirties. Upon arrival they are offered shelter, food and 'protection'. Most work in the streets, but some work in brothels or as bar-women and a minority in exclusive expensive clubs. According to the Asfalia-Tmima Ithon, there are around 220 'houses' or brothels (65 of which have work permits) employing between 10 and 20 girls each (interview with head of the Asfalia-Tmima Ithon). Most are located in the centre of Athens, and by and large are run by older Greek women;[23] during the summer months the numbers double as brothels are temporarily set up in tourist places. Older women (women aged above 50) are the bosses and mostly work with migrant women from Eastern and Central Europe because these women are cheaper and the demand for them higher. There are also around 70 massage parlours, employing three to four girls each (Lazos, 1996). According to Kornarou et al. (1995: 268), prostitution mainly takes place in brothels and in the streets and less in bars, saunas, massage parlours and luxury hotels. A 31- year-old woman from Albania, detained by the police while waiting for the deportation procedure to be completed, described her experience as follows:

> I came with my husband from Tirana six years ago. I have two children. In the past I used to work in a small factory. My husband died and left many debts behind. I lost my job when he died and the debts were huge. I found

> a job in a massage parlour. . . . The customer takes me to a hotel . . . they call me from the office give me directions where to go.

She went on to explain that because she has four children who need to be looked after, she prefers to work as a masseuse – she works for three to four hours every day – because the hours of work in a brothel are longer. Another woman said:

> I came to Greece with a neighbour who forced me to work as a prostitute; I earn good money . . . around 8000 drachmas per client whereas the man who drives me there earns 5000 drachmas. They call me from the agency . . . I haven't got their phone number . . . every two hours the numbers change.

It seems that there is a division of geographical space, where different nationalities are fenced in different streets and neighbourhoods of central Athens. For example, most brothels around the Metaxourgio area employ Greek women. In Filis Street there are many Russians and Albanians. In Omonia Square and Socratous Street, there are mostly Albanians and women from Africa. The length of time they work in a brothel is around six hours per day. They work in shifts and the number of clients they serve per day fluctuates between 40 and 110 (interview with Greek police). There are a couple of brothels run by homosexual men. These brothels are run in the same style as the ones run by women and employ men from Pakistan, Iraq and underaged Kurds (interview with Lazos). Unlike other European countries such as Holland and Belgium, one does not find women posing in windows in Greece. As many of these women live a 'double life', hiding their profession, or working as domestic workers or in the tourist industry and at the same time doing prostitution on the side to supplement their income, they 'accept the strictures of the dominant culture's moral rhetoric which condemn them as immoral within the home space while covertly demanding their sexual availability within the recognised zones of tolerance' (Castillo et al., 1999: 400).

Their work is characterized by all the ingredients of flexibility: ephemerality and transferability, in that one expects to be transferred from one geographical location to another as market necessitates, it is of short duration, fragmented and directly consumed (see also Psimmenos, 2000). It is also characterized by diffusion (one holds no attachments or loyalties that may impede the completion of the labour process), hierarchization, servitude, violence and stigmatization.

Transferability. Transferability is of particular importance. The women are always transferred from one place to another (two weeks here, another week there) and from one country to another (six months in

Greece, six in Cyprus, six in the Middle East) and hence leave no trace of their existence. The transfer across places according to market necessities[24] means the total commodification of these women; in some instances they were referred to as 'the cargo'; ' the cargo changes every 10–15 days', someone said. It also means total seclusion from any direct out-of-work contact with the local population and the inability to form any meaningful social and cultural interactions with the local population. This enhances even further their disempowerment, as it does not allow them to become part of, or to form any, support networks and hence deprives them of the opportunity to form political representation of their 'voice'. Any relationship with the local community is profit-oriented. This restriction with regard to social relations results in isolation of these women, their dehumanization and ultra-exploitation.

Moreover, these women have become consumption products in a society where preferences are stimulated by what people see their friends buying. As Appadurai (1986: 32) argues, 'modern consumers are the victims of the velocity of fashion'. From this perspective, commodities convey symbolic information about the consumers. In this case, the consumers are by and large men, who do not seek, what Giddens (1992) calls a 'pure relationship', that is a relationship of sexual and emotional equality, but rather aim to purchase an 'episodic encounter', which is depersonalized, and which 'enables the client to escape from the constraints and contradictions of his own gender, age, class and "racialised" identity as well as from the social conventions governing sexuality' (O'Connell Davidson, 1996: 188–9).

Hierarchization. Once in Greece they are ranked by body size and country of origin. At the top of the scale are the Russians, then the Ukrainians because they are tall, slim, blond. As a police officer interviewed said: 'Greek men are attracted to tall, blond women with a nice figure similar to the women they see in the TV soap operas or blue movies.' Those from Kazakstan and Poland follow and at the bottom of the rank are the Bulgarians, Romanians and at the very end the Latin Americans, Africans and Albanians. The prices charged to the client not only depend on country of origin but also on various crude racist stereotypes which enjoy wide circulation in Greece: for example, the Russians and Ukrainians are described as pleasant, interesting, polite, educated, refined, 'women who have class', whereas the Albanians are described as dirty, untrustworthy, rogue peasants with no manners. These negative stereotypes used against both Albanian men and women (see Lazaridis and Wickens, 1999) have contributed to the placement of Albanian prostitutes at the bottom of the hierarchy, occupying a space on their own, away from the 'others'. These crude stereotypes serve in racializing these women's lives and reflect socially constructed 'hierarchies of nation,

ethnicity, religion and "whiteness" ' (Phoenix, 1998: 110). It seems that 'whiteness' is differentiated, with the Russians and Ukrainians at one end of the scale and Albanians at the other; all experience racialized discrimination but to different degrees, as some categories of 'white' are more devalued than others. Hence, in this context, 'whiteness' is slowly becoming visible or rather constructed as a racialized position. 'Invisible others', once upon a time not excluded on the basis of membership of race groups (after all, they are white too), are now becoming subject to different forms and degrees of prejudice, discrimination, disadvantage and violence. The 'we' is in other words becoming the 'other'. Biological notions of race difference seem to coexist with cultural notions, where the culture visibility of the object of racism may or may not be that distinct. In the case of the Albanians, in particular, 'an a priori cultural difference is bestowed on them through a process of racialization: that is, the difference is naturalized and embodied in an idea of cultural difference as being static, given and undesirable' (Anthias, 1998: 10). Therefore one must avoid homogenizing the experiences of white migrant women trafficked for prostitution and working as prostitutes; one must rather pay attention to difference and try to comprehend the multiple forms of discrimination that exist and the way these are produced and maintained.

The place these women work is also ranked: at the bottom of the scale one finds the prostitutes who work in the streets and in brothels (the price paid by the client is around the 3500 drachmas mark, half of which is paid to the woman); immediately above one finds the massage parlours (the price paid here is around 10,000 drachmas of which only about 3000–5000 are received by the woman) and the bars[25] where women work as masseuses or 'artistes'; then, we have the agencies which arrange a meeting between the migrant woman and the client and cut a deal using mobile phones which guarantee the anonymity of the client; the agency transports the woman to the hotel. This type of prostitution is difficult to detect[26] since some of these agencies work also as clubs where the clientele can become a member. Finally, there are the 'pink adverts' and 'pink phones'.

> I nearly lost my husband; you cannot imagine what they do to men. You enrol as a member . . . you phone and ask for let's say three girls, they send them to you. There are no limits, no inhibitions . . . the payment is initially 5000–10,000 drachmas for a quarter of an hour . . . 80 percent of the girls are illegal migrants. My husband spent 10 million drachmas on this type of 'entertainment'.[27]

Near the top of the rank are the hotels in the Kolonaki district and Omonia Square. At the very top are the transsexuals who concentrate in Syngrou Street, and the public relations agencies, who work with high-class prostitutes and by and large remain undetected by the police. These women cater for the needs of 'special clients' or offer private shows

organized by 'good customers' in 'special clubs'; for 50,000 drachmas or more, the customer can take the woman home to satisfy his taste. The women involved in this high-class 'hidden prostitution' have significant autonomy with respect to fixing fees, working conditions and lifestyle in the country of destination. The migrant woman's main interest, whether a street prostitute, an 'artiste' offering sexual services in a club or a high-class prostitute, is the number of clients she serves per day so that she can make a living and send money back home.

Three major grids seem to meet specific client tastes and are analogous to the type of services provided by these women, their ethnicity, body shape, etc.:

- Grid A is characterized by those women working in clubs, striptease joints and massage parlours. This category comprises mostly Ukrainian, Russian and Polish women. They are highly priced and stereotyped as clean, beautiful, tall, slim, refined and educated. They cater for the needs of the privileged classes.
- Grid B contains those hotels and houses that manage sexual services within a semi-legal location. Here we have the residential isolation of these women from the public gaze. This takes place through mobile telephone 'red lines', as these are called in Greece, and local newspapers.
- Grid C comprises those working in the streets; these are at the lowest end of the hierarchy, work long hours and are often forced to offer unprotected sex as a service for which they could demand more money; the majority of these types of services are offered by Greek and Albanian women, some of the latter being underage. These are stereotyped as cheap, vulgar, ugly with no manners or education, 'they are animals', someone said to us. They occupy the lowest stratum in the business of prostitution. As a result, it seems that the social impoverishment and homelessness is more widespread among the Albanian prostitutes. This, together with mass deportations of Albanians in general, exacerbates the potential for somatic and psychological humiliation and abuse of these women.

This polarization which has been created between those working in the streets and practising prostitution for very low prices and those who retreat to safer environments has created tensions between different ethnic groups who struggle to control certain districts. One has to avoid homogenizing all trafficked women, locking them into one category, that of the helpless super-exploited prostitute. It is true that these women experience multiple forms of discrimination, and are seen to inhabit the worst social spaces in a range of contexts. Different women are, however, positioned differently within these contexts; for example, Polish women

trafficked for prostitution and offering sex services in hotels can be seen to be in a relation of dominance over poor women practising prostitution in the streets, but in a relation of subordination with regard to high-class Russians. In other words, complex forms of hierarchy exist across a range of different dimensions.

Servitude. Whereas some women insist on certain boundaries and specific practices that allow some prostitutes to establish a comfort zone within the profession, others fail to do so. This means intolerable working conditions, and a slave-like relationship with brothel owners and/or pimps and traffickers. Ironically, prostitution can provide women with a better living when other unskilled work is scarce, flexibility in terms of the number of days and hours a day she works and the number of clients, and the ability to hold other jobs in the informal economy as well as sell sexual favours. There is therefore a paradox here: this is the only option available which in theory can give these women the opportunity to live a quasi-autonomous life in which they are no longer dependent on an abusive partner and where they can support their family but which at the same time renders them 'socially dead' (Patterson, 1982) in terms of inability to exercise rights, claims and powers over others (e.g. the demands of the client or the pimp). Ironically, therefore, prostitution can alleviate oppression in one setting while accentuating the ugly aspects of life in another setting, that of the dehumanizing world of the red light district. Traffickers exercise property rights over the women in the sense that once they enter into a contract, they cannot freely retract from it; they are rendered powerless.

Violence. Lazos (1996) found in his study that trafficked women suffer physical, sexual and psychological violence, which they never dare to report. The type of violence experienced is either coercive, that is forcing them do things they do not wish to do (this takes the form of blackmailing), or a form of punishment for something the woman did (this takes the form of beating, destruction of personal belongings, withholding of money or documents) or a warning. These two types are often combined depending on the relation of the woman with the trafficker and/or her pimp. Violence is characterized by a hierarchy where at the top we find murder and at the bottom continuous threats and humiliation. In an interview with Lazos, he said: 'Many of these women vanish, and since they have no documents no one looks for them, or are scarred for life. In this way, the pimps get rid of them – a woman with a big scar can never work as a prostitute again – and make threats to other women credible.' The woman knows that if she does not obey, she will be punished.

I interviewed some prostitutes and asked them why they succumb to this type of treatment. Most replied that compared with the other options

available to them, this one seemed 'the best option available'. Some seem totally alienated, stating that they did not know where in Athens they were. Most do not speak Greek, and are therefore unable to build emotional resources (friends, support networks which could boost their self-esteem), do not know whom to ask help from, lack access to legal information, aid and protection, have no rights; this instils fear and insecurity and acts as a constraint to women's mobility, and therefore the women are forced into a subordinate position and become puppets in the hands of the traffickers. If they attempt to escape, they face physical assault, threats to their families, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. They are therefore forced into silence. The option of escape is not available as these women are undocumented and there is no forum in Greece which would offer them support. Therefore such incidents remain unreported and are thus difficult to detect. According to the head of the Police Department:

> . . . the police work is very difficult because when the migrant women are arrested 'they keep their mouth shut' and they very rarely give information on the pimps as they believe that they will eventually be able to return to and work for the same pimp.

It seems that only the regularization of undocumented migrant women will offer them a chance to escape, together with the establishment of NGOs willing to act as shelters for these women and facilitate this escape. This option is not yet available in Greece for people who cannot name their employer and hence these women have no chance to escape the enforcement of bonded labour and seek help; the revenge of pimps and traffickers cannot be escaped. If they escape, they risk being arrested by the police for violation of immigration and penal laws and being deported. Hence, their vulnerability to physical, sexual and psychological abuse is enforced by their illegal status, which discourages them from coming forward to the authorities.

Stigmatization. The stigmatization and marginalization of foreign prostitutes is accentuated by the behaviour of agencies of public order such as the police; this ranges from use of foul language, unprovoked beatings and arresting the women who have no powerful protectors and who have refused them sexual favours gratis. Some police are bribed by traffickers, pimps or the women themselves; we have, in other words, the development of a barter system where sex is exchanged for non-deportation. It seems, therefore, that there is often a failure to protect the victims and punish the perpetrators (see also Tsigris, 1996); 'these are whores, they deserve it', one hears the police commenting. This discourse reflects the way sex, women and women's bodies have been constructed in a society of male dominance (Jeffreys, 1997: 230). Patriarchal discourse

which extends to their wives, daughters, mothers, the role of respectable womanhood, constructs women who adopt or are forced into a lifestyle where they sell their sexual services for money as 'evil'.

> It is misogynistic, about the power of men and men exercising control over women, men taking sexual frustrations out on women working as prostitutes and/or playing out fantasies and desires they would not or could not play out with their regular partners. . . . It reinforces and reproduces the 'throwaway' status of women working as prostitutes. (O'Neil, 1996: 141–2)

In Greece, a number of state and private organizations work on women's issues in the fields of health, family planning and vocational training. However, very few of these organizations give support to prostitutes and those which do focus primarily on female adult prostitution. The organizations which we have identified as working in the field of prostitution are: first, the Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights, which together with academics from the Panteio University in Athens mainly conducts research on a number of topics, particularly violence against prostitutes, and has in the last two years undertaken research on trafficking in women, the results of which are currently being analysed; second, the non-aligned women's movement; third, civil service departments which are involved exclusively with the health of 'labelled' prostitutes, like the health departments in every prefecture in Greece and the Athens sexually transmitted diseases clinic. The latter is understaffed in that in recent years there has been no permanent medical staff in the clinic. The Ministry sends doctors from the Andreas Syngros hospital, which specializes in venereal diseases and dermatology. The doctors are seconded to the clinic for a few months where they are required to provide services in addition to their regular duties at the hospital. There have been long periods of time when the clinic has operated without a medical staff. The doctors mainly concentrate on registered prostitutes, whereas the non-registered illegal migrant women trafficked for prostitution and working as prostitutes are mainly supported by a social worker at the clinic and from voluntary field workers. These departments provide health care services, counselling and social and psychological support for registered and non-registered prostitutes. Moreover, the Centre for the Control of Special Infectious Diseases of the Ministry of Health has opened a mobile unit for street sex workers. The unit will operate one night a week.

As in Greece, there is no one organization which deals exclusively with the problems faced by migrant women trafficked for prostitution and working as prostitutes in a comprehensive way, I decided to visit and interview members of a number of NGOs which in one way or another have come across migrant women trafficked for prostitution and working as prostitutes. It soon became apparent that not one of these NGOs is dealing exclusively with migrant women trafficked for prostitution and

working as prostitutes or helping them with the problems they face in Greece. Some organizations offer the women medical help, others advice, but none seem to be willing to organize a campaign for them, save perhaps the Adesmefti Kinisi Gynaekon. It seems therefore that the possibilities of transformative politics for organization and coalition-building across different women's groups with groups of trafficked women for prostitution are rather meagre. Whereas in Italy, for example, growing public disquiet and intolerance towards street prostitution in particular has forced many local authorities such as the Bologna city council and voluntary associations such as Gruppo di Lavoro e Ricerca sulla Violenza alle Donne to set up projects to assist prostitutes who are in need of protection because they have denounced their traffickers, and to help them integrate into the Italian society, there is no such effort being made in Greece.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The arrival en masse of migrant women in the early 1990s has radically transformed prostitution in Greece. Traditional prostitution mainly serviced by Greek women has given way to a modernized system of prostitution serviced by a multinational group of migrant women trafficked for prostitution without bonds or communication between its members; the system has been rationalized on the basis of the potential for huge profits to be made. This new form of prostitution has driven native women out of the market; migrant women trafficked for prostitution and working as prostitutes occupy different positions in the hierarchy of the industry, depending on their nationality, body size, place of work and tasks performed. One of the characteristics of this new type of prostitution in Greece is the violence and excessive form of exploitation from which migrant women suffer; they are denied basic human rights, and the state is mainly there for them only as a mechanism for their prosecution, which in turn helps conditions to be created in which sex workers are completely dependent and trapped.

Despite international legislation, including the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, trafficking in women for sexual exploitation continues and is becoming an increasingly grave problem around the world[28] and within the EU. Little is known about this trafficking in women, but studies carried out by the IOM in a number of European countries like Austria and Italy, and papers presented in international workshops and conferences[29] show that the problem is very serious; hence, the former European Commissioner Anita Gradin has put trafficking in women firmly on the EU's agenda.

The issue needs comprehensive action at the EU level, with the participation of local, national governments of the member states and international organizations. These institutions need to establish working groups which will draw up recommendations for actions to combat trafficking in women in all its facets and provide financial support, social assistance and grant stay permits to victims or assist the repatriation of those who are prepared to act as witnesses in judicial proceedings. Witness protection programmes are necessary if victims are to give evidence against traffickers.

The European Conference on Trafficking in Women which took place in Vienna, June 1996, inter alia urged for closer cooperation between origin, transit and destination countries in organizing information campaigns on the dangers of trafficking and in informing potential victims about the lures and techniques of traffickers (IOM, 1996: 11). The ratification and implementation of international anti-trafficking conventions must be encouraged and the EU resolution of November 1995 on the protection of witnesses in the fight against organized crime should apply to victims as well. Support, information and assistance should be given to the victims.

Over the 1990s, the number of women from the former Eastern Bloc coming to Greece to work illegally has been increasing and has overtaken trafficking from developing countries, because it is easier and cheaper for traffickers to bring these women to Greece due to shorter travel distances, tourist entry or smuggling via lightly protected boarders; the knowledge that few traffickers are convicted is encouraging to traffickers.

As shown earlier, the difficulty in obtaining residence and work permits, the poverty, the need to support dependants makes these women vulnerable to exploitation not only by so-called 'mafias' but also by those close to them (fathers, husbands, neighbours, friends). Many of these women are led to prostitution, some to street prostitution, others to 'hidden' prostitution in bars and massage parlours. The conditions under which these women work are unknown as no systematic study has been undertaken until this and a larger study by Lazos, the results of which are currently being analysed. Preliminary findings show that the conditions under which trafficked women for prostitution work, their lack of even limited integration into the host community, make them a danger to themselves and to public health. The racist attitudes among the Greek population and the lack of solidarity between migrant women and Greek prostitutes (Roumeliotou and Kornarou, 1996: 160), who blame the migrant women for a fall in prices and demand of Greek prostitutes, and the lack of interest shown by most NGOs, leaves them unprotected. In an attempt to help non-Greek women who are victims of traffickers and work as prostitutes in Greece, I would like to make the following policy recommendations:

1. A forum for discussion (including representatives of the judiciary, police, immigration NGOs and migrant women's organizations) and formulation of concrete recommendations for action must be set up as soon as possible.
2. The IOM must work closely with the UN and the national and local governments of Greece in an operation to combat trafficking in women.
3. The need for a regular policy dialogue and exchange of information between country of origin and of destination on migration issues, on the dangers of trafficking and on administrative measures and policy decisions geared towards preventing trafficking in women and children and helping victims of trafficking integrate, is strongly recommended. Policies and mechanisms addressing violence against these women must be developed immediately. But 'a struggle to establish better conditions has to include the task of deconstructing this symbolisation of prostitutes as evil or sin, so linked to religious thought and so far from libertarian and democratic aspirations' (Lamas, 1993: 132).
4. Further in-depth study of trafficking in women but also in children from Eastern and Central Europe into Greece is paramount. Funding must be made available to organize the identification, registration and screening of these women and help and evaluate the insertion of these women in the social fabric of Greece and encourage job generation activities for these women. Reintegration, assistance and information campaigns are required which will press for legal reforms and mechanisms of support and empowerment.
5. NGOs in Greece must familiarize themselves with NGOs in other countries' activities and with governments' agendas and liaise with one another to find common positions and courses of action which will help improve the lives of these women; NGOs and governments must be alerted to the risk of the potential spillover of trafficking to other groups of the population such as children, should the problems be left unaddressed. Success with dealing with the phenomenon would depend on transparency, flexibility, openness and fair representation among the countries and agents concerned and upon international cooperation.
6. It is vital to upgrade the health care and social services on offer and expand them so that those non-registered women trafficked for prostitution and working as prostitutes can have access to them.
7. Public officials need to be more sensitive towards the human rights of these women and there should be specific standards as to how they are treated.
8. Support and protection has to be provided for women who want to give up prostitution, as well as insurance cover for prostitutes and

their families, social care and financial assistance and vocational training for those that are willing to quit prostitution and take on another job.

9. Existing decrees on regularization must be rethought; it should perhaps be opened to prostitutes too. At the moment, migrant women trafficked for prostitution and working as prostitutes in Greece cannot be legalized, as they cannot point to their employer. Otherwise, these socially excluded women will continue to be at the mercy of the employer/pimp. Other means of dealing with the massive influx of illegal migrants in Greece like massive deportations of Albanians may implicitly work in support of trafficking since they leave no other option to these women. Once the women are arrested, there is a short trial and the judge orders the deportation. Because they have no passport they are asked to bring a paper signed from the Consul for their country of origin; this whole process may take around one to two months, a time which is spent in jail. 'Once deported, they return home and the whole process starts again', a police officer said.
10. The law must be tightened up so as to impose heavy penalties on and take civil and criminal measures against those who profit from trafficking. At the moment the legal status of these women depends on employers who may exploit their situation.
11. The government must recognize the vulnerability of trafficked women and should provide well-funded shelters and relief support for girls and women subjected to trafficking as well as medical and counselling services and low-cost legal aid, and enable them to find a means of subsistence.
12. The state must promote research on the causes, nature and seriousness and consequences of forced prostitution and on the effectiveness of measures implemented (if any) to prevent and redress violence against women.
13. The failure to protect and promote these women's human rights and fundamental freedoms should be addressed by appropriate legislation. This necessitates research, which will produce knowledge about its causes and consequences, its incidence and will help introduce measures to combat trafficking. Failure to reform existing laws and inadequate efforts on the part of public authorities to promote awareness of the consequences of trafficking in women and images in the media of use of women as sex objects, are factors contributing to the continued prevalence of such violence, adversely influencing young people and the community at large. 'Educational systems should promote self-respect, mutual respect, and co-operation between women and men' (UN, 1995: 75). Awareness of the responsibility of the media in promoting non-stereotyped images of women and men must be raised and the media must be encouraged

to take measures to eliminate the negative images which degrade women and to stimulate a public debate on the factors that encourage trafficking in women and girls for prostitution in order to eliminate trafficking in women. As a police officer said, 'everyone profits from the system . . . the law is broken and the Greek state is very tolerant towards trafficking'.

NOTES

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1. There seems to be a great deal of confusion about what is precisely meant by the term 'trafficking in women'. This is because, 'trafficking covers a wide variety of situations, not all of which involve illegal migration or exploitation' (IOM, 1995: 6). In this article, the term 'trafficking women' is used to describe 'extreme cases wherein fundamental human rights and freedoms are violated' (IOM, 1995: 6). Definitional problems are addressed later on in this article.
2. The characterization of recent migratory flows into Europe as 'new' has often been associated with new types of migration such as short-term population movements (Salt and Clarke, 1996) and transit migration (Wallace et al., 1996); new migrant 'types' ranging from highly skilled legal migrants to undocumented migrants indebted to smugglers and asylum seekers (White, 1993); feminization of migration flows (Castles and Miller, 1993); a new geography of migration (King, 1993) with new countries of origin (Rudolph, 1996) and of destination (Anthias and Lazaridis, 1999), and resurgence of xenophobia and of extreme nationalist movements. Some scholars (Koser and Lutz, 1998: 4) have argued that although at an empirical level 'the characterisation of recent migration in Europe as "new" seems plausible', at a more conceptual level, 'the application of the term "new" to a social phenomenon is arbitrary and therefore debatable'.
3. In the late 1890s, three international conferences on the prevention of trafficking in women took place, one in Paris (1895), one in London and another in Budapest (both in 1899).
4. This convention, which was signed in Geneva, was ratified by only 66 out of 160 UN member states because a number of states objected to the inclusion of prostitution.
5. As Wijers and Lap-Chew (1997: 31) rightly point out, it is the conditions in which this activity takes place that must be the focal point here, as 'the human rights violated are the rights of women as workers'.
6. I have used the term 'country of destination' instead of 'receiving country' because this term respects the subjectivity of the migrants and of trafficked persons. The term 'receiving country' underlines the passive role of a person treated as an object (a human being is not an object to be sent and received by any country).
7. Although it would be interesting to know whether the women I interviewed

in 1998/9 still work as prostitutes and, if so, what was their strategy to stay in the country of destination given the high deportation rate, abusive working conditions and multiple forms of exploitation, I was unable to find such information. One of the main difficulties I encountered had to do with transferability, that is the transfer from one geographical location to another aiming at removing any trace of the women and the prevention of the formation of any meaningful social interactions with the local population – this point is elaborated in a later section of this article. The other problem I encountered was the reluctance of other prostitutes and key informants working in the same area to put me in touch with the women we interviewed back in 1998/9, for reasons associated with the risk of being undocumented together with the 'whore stigma', both of which mean that identities are created, used and changed in interaction with different people in a way that the 'true identity' of the person remains concealed. To be more precise, the act of trafficking for prostitution begins with distancing strategies. 'Distancing begins with separation of self from family, home, and worlds of social legitimacy' (Barry, 1997: 31–2) and culminates in dissociation from one's previous 'real' identity (i.e. taking new names and getting forged identity papers). This is a survival strategy.

8. For an analysis of migrant women who work as domestic workers in Greece, see Lazaridis (2000).
9. It is important to note here that some scholars (e.g. Zlotnik, 1995: 229–30) have challenged this notion on the basis that especially those women who migrate legally do not do so for work purposes. Phizacklea (1997: 2–3), on the other hand, argues that 'unless we examine the gender and ethnic composition of the undocumented as well as the documented migrant labour force, we can say very little about the extent to which it has become "feminised" '. She does, however, agree that the demand for migrant women workers in the service sector has grown since the mid-1970s.
10. Information on the Greek immigration policy and recent regularization is discussed later in this article. For an evaluation of the Greek immigration policy, see also Lazaridis (1996) and Lazaridis and Romaniszyn (1998).
11. In a study carried out by the feminist organization Adesmefti Kinisi Gynaekon, 1000 people (500 men and 500 women) selected at random were asked to give their opinion on prostitution: 95 percent of the respondents said that they saw it as a 'necessary evil' or a 'necessary function' (Kandaraki, 1997: 3).
12. In January 1982, an association of prostitutes called 'Solidarity' was set up and officially recognized as an occupational association. The Greek Electricity Board provides brothels with electricity at lower tariff: that is, the same tariff as for other businesses.
13. Unfortunately Greece did not take part in either the first or the second phase of the TAMPEP project (Transnational AIDS/HIV Prevention among Migrant Prostitutes in the EU/Project). For information on this project, see Brussa, 1998).
14. Press release by the Ministry of Public Order, 16 December 1997.
15. There are around 15,000 Filipino women in Greece, 20 percent of whom are working as prostitutes.
16. There are around 1500 Ethiopian women who have entered Greece either as asylum seekers or with tourist visas; once the visas expire, they move to Canada or the USA. Around 10 percent of them are working as prostitutes in bars in Salonica and in Piraeus. Their earnings are estimated to be around US$100 per day (interview).

17. Only 5 percent of women from Sri-Lanka work as prostitutes, whereas the majority of women from Thailand are engaged in prostitution.
18. After the influx of migrant women, Greek prostitutes tried to unionize themselves, but these attempts largely fell through (interview with Lazos).
19. Salt and Stein (1997: 467) argue that the migration business is 'a system of institutionalized networks with complex profit and loss accounts, including a set of institutions, agents and individuals each of which stands to make a commercial gain'. At the core is migrant trafficking. Salt and Stein (1997) attempt to show how trafficking operates by building a model which 'conceives trafficking as an intermediary part of the global migration business', comprised of the recruitment of migrants, their movement en route and their insertion and integration into societies and economies of countries of destination. They argue that the process involved a division into 'a set of technical and organisational tasks' which are critical for the trafficking's survival.
20. Between departure from the country of origin and arrival in the country of destination, there is a complex set of operations involved; these include locating individuals that can be bribed at border crossing points, transport (via boats, trucks or on foot), accommodation en route, recycling of false documents, and so on. This process is costly. The costs are covered by the debt bondage. To individual migrants the cost of trafficking varies depending on their ethnic background, means of transport, distances involved and relationship to trafficker. The trafficker justifies the price charged in terms of the costs just mentioned and the risk that needs to be taken. Trafficking in Greece is a crime. Those who are caught facilitating the illegal transport of human beings across the borders risk a year in prison and up to 1 million drachmas fine for each undocumented migrant. If there is trafficking involved, then they risk two years in prison and up to 5 million drachmas fine (Law 1975 of 1991, Art. 33). In other words, the emphasis is on illegal entry or stay rather than on the element of violence or abuse or the gender-specific character of trafficking in women. The crime is illegal transport and entry rather than violation of women's human rights. 'It transforms the women concerned from victims who need to be empowered in relation to "traffickers" into collaborators with these "traffickers" . . . [therefore] measures . . . primarily aim at combating illegality . . . thus "protecting the state", instead of the women' (Wijers and Lap-Chew, 1997: 32).
21. This replaced the old Law 4310 of 1929; this was until 1991 the basic piece of legislation which controlled the movement of people into and out of Greece (Lazaridis, 1996: 341).
22. As stated elsewhere (Lazaridis and Poyago-Theotoky, 1999: 727), under the following conditions a temporary resident card could be issued:

> A migrant must appear in the Organisation for the Employment on the Labour Force (OAED), provide his/her address as well as information on his/her education, previous employment, length of stay in Greece, nationality, country of origin, family situation; and also present identification documents, proof of application for social security stamp booklet, health certificate from a public hospital or social security organisation (IKA), a criminal record certificate from the Greek Ministry of Justice, a certificate from the Ministry of Public Order stating that he/she is not an undesirable foreigner.

After obtaining a temporary resident card one can apply for a green card provided that one can, inter alia, provide proof of generating an annual income from working legally of around US$2600.

23. There are three or four brothels run by transvestites (interview with Lazos).
24. As someone said to us: 'the clients are men; they often get tired of the girls; they want something new to taste'.
25. I visited a bar in Athens. The bar is open all year round and employs 50 women, mostly from Central and Eastern Europe; the turnover is high because of the frequent checks by the police. The owner of the club said that the most profitable are the Ukrainians and fewest profits are made by the Albanians. 'The taller the woman, the higher the profit', he said. While I was there a woman entered the bar and asked for work. As the owner said, 'new girls receive up to 15,000 drachmas per evening, plus any tips they earn from the customers'. One woman working in this bar told me: 'I was locked up in a brothel. The first day I was forced to have sex with 80 men . . . it hurt badly. I was in there for about seven months. In the end I escaped . . . this place is much better.'
26. A police officer described the methods followed by the police for detecting this type of prostitution:

> One of us pretends to be a client, picks up the phone and 'orders' a girl; he waits until the girl enters the room and the woman is arrested. In most cases the pimp is not arrested as he keeps a safe distance away from the meeting point. But even if he is caught, he can claim that he is just a friend offering her a lift. The women never confess, as they cannot afford to lose their 'protector'.

27. Programme on Prostitution broadcast on Sky television 23 April 1998 and coordinated by C. Vasilopoulos.
28. For example, the Commission on Human Rights Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery cites estimates of 2 million women in prostitution in India, roughly 400,000 of whom are under 18 years of age (UN, 1995: 162).
29. For example, the EU's conference in Vienna (10–11 June 1996) and the workshop on trafficking in women which took place in Budapest in 4–5 October.

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