



# **exploitation and trafficking of women**

**Critiquing narratives  
during the London  
Olympics 2012**

**Kate Cooper and Sue Branford  
for the Central America Women's Network**

**CAWN**



**CAWN** believes that the problem of trafficking and exploitation of migrant women is a global problem requiring a global response. Policies and actions to address this problem should be guided by the findings of evidence-based research exploring the impact of global trade agreements, structural adjustment and austerity measures, and the labour practices of transnational corporations on women's economic rights, migration patterns and trafficking of women.

**CAWN** calls for a more robust approach that recognizes the complex and multi-faceted nature of the problems linked to trafficking and migration and an analysis that takes account of all the intersecting issues that affect migration and security issues, prostitution and sex-work and issues of international organized crime. These include: labour rights issues (decent work, job opportunities), global economic justice issues (international wealth inequalities and global trade and debt flows), alongside gender issues (violence against women and gender discrimination).

**CAWN** also calls on national governments to address the issue of migrant workers' rights by promoting laws and regulations that uphold international agreements on women's rights, the right to decent work and that promote the fairer distribution of wealth and assets between countries North and South.

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# ACRONYMS

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CAWN	Central America Women's Network
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DfID	Department for International Development
ETI	Ethical Trading Initiative
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GAATW	Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Office of Migration
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
LOCOG	London Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
UN.GIFT	United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking
VoT	Victim of Trafficking

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was commissioned by the Central American Women's Network (CAWN) to inform its work around the role of civil society and the media in shaping public understanding of different forms of exploitation experienced by women, in particular migrant women, in the context of major sporting events. It is based on an extensive study of press coverage of the issues of trafficking and exploitation of women during the London Olympics 2012 and examines critically the range of narratives underlying the approach to these issues in the print media. In addition, the report includes in-depth analysis of the campaigns mounted by five civil society organizations (CSOs) and compares the different approaches and strategies applied in each case, assessing the reasons for the varying degrees of success of each, respectively. An important aim of the study was to identify lessons and draw up recommendations based on the experience of the London Olympics that can be applied to other forthcoming major sporting events.

The report highlights the fact that dominant narratives about trafficking not only conflate issues of trafficking with those of immigration and sexual exploitation but also frequently fail to employ the necessary analytical rigour. Prior to the Olympics, narratives circulated within Westminster and in the media predicting a rise in the number of women that would be trafficked to London for the London Olympics. The forecasts involved extremely large numbers and focused in the main on an expected rise in the number of women to be trafficked for sexual exploitation. During this period, many migrant women 'seen' in London, particularly those who could be characterized as 'exotic', were assumed to be trafficked into the capital for the Olympics and to be controlled by criminal gangs. Media reports circulating around this time (and in general) illustrate the very negative and stereotyped ways in which migrant women are portrayed, particularly in the tabloid press.

However, the ensuing 'moral panic' about trafficking and sexual exploitation was not backed up by any evidence. Indeed, a body of evidence already existed prior to the Olympics demonstrating that major sporting events do not contribute to a rise in the incidence of trafficking for sexual exploitation. It is unclear why no one in government seemed aware of such research. The prediction that London would be 'flooded' with 'sex slaves' proved to be a myth. Indeed, the numbers of actual Victims of Trafficking (VoTs), as defined in the Palermo Protocol, was low during the Olympics – as it had been prior to the event.

Over time, attention has been drawn to this discrepancy by a wide variety of stakeholders: CSOs, sex worker rights activists, academics and some journalists from the broadsheets. Yet despite the existence of this by now well-established counter-narrative that questions and contradicts the prevalent assumptions, the dominant framework within which most trafficking continues to be constructed is that of sexual exploitation.

At the same time, very little attention was given in both government discourse and the media either to the global inequalities that drive women to seek a better life abroad or to the benefits the economies of richer countries enjoy because of the role that migrants play in providing cheap labour. In particular, the role of the UK's trade and development policies in perpetuating and deepening these inequalities was not examined in any of the mainstream narratives. Nor was any understanding shown of the fact that restrictive immigration policies contribute to migrant women's vulnerabilities and potential exploitation. Finally, no account was taken of the fact that the percentage of migrant women in the UK is scarcely higher today than it was a few decades ago.

Even though the number of VoTs is low, migrant women in the UK face a wide range of problems. The London based Latin American Women's Rights Service is a CSO that works at the grassroots with women from Latin American countries who find themselves in a variety of exploitative situations. Because the official definition of VoT is very narrow, LAWRS encounters few women who are helped by trafficking legislation and believes that the law is too restrictive and should be replaced by a broader approach in which the human rights of all migrant women are addressed.

Stop The Traffik, a government-funded inter-governmental campaign, was set up to address the predicted rise in trafficking during the period of the Olympics. Although the premise was false, the initiative is to be commended for encompassing other forms of trafficking apart from trafficking for sexual exploitation, thus breaking somewhat with

the narrow focus on prostitution. However, while the campaign itself achieved high visibility, the number of reports of suspected trafficking was extremely low, a result that throws into question the government's strategy on this issue and, indeed, the utility of the trafficking legislation as a means of addressing exploitation.

X:talk, the third CSO examined in this report, is a sex workers' organisation, which was concerned that the government would use the wildly exaggerated predictions of a rise in the number of women trafficked into the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation as an excuse to aggressively police, raid and shut down some workplaces within the sex industry. Such practices have been shown time and again to endanger the lives of all sex workers by displacing them from their peers, from regular clients and from the outreach services that keep in contact with them.

The 'abolitionist' take on sex work and associated narratives, prevalent in the current and previous governments, obscure the wider reality that trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation is one out of a wide range of exploitative situations in which migrant women can find themselves. In addition, the focus on sexual exploitation, rather than on sex work as work, results in less meaningful intervention. Current narratives about the issue are mostly constructed within a framework of implicit moral disapproval, which fails to address the important health and safety concerns of all sex workers, whether migrant or not. Moreover, it appears that government officials, both within the current and previous governments, subscribe to a particular brand of feminist ideology that does not recognise or respect the agency of women who choose to become sex workers. Thus, despite the success of its media campaign from the perspective of press coverage, the x:talk campaign was not successful in achieving one of its main policy aims, namely a moratorium on the policing of sex workers during the period under analysis and, indeed, x:talk was excluded from wider debates around these issues.

Migration is a development strategy for millions of women all over the world who seek out work in different parts of the service sector and other informal spheres in order to subsist. Restrictive immigration policies and a focus on trafficking and sexual exploitation do nothing to alleviate their vulnerability. What is needed is an approach that addresses and is able to legislate against the whole range of different forms of exploitation that take place in workplaces both in the UK and further along global supply chains. However, there were some examples of a more integrated approach with a focus on wider exploitation and the human rights of women: the multi-agency Human Trafficking and London 2012 Games Network, as well as the Play Fair Campaign, of which War on Want was a key part.

War on Want's campaign, contributed both to the work of the Network and to Playfair and drew attention to the shocking labour conditions of many workers, mostly women, in the factories producing goods for export to the UK during the Olympics. A wide range of events ensured that their campaign figured in the media, though much ingenuity and imagination were required to gain the press's interest. This makes a marked contrast with the widespread coverage in the tabloid press of 'sex trafficking', in which any piece of news was seen as a hook for carrying yet another story on the issue. Responding to these difficulties in relation to attracting press interest, War on Want successfully developed a range of different media strategies, involving the innovative use of social media as a means of communicating directly with its supporters.

The fourth campaign studied is the one developed and coordinated by Anti-Slavery International in collaboration with the Institute for Human Rights and Business. Entitled The Staff Wanted Initiative<sup>1</sup>, this campaign sought to address exploitative working conditions in the poorly regulated sectors of construction, domestic work, cleaning, catering and hospitality during the London Olympics. This initiative helped business identify who is controlling cheap labour, how it is coming in and the level of workers' pay. This focus on workers' rights, rather than anti-immigration, trafficking or the abolition of any particular sector of work, serves as an example of good practice for employers in other areas of poorly regulated or informal work.

This report argues that governments would do better to focus on the human rights of all migrants in the UK, not just

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1 See <http://www.staff-wanted.org/>



those who fall into the restrictive definition of 'trafficked' people and many of whom experience exploitation in many different forms. In order for this change to occur, CSOs will need to work effectively together not only by campaigning against particular legislation but by also exerting pressure to counter particular ideologies that impede a reasoned and rational debate. This is particularly the case with sex work which, if it were conceptualized as "work", would lead to the formulation of holistic approaches based on global justice and the human rights of all migrant workers.

During the London Olympics 2012 the campaigns analysed in this report experienced various degrees of success. Factors linked to success rates include: the visibility of these CSO during the Olympics, their ability to work with other CSOs and agencies, the palatability of their message and their effectiveness in getting their message out using various media outlets. In some cases, the use of social media allowed them to communicate directly to their public, reducing the importance of the conventional media. Nonetheless, high level campaigns in which CSOs were able to work together effectively and which managed to gain high media visibility stood the highest chance of effecting change. This is how, for example, the Playfair Campaign 2012 was able to insist on corporations disclosing their supply chains. But the strategy needs to be further developed if change is to occur at the level of ideology and legislation and the first step is for all CSOs to find a common, integrated narrative that focuses on global justice and the human rights of all women and to use this as a campaign framework.

Based on the above analysis, the report concludes with recommendations directed at CSOs, governments and corporations. These recommendations are aimed at protecting the human rights of all women and ensuring responsible actions and media coverage during future sporting events around the world.

## Recommendations for future sporting events

This report has put forward the need for an integrated narrative that takes account of global inequalities and that views the phenomena of trafficking and migration within this context. As part of this, it is clear that trafficking legislation mostly hinders rather than protects the rights of those in exploitative situations and that a wider focus on forced labour and the rights of all migrants would be a more effective approach.

Drawing on the findings and analysis presented in this report, the following recommendations have been drawn up for the major stakeholders involved in future sporting events:

- Agencies should carry out their own research, based on sound investigative principles, rather than letting an ill-informed media set their agenda.
- Whenever possible, agencies should work together to develop a common agenda; a multi-agency, joined-up approach is more effective than CSOs working alone.<sup>2</sup>
- CSOs must create 'media events' to get their issues covered in the mainstream media.
- CSOs must use social media to mobilize their supporters independently of the mainstream media.
- Policy-makers should be encouraged to protect the human rights of all women, whatever their occupation and whatever their migrant status, and this should include listening to sex workers rights organizations.
- Governments should be encouraged to comply with international laws that protect the rights of migrants both in general and within the labour market.
- Corporations who stand to benefit from the sporting events should be encouraged to disclose their supply chains and to ensure workers' rights wherever the outlets are located.

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2 See <http://www.playfair2012.org.uk/what-we-want/from-london/>

# INTRODUCTION

This report deals with the various forms of exploitation experienced by migrant women in the labour market and how legislation designed to police immigration and prevent trafficking often fails to protect these vulnerable women. The report also examines the role of the media in objectifying migrant women through their often negative, stereotypical portrayals. In addition, it provides an overview of some of the narratives within civil society and discusses ways in which their messages can be amplified and integrated to reflect a global justice approach.

Migration is a development strategy for millions of poor women whose families depend on the remittances sent home. Against a background of global economic insecurity, thousands of men and women seek a better life abroad. Migration can be a vital source of income for migrant women and their families. On the one hand, the so-called 'feminisation of migration' has helped many women to acquire greater autonomy, self-confidence and social status.<sup>3</sup> But, on the other hand, women migrants, especially if undocumented, can face stigma and discrimination at every stage of the migration cycle. Restrictive immigration policies can push 'unskilled' women workers into irregular and more risky migration channels and more exploitative, 'low end' labour markets:

Before departure, women can be faced with gender-biased procedures and corrupt agents. In fact, gender discrimination, poverty and violence, can provide the impetus for women to migrate or enable women to be trafficked in the first place. During transit and at their destination women can be faced with verbal, physical and sexual abuse, poor housing and encampments, sex-segregated labour markets, low wages, long working hours, insecure contracts and precarious legal status. And upon return to the source country they may be faced with broken families, illness and poverty.<sup>4</sup>

Despite such widespread vulnerabilities and 'exploitation' (however this is defined – the term is contentious) public debates rarely take account of the fact that in the UK, as elsewhere, much migration – and trafficking – occurs within a context of structural inequalities, compounded and sustained by the UK's trade and development policies and the accompanying 'informalization' of labour (that is, labour that is not covered by a contract and does not provide access to the normal employment rights and protections). In contrast to the widely accepted rights-based approach to migration, understood and analysed within a context of global inequalities and often grinding poverty<sup>5</sup>, public debates are frequently dominated by one-dimensional narratives which present migration (both documented and undocumented) in a negative vein and treat trafficking as a separate criminalized phenomenon.

This report analyses some of these 'narratives' within the UK, with a particular focus on narratives about trafficking and exploitation of women in the run-up to and during the London Olympics 2012<sup>6</sup>. This task proved surprisingly complex, largely because of the number of misconceptions, half-truths and prejudices embedded in the discourse. For instance, the run-up to London 2012 was characterized by a flurry of anxiety around trafficking, which focused, in the main, on women and sexual exploitation. For example, in January 2010, Tessa Jowell, then Minister for the Olympics, told MPs: 'Major sporting events can be a magnet for the global sex and

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3 This term is contentious as women already made up almost half the numbers migrating several decades ago. However the patterns of migration changed in response to geo-political and economic events and more recently there has been an increase in the numbers of women migrating from certain regions (e.g. from the Philippines). Furthermore, the term is sometimes used to describe how women are increasingly moving as independent migrants in search of jobs, rather than to rejoin male family members.

4 Jolly, S. & Reeves, H. 2005. Gender and Migration Overview Report, Bridge, Brighton, Institute of Development Studies. Available at: <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/CEP-Mig-OR.pdf>

5 Ruhs, Martin, 2009. Migrant Rights, Immigration Policy and Human Development, Human Development, Research Paper 2009/23, UNDP. Available at: [http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/papers/HDRP\\_2009\\_23.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/papers/HDRP_2009_23.pdf)

6 In this report the term 'narrative' is used in a loose sense to mean the ways in which a range of different stakeholders debate and discuss trafficking and the exploitation of women.

trafficking industry; this is wholly unacceptable. I am determined that traffickers will not exploit London 2012.<sup>7</sup>

Among the many stakeholders involved in issues about trafficking and exploitation of women, including Ministers and policy makers, CSOs (civil society organizations), the media, academics and research centres, few would accept Tessa Jowell's assertion that major sporting events often lead to a big increase in sex trafficking. On the contrary, experts, such as Patrick Belser, a senior economist with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in response to predictions that 40,000 sex workers would be trafficked into South Africa for the 2010 World Cup, stated: 'It is the kind of number which has no identifiable source and no transparent methodology.'<sup>8</sup> Despite the existence of rigorous research and robust analysis produced by a wide range of sources, most of which fail to support claims of any causal link between major sporting events and incidence of trafficking, such narratives continue to circulate with surprising tenacity.

In a preliminary briefing paper on this issue (see Annex for a summary), CAWN identified seven key approaches or 'narratives' that inform debates around trafficking and exploitation of women:

- a sex work issue
- a labour issue
- a migration issue,
- a criminal networks issue
- a global economic justice issue
- a gender issue
- an ethnic/racial discrimination issue

These different narratives do not occur with equal frequency. Some, such as the sex work narrative in which trafficking is often conflated with prostitution, are more dominant than others. Despite these variations, this classification is helpful, both for disentangling the often contradictory and overlapping narratives used to frame the phenomenon of trafficking and exploitation of women, as well as for drawing attention to issues that should be included in the debate.

This report aims to be of use to stakeholders in the UK and other countries where major sporting events are to take place, in particular, the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014, the 2014 World Cup in Rio and the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio. As CAWN points out:

Advocates within civil society have developed discourses, often in line with their expertise, that are not necessarily comprehensive and encompassing of all the aspects outlined above. All too often this fragmentation of expertise has led to confronted stances as the issue is looked at from a specific angle. Those working to support women migrants who are abused and exploited know from first-hand experience the complexity of each case. The multiple variances are a reflection of the numerous dimensions of the phenomenon of trafficking, migration and exploitation of migrant women.<sup>9</sup>

Some of these different narratives are examined in this report, focusing specifically on the campaigns organized around the London Olympics by five CSOs who submitted evaluation reports to CAWN: x;talk, War on Want, Anti-Slavery International, the Latin America Women's Rights Service (LAWRS) and Stop the Traffik<sup>10</sup>. The report incorporates detailed critical analysis of the media coverage of these issues in the UK


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7 Cacciottolo, Mario, London 2012: Will the Olympics bring more prostitutes? BBC, 7 June 2010. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18174387>

8 Bialik, Carl. The elusive link between sex trafficking and sporting events. Wall Street Journal, 18 June 2010. <http://blogs.wsj.com/numbersguy/the-elusive-link-between-sex-trafficking-and-sporting-events-952/>

9 Lopez Calvo, V., 2012. Using Intersectional Analysis to tackle trafficking and exploitation of women, CAWN Briefing Paper.

10 These reports are available from CAWN upon request. Contact [info@cawn.org](mailto:info@cawn.org).



covering the period between May and August 2012, and also draws on other articles outside this timeframe, when relevant. The report also includes, where appropriate, a discussion of different pieces of legislation and how these have been interpreted and enforced.

The report is organized into four sections: Section One examines the nature and scale of migration and trafficking; Section Two discusses narratives about trafficking and sexual exploitation; Section Three discussed migration, trafficking and labour exploitation (excluding sex work) and Section Four presents some conclusions and recommendations for future work.



## Migration and trafficking into the UK and its non-relationship to the London Olympics

### Conflations, exaggerations and misinterpretations

The total number of international migrants has increased over the last 10 years from an estimated 150 million in 2000<sup>11</sup> to 214 million persons today.<sup>12</sup> It has been estimated that approximately 10–15 per cent of these people are in an ‘irregular’ situation.<sup>13</sup> This global trend is mirrored in the UK, where it has been estimated that there were approximately 6,452,000 immigrants in 2010, around 10 per cent of whom were estimated to be in an irregular situation.<sup>14</sup> Female immigrants amount to slightly more than half of this total.

Such figures are, of course, only estimates. By their very nature irregular immigrants are difficult to enumerate

and, as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), points out:

The law defines immigration status in a binary way as either legal or illegal, but in practice, irregular migration status can involve a wide spectrum of violations of immigration and other laws.... Debates about what and who should be included under irregular migration and irregular migrants are further complicated by disagreements about the terminology that should be used to describe the phenomenon.... These include, among others, clandestine, illegal, unauthorised, unlawful, undocumented, aliens without residence status, illegalised people, non-compliant, sans papier (without documents) as well as irregular. In addition to – and partly because of – the complexities of definitions, data on irregular migration and migrants are very limited.<sup>15</sup>

Although such figures show a large increase in the numbers of migrants, it is important to note that the proportion of migrants in relation to the global population has remained fairly constant over

11 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision. Available at: <http://esa.un.org/migration/index.asp?panel=1>

12 IOM. World Migration Report 2010. Available at: <http://www.publications.iom.int>

13 IOM. World Migration Report 2010. Available at: <http://www.publications.iom.int>

14 The Migration Observatory. 2011. Definitions, Pathways and Scale. Available at: <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/irregular-migration-uk-definitions-pathways-and-scale>

15 Ibid.

this period. Despite this fact, public discourse and narratives about migration in the UK remain infused with antipathy, as revealed by recent research.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, around three quarters of the British population are hostile to immigration (of any type) and in the first decade of the twenty-first century, immigration has re-emerged as a prominent political issue following a period when it had not been a feature of political or media debate at all. Today immigration consistently ranks among the top four issues facing Britain in public opinion surveys compared with fewer than 5 per cent of survey respondents at the turn of the century.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to this hostility towards immigrants, narratives about trafficking are often characterized by a sense of shared public concern and moral indignation. As Professor Bridget Anderson points out, even those who are usually unsympathetic or 'hostile' to undocumented migrants 'can engage with the plight of 'victims of trafficking' and respond to calls for their protection'.<sup>18</sup>

'Trafficking' is a relatively recent term but one that, since the mid-1990s, has been invested with a whole variety of meanings by various stakeholders. Narratives about trafficking are often characterized by alarmist statements about the magnitude of the industry, yet the actual legal definition of trafficking is specific. The Palermo Protocol is the most recent piece of legislation to define trafficking:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion,

of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of apposition of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.<sup>19</sup>

According to this definition, three main criteria need to be fulfilled in order for someone to be legally described as 'trafficked'. These are: movement (within a country or internationally), coercion and/or deception, and exploitation. This definition of trafficking is therefore quite narrow, ignoring vast swathes of people who experience exploitation or human rights abuses but do not fulfil these criteria for being a Victim of Trafficking (VoT).

Whilst in some ways this legalistic definition of trafficking can seem excessively narrow and specific, in other ways it can seem too broad. For example, there are no international standards (or even national standards) on what actually constitutes exploitation or coercion, thus narratives about trafficking can become a catch-all for a range of activities from illegal migration to prostitution, including the use of xenophobic and/or nationalistic language.

Comments and statements made by politicians and senior civil servants in the UK have added to the confusion around the meaning, nature and scale of immigration in this country. In a speech addressed

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16 Sagar, S. & Somerville, W., 2012. Building a British Model of Integration in an Era of Immigration: Policy Lessons for Government. Washington, DC, Migration Policy Institute. Available at: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/UK-countrystudy.pdf>

17 See Ipsos-MORI Issue Index polls of public opinion in the United Kingdom over the past 15 years, [www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/poll.aspx?oltemID=56&view=wide](http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/poll.aspx?oltemID=56&view=wide). In December 1999 fewer than 5 per cent of respondents identified immigration or race relations as one of the most important issues facing the country; in December 2007 this figure was 46 per cent. The percentage of people identifying immigration or race relations as one of the most important issues facing the country has declined since 2008 as economic concerns have become dominant (the other most common responses of crime, education, and the National Health Service have followed the same pattern). Nonetheless, immigration (or race relations) has remained almost constantly among the top four issues identified by the British public. For further discussion see Blinder, Scott. 2011. UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern, Oxford: Migration Observatory. Available at: [http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/migobs/Public%20Opinion-Overall%20Attitudes%20and%20Level%20of%20Concern%20Briefing\\_0.pdf](http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/migobs/Public%20Opinion-Overall%20Attitudes%20and%20Level%20of%20Concern%20Briefing_0.pdf).

18 Anderson, Bridget. Stuck in Traffic: How helpful is the trafficking framework? The Compas Blog, posted 7 May 2013. <http://compasoxfordblog.co.uk/2013/05/stuck-in-traffic-how-helpful-is-the-trafficking-framework/>

19 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2004. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Article 3: p. 42. <http://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf>.

to parliament in 2011, Immigration Minister Damian Green said: 'It is simply intolerable that in 2011 human trafficking still plagues this country.'<sup>20</sup> Timothy Brain, the UK's most senior police officer dealing with human trafficking before he retired in 2012, said: 'We think back to the cotton plantations and sugar plantations of the 18th and 19th century and it wouldn't be as bad as what some victims go through. It's inhumane.'<sup>21</sup> In a similar vein, Anthony Steen, chair of the Human Trafficking Foundation, said: 'In William Wilberforce's day, slavery could be seen. Now it is hidden from view but no less prevalent.'<sup>22</sup>

While the clandestine nature of trafficking and associated activities makes it difficult to prove – or disprove – that trafficking in the UK is a 'massive industry', the discourse is also severely hampered by the lack of understanding and clarity around what actually constitutes trafficking. The statements quoted above show how Ministers often use rhetoric that conflates issues of immigration, migration and labour exploitation with trafficking, possibly to justify an increasingly strident anti-immigration agenda.

Similar confusions are evident in the minefield of figures and statistics that circulate as part of these narratives. In 2003 the Home Office reported to the Joint Committee on Human Rights that it estimated that 4,000 people had been trafficked into prostitution in the UK. This 4,000 figure was again used in a Home Office report in 2008, referred to as 'the most recent Home Office analysis', although it is not clear how the figure was calculated.<sup>23</sup> Statistics for migrant women working in the sex industry should clearly not be used as an indicator for trafficking and sexual exploitation, yet a 2010 report published by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) used such figures for precisely

this purpose. The report estimated that of the 30,000 women said to be involved in off-street prostitution in England and Wales, 17,000 were migrants, of whom 2,600 were trafficked while a further 9,600 were 'vulnerable migrants' who may have been trafficked.<sup>24</sup> No evidence was produced to substantiate these figures. Actual verifiable figures about trafficking have always been few and far-between. Kelly and Regan reported that 71 trafficked sex-working women were known to the police in 1998.<sup>25</sup> Professor Kelly then speculated that this was an underestimate and that the real figure may have been anywhere between 142 and 1,420!

An eye-opening revelation about the extent of trafficking for sexual exploitation in the UK comes from the police's own reports of two nationwide anti-trafficking programmes - Pentameter 1 and Pentameter 2.<sup>26</sup> Pentameter 1 was the first coordinated effort to tackle human trafficking for sexual exploitation on a national scale. Launched in February 2006, Operation Pentameter involved every police force in the UK, as well as the United Kingdom Immigration Service, the Serious and Organised Crime Agency, the Crown Prosecution Service and several non-governmental organizations, such as the Poppy Project. During its 3-month operational phase 84 women were identified as VoTs. Pentameter 2 was launched on 3 October 2007 and, when Jacqui Smith, then Home Secretary, announced the results in July 2008, she hailed it a 'great victory'. She credited Pentameter 2 with 'arresting 528 criminals associated with one of the worst crimes threatening our society'.<sup>27</sup> In addition, 167 VoTs were identified.

However, investigative journalist, Nick Davies, revealed in an article in the Guardian in October 2009 that an

20 Cited in: Townsend, Mark. Trafficking victims lured to the UK: locked up and raped at £30 a time. The Observer, 15 May 2011: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/law/2011/may/14/trafficking-victims-lured-to-england-locked-up-and-raped> .

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Home Office report, 2008:p.6

24 Association of Chief Police Officers, 2010. Setting the record: The trafficking of migrant women in the England and Wales off-street prostitution sector. Available at: <http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2010/201008CRITMW01.pdf>. pp. 5-6

25 Kelly, L. & Regan L. 2000. Rhetoric and Realities: Sexual exploitation of children in Europe. CWASU, London Metropolitan University

26 Police Oracle, 2008. Pentameter Facts and Figures. Available at: [http://www.policeoracle.com/news/Pentameter-Facts-and-Figures\\_16691.html](http://www.policeoracle.com/news/Pentameter-Facts-and-Figures_16691.html)

27 Ibid.

internal police analysis of Pentameter, which he had obtained after a lengthy legal struggle, painted a very different picture:

Only 22 people were finally prosecuted for trafficking, including two women who had originally been 'rescued' as supposed victims. Seven of them were acquitted. The end result was that, after raiding 822 brothels, flats and massage parlours all over the UK, Pentameter finally convicted of trafficking a grand total of only 15 men and women ... Internal police documents reveal that 10 of Pentameter's 15 convictions were of men and women who were jailed on the basis that there was no evidence of their coercing the prostitutes they had worked with. There were just five men who were convicted of importing women and forcing them to work as prostitutes. These genuinely were traffickers, but none of them was detected by Pentameter, although its investigations are still continuing.... The UK's biggest ever investigation of sex trafficking failed to find a single person who had forced anybody into prostitution in spite of hundreds of raids on sex workers in a six-month campaign by government departments, specialist agencies and every police force in the country.<sup>28</sup>

While this article did not claim that sex trafficking did not exist, it revealed that 'the scale of and nature of sex trafficking into the UK has been exaggerated by politicians and the media'.<sup>29</sup>

Since then, other journalists have made attempts to talk to trafficked sex workers and to make their own assessment of the scale of the trafficking. One such article was published by the Observer in June 2012. Written by Mark Townsend, the paper's home affairs editor, the feature had the somewhat dramatic headline:

Trafficking Victims lured to the UK: locked up and raped at £30 a time:

As the government's anti-trafficking strategy falters, what of the thousands of women brought into the UK every year and forced into prostitution and slavery?<sup>30</sup>

But does the article really substantiate the claim that 'thousands of women' are trafficked each year? Townsend uses figures from the ACPO 2010 report. These figures are based on Operation Acumen, which commenced in January 2009 'as a multi-agency year-long initiative to improve knowledge and understanding of the scale of human trafficking for sexual exploitation in England and Wales'.<sup>31</sup> Townsend terms these figures 'the most authoritative effort to determine the scale of sex trafficking in England and Wales' yet in another section of the article he gives the actual figures for convictions published in Operation Acumen:

On average, there have been 25 convictions a year for sex trafficking since 2004, with only eight in England last year. Scotland and Wales have yet to record a single successful prosecution.<sup>32</sup>

These figures scarcely corroborate his earlier claim of thousands of women forced into prostitution.

Another journalist, the respected Roy Greenslade, believes that, in fact, the police really do not know the scale of the problem. Greenslade has followed the issue for several years and in his blog, published in the Guardian on 6 July 2012, he said he had been intrigued by a claim that new research had established a 'direct link between advertisements for prostitutes in the back of newspapers and sex trafficking'.<sup>33</sup> He went to the research on which this claim was based and found no clear evidence. In fact, the report itself

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28 Davies, N. Inquiry fails to find single trafficker who forced anybody into prostitution. The Guardian, 20 October 2009. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/oct/20/government-trafficking-enquiry-fails>

29 Ibid.

30 Townsend, M. op.cit.

31 Association of Chief Police Officers. 2010.op.cit. <http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2010/201008CRITMW01.pdf>: p.7

32 Townsend, M. op.cit.

33 Greenslade, R., Do newspaper sex adverts really encourage the trafficking of women?, The Guardian, 6 July 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/greenslade/2012/jul/06/local-newspapers-prostitution?INTCMP=SRCH>



entitled *Reading between the lines – the links between advertisements for sexual services and trafficking for sexual exploitation*, had concluded:

Available evidence on the central themes of prostitution, sex trafficking, sex advertising and their links remains limited, unclear and contested. More comprehensive, quantitative as well as qualitative research is urgently needed for evidence-based policy and guidelines to become a reality.<sup>34</sup>

Greenslade commented:

I suspect that some trafficked women have been coerced into working in brothels that have been advertised in newspapers. I also suspect that when non-British women working in brothels are arrested, many of them claim they have been trafficked when, in fact, they came here of their own volition.

Of course, I don't know anything for certain – and neither does anyone else, including 'the authorities'. That perhaps is the most honest conclusion for journalists and other analysts to reach – that they know very little and the authorities know very little.<sup>35</sup>

Given the level of ignorance highlighted by Roy Greenslade, it is scarcely surprising that misinterpretations and conflation are evidenced in the media and often coalesce around the narrative about sexual exploitation, doubtless because of the sensationalist nature of the issue.

Such confusions and slippages are not aided by the fact that international law does not correlate with national law. The definition of trafficking as per the Palermo Protocol does not, for example, correlate with Sections 57-59 of the 2003 Sexual Offences Act. These Sections 'create an offence of arranging or facilitating the transportation of a person into, within or out of the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation....

[they] do not require that the person facilitating arrival, travel or departure of a person for the purposes of sexual exploitation, use force, coercion or deception as required by the Palermo Protocol'<sup>36</sup>.

This confusion is illustrated when an article published in BBC Online in April 2012 is examined. The case relates to Northern Ireland and reports on a man in Belfast convicted 'of the trafficking of two women into the UK, controlling prostitution and brothel keeping'. This is reported as being the first time that anyone in Northern Ireland had been sentenced for human trafficking and, for this reason perhaps, there appears to have been some confusion in the way the authorities dealt with the issue. It is made clear in the article – and is also reiterated by the judge – that the two women chose freely to travel from Slovenia to Belfast to work as prostitutes:

A man has been convicted by Belfast Crown Court of prostitution and human trafficking offences ... It is the first conviction for trafficking in Northern Ireland ... There was no allegation that the women were brought or held against their will. (Authors' emphasis)

Should the man have been convicted of 'trafficking'? It would appear not, from the legal definition of trafficking as per the Palermo Protocol. Yet, the lack of clarity in the 2003 Sexual Offences Act means that it is possible to interpret consensual sex work, particularly migrant sex work, as trafficking, thus adding to the range of misunderstandings.

Such confusion is inevitable perhaps within a context where government rhetoric seems to consider trafficking as an inherent part of sex work conducted by foreign women. This can lead to nonsensical statements, such as the one that Detective Inspector Douglas Grant gave to BBC Online about the conviction of the 'trafficker': 'Following an investigation [the two women] were rescued on 21 March.' Although the women may well have needed help, given the

34 Voolme, H. & Trujillo, M., 2012. *Reading between the lines: Examining the links between advertisement for sexual services and trafficking for sexual exploitation*. Available at: [http://maryhoneyballmep.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/reading-between-the-lines\\_final\\_mh.pdf](http://maryhoneyballmep.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/reading-between-the-lines_final_mh.pdf)

35 Greenslade, R. op.cit.

36 x:talk, 2010. *Human Rights, Sex Work and the Challenge of Trafficking*. Human rights impact assessment of anti-trafficking policy in the UK, p. 9. London. Available at: <http://www.xtalkproject.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/reportfinal1.pdf>

precariousness of their situation, they clearly could not have been 'rescued', in the sense of being freed, as they were not being held in the brothel against their will. In this case the confusion in the coverage does not stem essentially from journalist incompetence but from a lack of clarity from the authorities involved.

### The non-issue of trafficking during the Olympics

As has already been noted, unfounded claims that large sporting events are necessarily accompanied by a significant rise in prostitution and trafficking of women are widespread and have often been used to justify a range of actions by governments and other actors. According to the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), this was particularly evident in relation to the 2006 World Cup in Germany.<sup>37</sup> During this period the Swedish government saw an opportunity to challenge Germany's policy towards sex work, arguing that Germany's policy of legalised prostitution would increase the risk of trafficking for the 2006 World Cup.<sup>38</sup> This was followed by a European Parliament resolution on 15 March 2006, which claimed that 'major sports events result in a temporary and spectacular increase in the demand for sexual services.'<sup>39</sup>

However, this assumption turned out to be false, as had been predicted by several experts.<sup>40</sup> In their report, *What's the cost of a rumour?* GAATW shows how time and again predictions of huge increases in sex trafficking at successive Olympics failed to materialise:

In 2006 in Germany, for example, it was predicted that 40,000 extra prostitutes/foreign prostitutes/trafficked women/forced prostitutes were to be 'imported' for the event. In reality, however, five trafficking cases only were assumed to have any

link with the event, of which one was a man. In Athens in 2004 there seems to have been much inaccurate reporting and much international controversy around the status of sex work in Greece and how the authorities were regulating the industry. However the point is that none of the instances of trafficking in 2004 were linked to the 2004 Olympics. A final case in point is the 2010 world Cup in South Africa at which again, 40,000 women were predicted to become trafficked victims for the event. After the event however, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development reported at a Parliamentary meeting that no cases of trafficking were found during the World Cup.<sup>41</sup>

Despite such evidence, this narrative linking sex work, trafficking and sporting events had wide appeal in the UK in the run-up to the London Olympics, particularly for politicians and some journalists. This is evident in some of the comments made by politicians and officials and reported in the media. For instance, in February 2011 Yvette Cooper, the Shadow Home Secretary, expressed concern that the scale of human trafficking would accelerate during the run-up to the Olympics:

The Olympics will make London a 'magnet' for human trafficking unless Ministers launch an urgent crackdown, Shadow Home secretary Yvette Cooper warned today. ...criminal gangs will use next year's Games to force women and girls into the sex trade and push men into forced labour, Ms Cooper said. She called on the Government to learn the lessons of the Athens Games in 2004, saying the number of human trafficking victims doubled due to poor prevention efforts.<sup>42</sup>

By early 2012 trafficking, particularly the narrative about the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation,

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37 Ham, J., 2011. *What's the Cost of a Rumour? A Guide to the Myths and the Facts about Sporting Events and Trafficking*. Bangkok, Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW). Available at : <http://www.gaatw.org/publications/WhatstheCostofaRumour.11.15.2011.pdf>

38 Ibid. and also see footnote 14

39 Ibid.

40 Bialik, C. Op.cit.

41 Ham, J. Op.cit.

42 Woodhouse, C. Olympics will be magnet for sex trafficking gangs, warns Yvette Cooper. *Evening Standard* 9 February 2011. <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/olympics-will-be-magnet-for-sex-trafficking-gangs-warns-yvette-cooper-6565248.html>

was clearly on the news agenda with politicians and policy-makers talking about it and thus creating further media interest. As the Olympics drew nearer, newspapers gave more and more emphasis in their output to the predicted boom in prostitution and, just as politicians ignored other sectors within which women can be trafficked and exploited, so did the media. This is an extract from an article from the Daily Mail on 27 June, making a misleading link between prostitution and sex trafficking:

Fears that prostitution and sex trafficking will rise in the capital during the Olympics are growing, as it emerged escort agencies are adopting the Olympic name, laying on extra women and offering special 'gold medal' services.<sup>43</sup>

In the same article, it referred to the widespread but fictional narrative that major sporting events contribute to 'a boom in the sex industry', using the recurrent 'flood' metaphor often associated with migrations or incursions of people into the UK. The other imagery of note is that of cash-hungry sex workers or prostitutes, waiting to 'cash in' on the Games:

Major sporting events always tend to precipitate a boom in the sex industry, with hundreds of thousands of visitors – including site workers, spectators and athletes – flooding an area.... Sex trafficking almost doubled during the 2004 Athens Olympics, and there were reports of sex attacks in the athletes' village at Sydney in 2000. And, one month before the games begin, many London-based escort agencies are cashing in on this.<sup>44</sup>

The Sun carried the same story and used much the same imagery:

Prostitutes are ready to cash in on the Olympic Games, a Sun investigation can reveal. The internet has been flooded by agencies targeting tourists

coming here for London 2012. Their offers include 'outstanding Olympic escorts' and 'gold standard social companions'. One company even calls itself Olympic Escorts and offers discounts for customers who use them more than once.<sup>45</sup>

This article in the Sun is written in a sensationalist style, feeding the idea that prostitution will surge during the Olympics, but in a refreshing departure it actually interviews one of the prostitutes. She, at least, makes it clear that, she has freely chosen to come to London because she sees the Olympics as a business opportunity. Breaking with the dominant practice, this article provided a counter narrative to the dominant assumption that those who sell sex are mainly coerced and exploited:

High-class escort Madison, 49, is moving to London for a month to cash in on the Games. The Manchester-based mum of one, who charges £1,000 per night for sex, said: 'It's worth my while getting a hotel in London while the Olympics are on. My earnings are about average for an independent escort, but I expect to make several thousands more at the Olympics. More men will be at the Olympics.'<sup>46</sup>

This article is also evidence of another, more liberal narrative in popular culture: that of the high-class, English sex worker who does indeed work for herself and who makes good money doing so. Although dominant narratives in the UK reflect a mainly abolitionist perspective, there is concurrently an emphasis on prostitution as a high-class, high-income activity. This new narrative became more widely adopted when Brooke Magnanti, needing cash to complete her PhD, signed on with a high-class escort agency. Calling herself Belle de Jour, she wrote a blog about life as a high-class prostitute, which became a bestselling book and a TV show.

43 De Lacey, M. London set to be flooded by prostitutes during Olympics, Mail On line, 27 June 2012: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2165027/London-set-flooded-prostitutes-2012-Olympics.html>

44 Ibid

45 Francis, N. Prostitutes are ready to cash in on the Olympic games. The Sun, 17 June 2012. <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/features/4377239/On-the-Games-Web-vice-sites-target-Olympics-fans.html>

46 Ibid

The end of this article quotes Madison as saying:

My earnings are about average for an independent escort, but I expect to make several thousands more at the Olympics. More men will be at the Olympics. They get up in the morning and sex is on their mind. And they can't relax until that's been taken care of.<sup>47</sup>

As GAATW points out however, such ideas are based on 'problematic assumptions about masculinity':

The hype around sporting events and trafficking for prostitution relies on hetero-normative or heterosexist notions about masculinity and femininity. Crowds are assumed to be predominantly male crowds demanding commercial sex, and women are only visible as targets for men's 'demand'.

'There are large volumes of people coming and they are men. They are away from home and alcohol is flowing and they want sex', says Christine MacMillan, from the Salvation Army.

However, reports found that many of the visitors and spectators at the 2006 World Cup (Germany) and the 2010 World Cup (South Africa) comprised families, women, couples, and mixed groups.<sup>48</sup>

Not all reports tapped into the same narrative as the tabloids. A major contribution to a more responsible analysis was made by Andrew Boff, a Conservative London Assembly member, who published a report, entitled 'Silence on Violence', about the policing of off-street sex work and sex trafficking in London. He concluded:

The Olympics led to heightened media interest that trafficking and prostitution in London would rise. As a result, the Metropolitan Police Service has received additional funds to tackle sex trafficking. However, I found no strong evidence that trafficking for sexual exploitation does in fact increase during sporting

events nor that such trafficking or prostitution had increased in London. In fact, my research found that a decrease in prostitution had been reported by police in London. Many sex trafficking victims in the sex industry do not fit the presumed - almost idealised - role: whereby someone is tricked into being a sex worker against their will. Both my interviews with service providers who work with sex workers and with academics highlighted that many sex trafficked victims are migrant women who choose to be sex workers. Their conditions of work, once here, may be very exploitative but they may only comprehend this exploitation gradually.<sup>49</sup>

Boff's report was a useful corrective. It was published in March 2012, before any of the articles quoted above were published. The tabloids that have been examined would have known about it or could have readily found out about it if they had carried out basic research. But why let facts get in the way of a good story?

There are also other examples of more responsible media coverage. On 7 June 2012 BBC Online carried an article that challenged the claims that London would be 'flooded' by trafficked prostitutes. It began:

Major sporting events such as World Cups and Olympic Games are often preceded by warnings about a rise in prostitution and sex trafficking as a result of the impending influx of spectators. But will prostitution in London really increase because of the 2012 Olympics?<sup>50</sup>

After looking at the evidence and quoting at length a statement from Boff, the article concludes that it will not.

### Implicit racism

Trafficking in the UK is most often associated with criminal networks or mafia-like gangs operating across national boundaries. As pointed out in CAWN's framework paper, this is an aspect often stressed by

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47 Ibid

48 Ham, J. Op.cit p. 14.

49 Boff, A., 2012. Silence on Violence – Improving the Safety of Women. Available at: <http://glaconservatives.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/03/Report-on-the-Safety-of-Sex-Workers-Silence-on-Violence.pdf>

50 Cacciottolo, M. Op.cit.: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18174387>

government agencies.<sup>51</sup> Much anti-trafficking policy derives from this stance, which calls for greater law enforcement and greater cross-border cooperation, with a strong focus on prosecuting traffickers and dismantling organized crime networks. There is an inherent 'othering' process that takes place within such narratives, as indeed within much discourse about trafficking. Some academics, for example, have pointed to the inherent colonialist assumptions in discourses about trafficking, which create a dichotomy between, on the one hand, migrant sex workers who are assumed to be trafficked and in need of rescue, and, on the other, European sex workers who are assumed to be emancipated and autonomous.<sup>52</sup>

Such colonialist and racist assumptions are an inherent, rather than explicit part of most narratives about trafficking and they are reinforced by the alarmist reports about 'floods' of migrants and 'hordes' of migrant sex workers in need of rescuing from the hands of (non-European) criminal gangs, and so on.

In fact, the issue of criminal gangs or networks is far more nebulous: Kalayaan, an NGO that works for justice for migrant domestic workers in the UK, points out that traffickers are often individuals operating alone<sup>53</sup> and anecdotal evidence from the sex industry suggests that many traffickers are individual women.<sup>54</sup>

In the run-up to the Olympics, there was a flurry of articles that reflected the assumptions referred to above. In their rush to get colourful stories, many newspapers, particularly the tabloids, disregarded the complexities and talked about criminal gangs flooding the capital with prostitutes and thieves. This, for instance, is from the Daily Mail, in an article published on 24 April 2012:

Romanian crime syndicates are flooding London

with hundreds of pickpockets, prostitutes and beggars ahead of the Olympics.

Coachloads of penniless migrants are arriving in the capital every day, many already armed with maps directing them to the best patches, which they have been ordered to defend from rivals.<sup>55</sup>

There is an implicit racist element to the way in which this incident is described. The article stated that 60 Romanians had arrived (the only concrete figure and scarcely 'hundreds') and had been prevented by council workers from sleeping rough near Marble Arch.

The article went on:

Police recently discovered 50 women believed to have been trafficked into the area to work as prostitutes and arrested four female beggars using babies as young as three weeks old.

The article is accompanied by a picture of four women, none of whom was carrying a baby. No evidence was produced that the women in the picture were beggars, yet the caption said:

Organised crime: Police recently arrested four female beggars using babies as young as three weeks old.

The Express, another tabloid, carried the same story on the same day:

Romanian crime gangs are bussing hundreds of men, women and children into London ahead of the Olympics to flood the streets as pickpockets, beggars and prostitutes.<sup>56</sup>

It stated later in the same article:

Police discovered 50 women trafficked into the

51 López Calvo, V. Op.cit.

52 Kempadoo K and Doezema J. 1998. *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, Redefinition*. Routledge, New York.

53 Kalayaan .2011. Policies that work to protect migrant domestic workers. Annual Report, London <http://www.kalayaan.org.uk/documents/ANNUAL%20REPORT%2010-11pdf>

54 Cusick, L., Kinnell, H., Brooks-Gordon, B. & Campbell, R., 2009. Wild guesses and conflated meanings? Estimating the size of the sex worker population in Britain, *Critical Social Policy* 29 (4): 703 – 719.

55 Mail Online. Romanian gangs are flooding London with pickpockets, prostitutes and beggars ahead of Olympic games, 24 April 2012. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2134301/Romanian-gangs-flooding-London-pickpockets-prostitutes-ahead-Olympic-games.html>

56 Dawar, A. Migrants bussed in to beg, steal and sell sex, Express, 24 April 2012. <http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/316202/Migrants-bussed-in-to-beg-steal-and-sell-sex>

area to work as prostitutes. They also arrested four women beggars for using babies as young as three weeks old. Clearing away the people and the mess they leave behind is costing thousands of pounds.

Once again no evidence was given that the 50 women had been 'trafficked', that is, brought into the UK against their will or with false promises. The Evening Standard also carried a similar report, written in a somewhat more objective way. Three days later the Express returns to the story with a more alarmist tone:

Streets around Marble Arch are flooded with migrants sleeping rough on a scale never seen before.

Officials fear one of the capital's iconic landmarks will be turned into a squalid campsite as the world descends on London for the Games.

Neighbourhood wardens are clearing groups of up to 60 Romanian rough sleepers every night from around Marble Arch and Oxford Street. Police discovered 50 women trafficked into the area to work as prostitutes. They also arrested four women beggars for using babies as young as three weeks old.<sup>57</sup>

Although it is not explicit, there is a racist and xenophobic element in the articles in the Daily Mail and the Express. The women pictured in the Daily Mail were probably Roma women (or certainly looked like Roma women, with their long skirts and headscarves). Today newspapers risk prosecution under the Race Relations Act if they openly suggest that Roma people are beggars, thieves and prostitutes but the association is strongly implied by the photo and by the linguistic similarity between 'Romanian' and 'Roma'.

Moreover, there was not a hint of sympathy for the new arrivals. No attempt was made to talk to them. What economic pressures had led them to move to an inhospitable large city? What kind of employment were they seeking? How long were they expecting to stay? We are not told. The context of these women's migration is completely lacking.

It was only several months later that an article – a blog in the Independent written by Eliza Galos, one of the authors of a report on human trafficking for the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) – provided some background to this flurry of articles. All the newspapers had been tipped off by the Metropolitan Police, which in its turn had been tipped off by the Romanian Police about the arrival of the Romanians. In other words, it had been an easy, quick story, with none of the newspapers bothering to dig any deeper.

As Eliza Galos points out in her blog, there is a problem of trafficking, particularly the trafficking of children, from Romania to the UK but this problem will only be solved if the reasons why it is happening are explored and tackled:

Previous police cooperation to tackle begging and crime, under 'Operation Golf', revealed that many Roma children were being trafficked into the UK, and recent data show the largest number of potential victims of trafficking from the EU – that are assessed through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) – come from Romania.

In the case of the Romanian Roma there are vulnerabilities that lead to exploitation: minimal education, poverty, marginalisation in the home country, family exploitation prior to trafficking etc. Unless these are addressed, Roma people are likely to keep reappearing on the streets of London. At the same time the UK needs to do more to address the structural demand for cheap labour and to target unscrupulous organised groups or individuals that exploit vulnerable migrants.

That knowledge does not seem to have been factored into the current operation which is focussed solely on clearing the streets, arrest, and prosecution. Quite apart from the fact that serious issues of victim exploitation were ignored, this approach to the problem of beggars and petty criminals (some under-age), controlled by gangs, will keep coming back, if the underlying social problems are not addressed.<sup>58</sup>

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57 Dawar, A. Op.cit.

58 Galos, E. A short-term Olympic facelift cannot fix long-term human trafficking. Independent Blogs, 23 July 2012: <http://blogs.independent.co.uk/2012/07/24/a-short-term-olympic-facelift-cannot-fix-long-term-human-trafficking/>

The newspapers that have been examined took the easy, misleading story – that Roma women were being ‘trafficked’ into work as prostitutes and beggars– while ignoring the real and disturbing fact, that some Roma children are being trafficked into the country because of a whole complex web of social deprivation.

### Messages from civil society

As the above sections demonstrate, there is huge confusion in British public opinion with respect to immigration, sex work and sex trafficking. It is scarcely surprising that different CSOs have found it almost impossible to develop a coherent and integrated strategy in relation to these issues. In this section the contrasting work of two organizations – the Latin American Women’s Rights Service (LAWRS) and Stop the Traffik are discussed.

#### Latin American Women’s Rights Service<sup>59</sup>

The Latin American Women’s Rights Service (LAWRS), a small community-led organisation that provides the only holistic service for Latin American women in London, struggles to reconcile its day-to-day experience in dealing with the concrete problems of Latin American women with the statistical minefield. LAWRS provides women with support and advice around three main issues: poverty, violence against women and improving opportunities for community integration. As part of its general remit to work on issues around the trafficking and exploitation of women, LAWRS carried out specifically tailored work in relation to the London Olympics 2012.

In its evaluation report about its work on the trafficking and exploitation of women, both in general and in relation to the London Olympics 2012, LAWRS draws attention to the mismatch between, on the one hand,

estimates of women trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labour and, on the other hand, the number of identified VoTs, originally from Latin America amongst their client group or referred to them by other organizations. It says:

According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the sexual exploitation has become a \$16-billion a year business in Latin America.<sup>60</sup> The US State Department has estimated that at least 100,000 Latin Americans are trafficked internationally each year, with large numbers of victims coming from Colombia and the Dominican Republic, among others. It has identified Spain, Italy, Portugal, the United States, and Japan as major destination countries for Latin American trafficking victims.<sup>61</sup> The US State Department in its Trafficking in Persons report in 2012 estimates that there are 1.8 million persons in forced labour from Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>62</sup> However, these claims do not match the numbers of identified victims of trafficking in the UK coming from LA that are very small.<sup>63</sup>

Even though very few actually qualify as VoTs, LAWRS’s client group experiences many different forms of exploitation:

Latin American women tend to be subjected to exploitation (labour, sexual, financial, etc.). They also live in isolated conditions and have often been deceived into coming to the UK to look for a better life and for ways to send back money to their loved ones living in poverty. Many of the women that we see have also been threatened with harm to their family members.<sup>64</sup>

The women’s stories exemplify some of the complexities of each individual case handled by LAWRS and how a focus on ‘finding’ VoTs is too narrow a focus from which to approach such cases.

59 See [www.lawrs.org.uk](http://www.lawrs.org.uk)

60 EFE, Sex Trafficking Now a \$16 Billion Business in Latin America, 3 January 2007.

61 Ribando Silke, Clare. 2012. Trafficking in persons in Latin American and the Caribbean. Washington DC:US Congressional Research Service. Available at: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33200.pdf>

62 US Department of State. 2012. Trafficking in Persons Report. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/192587.pdf>

63 Latin American Women’s Rights (LAWRS) evaluation report for CAWN, 2013 (unpublished).

64 Latin American Women’s Rights (LAWRS) case study for CAWN, 2013 (unpublished).

### Case study one:

#### 'I hope for a violence-free life'.

Fabia (not her real name) came to Europe from Brazil. She decided to move in order to escape poverty and family abuse, as do many other Latin America women. She migrated to Portugal first for language and cultural reasons. While living in Portugal, she married a local man. Although she was university educated in her home country, she had to work as a low-skilled worker and consequently received a low income. Her visa depended on her husband. A year after her move, her husband's behaviour changed. He began to drink alcohol heavily and soon began physically abusing Fabia. He used to spend all their joint wages on alcohol.

After some months, she decided to leave him; however, when she approached Portuguese police she was told that if she decided to report her husband they would have to report her to the immigration authorities. She was desperate: in a new country with no friends, no money, experiencing violence every day and fearing for her life.

At that time, she was approached by a 'friend' who lived in the UK. This 'friend' offered a way out. The friend agreed to cover her expenses if she would move to London and work in the sex industry. Fabia had three options: either to return to her life of abuse and poverty in Brazil; to remain in Portugal without documents and face being threatened by her husband; to move to London and hope for a violence-free life. She decided to move to the UK.

Soon after she arrived she found out that she will have to pay back the money lent to her by her 'friend' plus interest. Fabia approached LAWRS via the Open Doors project with St Bartholomew's Hospital. She is still involved in the sex industry and receives psychological and practical support from LAWRS. She is also receiving legal advice to regularize her immigration status. She has been offered volunteering opportunities as a way of developing her skills.

### Case study two:

#### Exploitation in marriage

Margarita (not her real name) came to the UK in 2010 after meeting her husband over the internet and marrying in Peru. She has children in Peru and it was always her intention to come to the UK to live with her husband, work and continue supporting her children in Peru.

Soon after arriving in the UK she started working and because she did not understand much English nor was she familiar with anything in the UK, such as how to open a bank account, how to apply for a National Insurance number, how to register with a General Practitioner (doctor), she let her husband take care of everything including her salary which for many months went straight into his account.

As the months went by she settled into her new married life and in her own words tried to be a 'good wife': she cooked, she worked, and she cleaned. The husband did not work because he was supposed to be studying. Because her husband had control of her money she found she had no money for basic expenses and no money to send to her children in Peru. One day, her employer helped her to open a bank account so that her money could go into her own account.

From then on her life became a living hell as the husband started abusing her verbally, insulting her, calling her stupid and ignorant. He even tried to demand that she gave him money. She refused. He started bringing other women into the house who would also abuse Margarita. The abuse and harassment went on, and he insisted that he had done her a great favour by giving her the chance to come and work in the UK. Margarita, in her early 50s, was also vilified by her husband about her age, about her body and mocked as old and good for nothing and a person that could not satisfy his sexual needs.

She started to realise that he did not care about her and had only brought her to the UK to be his slave, someone who would keep him, clean and cook for him. She felt ashamed and embarrassed. She was so frightened that she ran away. She now lives in as a domestic worker hoping to save enough money to be able to return to Peru to join her children.



Because the legal definition of trafficking is quite restrictive, these women are not eligible for any protection or support from the British state. Such cases exemplify the need for a more holistic approach towards the issue; one that prioritises human rights and views migration and trafficking as responses to a wider system of global inequalities.

### Stop the Traffik<sup>65</sup>

Despite the dominance of the trafficking for sexual exploitation narrative, more recently the government has made greater attempts to broaden its definition of trafficking and sexual exploitation into an understanding of trafficking and forced labour in other sectors. Reflecting this subtle shift, the government-funded CSO, Stop the Traffik, mounted a campaign to raise awareness of different kinds of human trafficking during the period of the London Olympics 2012. The campaign was named, 'Gift Box: the London Olympics and Beyond', and was a collaboration between Stop the Traffik and the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT). The main point of the campaign, which reflects the mission statement of Stop the Traffik, is to raise awareness of human trafficking at a community level to ensure that 'everyone takes responsibility for this fight'.

The campaign focused on raising awareness of human trafficking using the concept of a walk-in GIFT Box, symbolising 'the way in which traffickers entice their victims with false promises'. The outside of the box offers the 'gift' of a brighter new life. Four types of GIFT boxes were designed for the London Olympics each with a different colour to represent a different type of human trafficking: sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and street crime. Once inside the box, the viewer is confronted with a three-dimensional interactive experience based on an actual case that had taken place in the UK.

This campaign was clearly designed to be high profile

and to increase public awareness of the issue of human trafficking at the level of the individual and community. And it was indeed reassuring to see that such a high profile campaign drew attention to trafficking and exploitation in four different sectors of labour, rather than being exclusively focussed on sexual exploitation.<sup>66</sup>

However, the work of Stop the Traffik and their campaign is based on the alarmist narrative about human trafficking that has been described above: that there is a 'massive industry of human trafficking', as David Cameron stated during a discussion in Parliament after the Queen's Speech in May 2012.<sup>67</sup> As has been shown, such statements are more rhetorical than evidence-based and conflate a whole range of issues, including labour exploitation, poverty, illegal migration and criminal activities. Trafficking is far from being the only, or even the most serious problem faced by migrants. Good journalism can help to clarify and raise awareness and help to clarify, rather than obfuscate the complexities of these issues. This is clearly demonstrated by an article published in the Guardian on 19 March 2012. In an interview with an alleged trafficked sex worker, called Fatima (not her real name), the article reveals the limitations inherent in the legal definition of trafficking:

Fatima grew up in a remote village in West Africa. She does not know what happened to her parents but she was informally adopted by a childless couple soon after birth. The couple used her as a domestic slave and her body is covered with scars from beatings with various implements which she received from a very young age. The couple did not allow her to go to school and she is illiterate. At the age of 15 the couple sold her to a man she had never seen before. She has no idea what price she was sold for but was happy to leave her village with the man.<sup>68</sup>

Fatima ended up in London, locked up in a room and forced to work as an unpaid prostitute. The piece

65 See <http://www.stopthetraffik.org/>

66 Stop the Traffik evaluation report for CAWN 2013 (unpublished).

67 See <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm120509/debtext/120509-0001.htm>

68 Taylor, D. Met police sex trafficking investigations criticized. The Guardian, 19 March 2012 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/mar/19/met-police-sex-trafficking-investigations-criticised>

reveals the lack of clarity around whether Fatima can actually be said to have been 'trafficked' as she was not forced to leave her village and, even after her dreadful experience, she does not want to return to West Africa. Her story clearly illustrates the importance of an analysis based on global structures and labour markets rather than a narrow and restrictive definition of trafficking.

In its own terms, the UN.GIFT campaign was successful. It mobilized the public to become involved in the issues, to promote change at a community level and to make a link between policy narratives and directives and wider and more diffused community awareness. Three hundred and sixty one volunteers helped with the campaign over the course of the London Olympics and a total of 11,725 people were recorded as entering the box during the period of the campaign. In addition, approximately 32,000 leaflets were distributed and almost 10,000 people from 98 different countries signed the leaflet and returned it, indicating that they wanted to be involved in further initiatives to combat human trafficking.

A variety of different media were used to promote the initiative, including a project website<sup>69</sup> (which attracted 2,531 unique visitors, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube videos which, by the end of November 2012, had received 2,179 viewers.

In terms of numbers of potential VoTs identified as a result of the campaign, the success was more muted a result which calls into question the rationale behind the campaign. The Metropolitan Police Trafficking Helpline number was provided on materials and on the side of the GIFT boxes, and Stop the Traffik stated that in July and August there was an increase in the numbers of calls made, although only half of these resulted in advice being given and none resulted in a conviction or identification of a VoT. In addition, GIFT volunteers were asked to complete a briefing form when they came across a suspected incident of human trafficking,

either at their location or via a member of the public. In total, 22 forms were completed. Stop The Traffik also received five calls/emails from GIFT box volunteers, who reported on both national and international cases of possible trafficking. In total, therefore, the campaign resulted in information being given about 27 cases.

It is clear that the campaign was based on a misapprehension – that sex trafficking would increase during the Olympics. In her blog, 'Getting money to prevent sex trafficking even if there isn't any: London Olympics'. Dr Laura Augustin, an expert on migration and sex work, draws attention to the lack of evidence on which this campaign is based which undermines the *raison d'être* of the campaign. However, it has proved very difficult, she says, to argue against the campaign:

Those who wish evidence were the basis for social policy have been endlessly frustrated and annoyed by the survival of the myth saying sex trafficking – forced prostitution – increases enormously on the occasion of major sporting events. Despite enough evidence to convince most people that there is no such surge, it's obvious that evidence doesn't matter where the fear of hidden crime is constantly threatened. In other words, if the police haven't found many women in chains, the victims must be too well hidden, which justifies further money for more intense policing... This is what happens when a fear (panic, myth) takes on a life of its own. Evidence that there is cause for such fear is simply irrelevant.<sup>70</sup>

It should go without saying that every VoT deserves every support and protection that the state can provide and that the perpetrators of the offence should be punished. However, predictions of a 'massive industry' of slave labour are unhelpful in that they lead to misuse of resources and divert the debate away from broader concerns about labour exploitation, global justice and human rights.

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69 See [www.ungiftbox.org](http://www.ungiftbox.org)

70 Agustín, L. Getting money to prevent sex trafficking even if there isn't any: London Olympics. *The Naked Anthropologist*, 10 May 2012. <http://www.lauraagustin.com/getting-money-to-prevent-sex-trafficking-even-if-there-isnt-any-london-olympics>

## The role of the UK's policies

The narratives discussed in the above sections not only exemplify a lack of clarity about what constitutes trafficking, as opposed to migration or immigration, and sex work, as opposed to sexual exploitation, but they also reveal a complete lack of understanding of the wider issue of global inequality and economic injustice within which decisions on trafficking, migration and labour are taken. In this section an overview is given of some of the ways in which UK trade and development policies have contributed to the deepening global inequalities that are linked to increasing reliance on the kind of informal migrant labour that the current government seems so keen to expel.

The global context of economic insecurity within which so many women exist today has been brought about by broad economic trends over the last few decades. Since around 1980 fundamentalist free-market policies, first adopted by Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the US, have been the dominant economic strategy throughout the world. There has been a drastic reduction in the regulatory role of the state. Free trade, unfettered investment, deregulation, balanced budgets, low inflation and the privatization of what were once publicly-owned enterprises, have been trumpeted as the fail-safe recipe for national prosperity. In order to maximise returns for share-holders, companies have moved their plants and factories to wherever costs are cheapest. In this 'race to the bottom', local suppliers to the big multinationals have cut back on the construction costs of their factories, health and safety measures and, above all, wages, in order to win the contracts. States have introduced tax breaks to attract the foreign companies, reducing the amount of money available to invest in health and education. Trade unions have come under unprecedented attack as they attempt to defend wages and job security when local companies, uncertain as to whether they will have full order books in the future, insist on employing workers on short-term, precarious conditions.

At the same time, agriculture has been subjected to

the same kind of onslaught. Since the debt crisis in the 1980s, countries in the Global South had been under great pressure to open up their domestic food markets to foreign companies. The process gained impetus in 1995 when a far-reaching Agreement on Agriculture, negotiated as part of the Uruguay Round of world trade negotiations, came into force. It committed countries to the progressive opening of their agricultural markets through tariff reductions on food imports and the abolition of subsidies to farming communities. These policy prescriptions were reinforced by a barrage of free trade agreements, one of the earliest of which was the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the USA, Canada and Mexico. One of the most recent is the Association Agreement between the European Union and Central America, with Foreign Secretary William Hague pledging in 2010 to support British business access markets in the region.<sup>71</sup>

This flurry of agreements promoted a massive increase in world trade, as cheap foods, such as US rice and US maize, were dumped on markets at very low prices. This was very bad news for millions of small-scale and medium-sized farmers, whose livelihoods were destroyed. In Mexico, for example, employment in agriculture fell from 8.1 million in the early 1990s to 6 million in 2006. Mexico, once self-sufficient in food, now imports 40 per cent of the food it consumes. The destruction of many old rural communities has contributed to the widespread social and political disintegration of Mexico in recent years.

At the same time, since the 1980s big corporations have swarmed into the Global South, promising to end world hunger through the so-called Green Revolution and persuading local farmers to take up 'packages' of hybrid seeds, credit, fertilisers and pesticides. Over the last decade genetically modified seeds have formed part of many of these packages. Profits have rocketed for the corporations – particularly pesticide manufacturers such as Bayer, Syngenta, Monsanto and Dupont – yet the levels of hunger have actually risen in many regions, increasing by 19 per cent in South America.<sup>72</sup> According

71 Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Speech: Britain and Latin America: historic friends, future partners. 9 November 2010. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/britain-and-latin-america-historic-friends-future-partners>

72 War on Want, 2011. Food Sovereignty – Reclaiming the Global Food System.

to the UN's Food and Agriculture organisation (FAO), about 925 million – one in seven of the world's population – suffer from chronic hunger.<sup>73</sup>

As well as being one of the first advocates of radical free-market policies, the UK has also been one of the keenest players in the corporate take-over of world farming. The UK's Department for International Development (DfID), which is required by law to use British aid to reduce poverty across the world, is promoting projects designed to benefit the world's richest agribusiness corporations and to extend their control over the global food system, as War on Want pointed out in a recent report<sup>74</sup>. Much of its support for agribusiness is channelled through public-private partnerships, such as the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the New Vision for Agriculture, which clearly promote a model of agriculture based on free-trade, corporate-owned technology and greater private sector control. In effect, as War on Want says, 'DfID is promoting the supply of chemical inputs and seeds sold by major agribusiness corporations, which reinforces the subordinate role of small farmers in global supply chains<sup>75</sup>.' This corporate offensive often leads to thousands of peasant families being forced off their land and with no alternative but to seek to build a new life elsewhere.

The UK has been one of the key destinations for migrants, with migrants providing much of the labour force for the 'bottom end' of the labour market. These workers have become critical to the everyday functioning of London given their predominance in the public and services sectors (such as cleaning, caring and hospitality) which literally keep London 'working'. With stronger restrictions on entry, illegal

or irregular migration thrives.<sup>76</sup> Irregular channels put women at particular risk of sexual harassment during the migration journey and make it harder for them to protect their rights in destination areas.

Overall, immigrants have lower employment rates than people born in the UK. However, there are important differences linked to gender and nationality. Immigrant men have similar employment rates, while immigrant women have much lower employment rates.<sup>77</sup> Industries profit from irregular migrants as a cheap and flexible labour force with reduced means to demand rights, safety standards or social security benefits, a situation which governments may be unofficially aware of and complicit in. Reflecting such insecurity in the labour market, migration has become more temporary in nature: 72 per cent of migrants come for fewer than five years; and a majority of long-term migrants now state that they intend to stay for one to two years only.<sup>78</sup>

This overview of key macro-economic trends over the last few decades provides the context against which many of the issues discussed in this report should be considered.

Poverty, exacerbated by these global economic developments, drives workers, often women, to undertake hazardous journeys to work for low wages in unknown countries. Those who remain behind often have no other choice but to take up exploitative employment opportunities in factories manufacturing goods for multinationals exporting to richer countries, thereby subsidising improved living standards in those countries. Yet, far from being recognized for their important contribution to the economies of the richer countries, immigrant workers are often unfairly blamed for the economic woes of the host countries.

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73 See <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/117486/icode/>

74 War on Want, 2013. The Hunger Games – How DfID support for agribusiness is fuelling poverty in Africa.

75 Ibid. p. 2.

76 Anderson, B. & Rogaly, B. 2005. Forced Labour and Migration to the UK, Compas and TUC: London. Available at: <http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/Publications/Reports/Forced%20Labour%20TUC%20Report.pdf>

77 Cinzia, R., 2011. Outcomes and Characteristics of Migrants in the UK Labour Market. Oxford, Migration Observatory.

78 Saggat, Shamit & Somerville, W. 2012. Op.cit.

## Moral stances and legislation about sex work and trafficking

In this section the dominant narrative about trafficking and exploitation of women in the UK, namely, trafficking and sexual exploitation, is examined. Despite increasing recognition of the issue of labour trafficking in recent years, work in the sex industry continues to be excluded from most narratives about labour trafficking. Conversely, despite the high profile campaigns mounted by some CSO's such as War on Want and Anti-Slavery International which focused on labour exploitation, the predominant narrative in the media and in the rhetoric used by government ministers and officials during the course of the London Olympics and in the run-up to the event, still focused on trafficking and sexual exploitation.

According to the IPPR (Institute for Public Policy Research) report, *Fit for Purpose*,<sup>79</sup> as well as the x:

talk briefing paper 2010,<sup>80</sup> trafficking in the UK tends to be interpreted according to two key narratives: an anti-immigration discourse and an anti-prostitution or 'abolitionist'<sup>81</sup> discourse. For instance, the IPPR report notes that there is a tendency to discuss trafficking in relation to international migration even though, according to the legal definition of trafficking, it does not necessarily involve crossing international borders. Indeed, as x-talk points out in their briefing paper,<sup>82</sup> trafficking has been debated since the year 2000 in a context characterized by increasingly heightened and stringent immigration controls which have become more and more bureaucratic and difficult to negotiate and which have now resulted in the creation of over half a million irregular migrants in the UK.<sup>83</sup>

Trafficking has also been interpreted according to an anti-prostitution or abolitionist outlook. As Cusick et al point out,<sup>84</sup> this is partly to do with the context within which the UK first started negotiations about trafficking at the beginning of the last decade, a context characterized by an abolitionist feminist lobby within the last government. This is evidenced by the list

79 Charti, M., Pennington J., & Galos, E., 2012. *The UK's Response to Human Trafficking Fit For Purpose?* Briefing Paper, London, IPPR.

80 x:talk , 2010. *Human Rights, Sex Work and the Challenge of Trafficking: Human rights impact assessment of anti-trafficking policy in the UK.*

81 This term refers to those in favour of abolition prostitution, a position held by many feminists, amongst others.

82 See <http://www.xtalkproject.net/>

83 Mai, N., 2011. In *Whose Name? Migration and Trafficking in the UK Sex Industry: delivering social interventions between myths and reality*; and also Wills J. et al. 2010. *Global Cities at Work: New Migrant Divisions of Labour*, London, Pluto Press.

84 Cusick L, Kinnell H, Brooks-Gordon B and Campbell R, 2009. Wild guesses and conflated meanings? Estimating the size of the sex worker population in Britain. *Critical Social Policy* 29 (4): 703 – 719.

## Section Two

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of government consultations and reviews which were informed by a strong abolitionist lobby, and which were focused on women, with no mention of men or transgender people (see for example *Setting the Boundaries*<sup>85</sup> and *Stopping Traffic*<sup>86</sup>).

This particular narrative, as x: talk makes clear, diverts from the issue at hand: sex work is criminalized in the UK (the act of selling sex is legal but most related activities are criminalized). Women can and do decide to engage in sex work and many women who have migrated to the UK from outside Europe work in the sex industry. This does not mean that these women do not encounter exploitation in the workplace but this is not the same as saying that all women who sell sex and who have migrated to this country are trafficked and sexually exploited. As x: talk states in its briefing paper:

Bad working conditions do not necessarily imply forms of 'slavery', and this report maintains that sex workers have agency to individually or collectively organise to change their terms of labour, though their ability to do so is greatly impeded by the criminalization of their work and the unregulated nature of the industry.<sup>87</sup>

X: talk is not a lone voice. Since the beginning of the last decade, an increasing body of evidence has accumulated to question and critique the government's interpretation of the trafficking legislation. Academics, civil society organizations, health and support workers, as well as investigative journalists, have all contributed to a body of research and critical analysis that has undermined the government's approach to this issue. The rationale for such an interpretation of trafficking has been questioned at all levels and many stakeholders have pointed out the human rights imperative both for legalizing the sex industry and thus regulating it, as well as for dealing with sex work as a labour rather than a

sexual exploitation issue in anti-trafficking policy.<sup>88</sup>

Despite this, it seems that the trajectory towards criminalizing and stigmatizing the sex industry continues unabated. For example, the Policing and Crime Act 2009 was debated within the context of tackling demand both for those trafficked into sexual exploitation as well as for domestic sex workers. Section 14 criminalizes clients of sex workers subject to force, threats or deception. While it has been presented as a law to 'protect' women, in practice, as x: talk points out, this law has forced migrant sex workers further underground, to work in less safe workplaces, and it has meant that clients who might have helped trafficked people are less willing to do so for fear of prosecution. Anecdotal evidence from outreach services, such as Open Doors, suggests that the introduction of the law has created self-policing in certain sections of the industry. Maids (who act as receptionists and gatekeepers in flats) as well as managers require sex workers to provide immigration documents in order to work, as they fear being prosecuted for trafficking offences in the event of their workplaces being raided.

Section 21 of the Act – Brothel Closure Orders – are referred to in the government's Human Trafficking Strategy as part of their attempt to 'disrupt' trafficking but, in practice, closure orders can be granted for premises simply used for prostitution or pornography offences that are not specific to trafficking. This means that section 21 can be served on properties just because a maid is present, under the 'controlling for gain' offence.

It was within this context of an increasingly abolitionist and anti-immigration framework that x:talk conceived its campaign, *Stop the Arrests*,<sup>89</sup> as an opportunity to raise concerns about how the narrative of trafficking

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85 House of Commons, Home Affairs Committee, 2003. *Sexual Offence Bill*. Fifth Report of Session 2002-03. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmhaff/639/639.pdf>

86 Kelly, L. & Regan, L. 2010. *Stopping Traffic: Exploring the extent of and response to, trafficking in women for sexual exploitation in the UK*. Policy Research Series, Paper 125, London, Home Office. Available at: <http://andreatnetwork.pbworks.com/f/trafficking.pdf>

87 x:talk. Op.cit. October 2010, p. 29.

88 See Augustin, L., 2005. *Sex at the Margins: Migration, Labour Markets and the Rescue Industry*. Zed Books, London; and also Munro, V., 2008. *Exploring Exploitation: Trafficking in Sex, Work and Sex Work*; and also Munro, V. & Della Guista M. (eds) *Demanding Sex: Critical Reflections on the Regulation of Prostitution*. Ashgate, Aldershot.

89 See <http://www.moratorium2012.org/>

was used, both leading up to and during the London Olympics, in order to 'clean up' London. As part of its campaign, x:talk debunked the myth that large sporting events lead to an increase in trafficking and argued against the use of anti-trafficking laws to limit and disrupt sex businesses in London during the Olympics.<sup>90</sup>

X:talk also aimed to materially alter policing practices, even if only for a limited period. The case was presented to a number of organizations, and individuals were encouraged to sign an open letter calling on the Mayor of London to suspend the arrest of sex workers during the Olympics. The response that this engendered gives some insight into the extent to which the mainstream abolitionist narrative, by focusing on trafficking and the sex industry, refuses to take account of the views of those who work at the grassroots level and who understand the human rights impact of policy and policing on the women, migrant and non-migrant alike.

The Mayor responded to the campaign by stressing that it was out of the question to suspend arrests for any type of crime. In addition, x:talk was told that 'a protocol for an approach to street-based prostitution in London during and after the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games has been proposed and discussed at the London Violence against Women and Girls Panel'.<sup>91</sup> The Protocol was described as ensuring that street-based sex workers are not arrested unless there is 'a threat to general security, their personal safety or they are causing a disturbance that constitutes a breach of the peace', and that the emphasis will be on 'those who create demand'.<sup>92</sup>

The Mayor's response made no reference to the policing of off-street sex work, suggesting that no protocol was put in place during the Olympics. However, minutes from the London Violence against Women and Girls Panel suggest that a protocol was developed in partnership with the London Metropolitan Police, Women at Well and Safe Exit and launched on 13 July 2012. X: talk requested a copy of the Protocol on several occasions but they were not given it.

Such an attitude from the Mayor's Office, the London Metropolitan Police and all those involved in the Violence against Women and Girls Panel, displays a complete lack of concern for transparent dealings and engagement with sex workers and sex work-related projects. Indeed, this outlook can be identified as one of the main problems hampering the development of a human rights-based approach to anti-trafficking and to the sex industry in the UK. A strong abolitionist perspective informs legislation about trafficking and sex work and much current anti-trafficking policy is aimed as much at criminalizing women who work in the sex industry as at reducing trafficking. In this context the response from the Mayor's office was not unexpected, although x: talk was nevertheless disappointed with this outcome, as were numerous other sex work-related advocacy and health projects.

In terms of being able to effect a stay of execution with regard to the raiding of workplaces and arrests of sex workers and clients, x:talk states that their campaign started too late (or the campaign of policing and raiding workplaces started too early) for them to be able to mount any significant challenges to this police action. This has had a harmful effect on the health and safety of many sex workers in that women have been forced to move workplace more frequently and work without a maid on the premises, solicit online and thus often work alone or on the street. As a result of all these repercussions, women have been displaced from their familiar locality and from peer networks they normally rely upon as a source of information and as a safety net. Finally, it has made it more difficult for services such as x:talk, Open Doors and LAWRS, to contact and provide services to workers in the sex industry.

Notwithstanding this, the campaign was extremely successful at raising awareness of the debate in the media and some broadsheets also took notice of the issue, operating as a corrective to many of the more sensationalist stories that had been circulated in the media, mainly by the tabloids. For instance, the Independent reported in non-sensationalist fashion the

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90 Ibid

91 x:talk evaluation report for CAWN, 2013 (unpublished).

92 Ibid

impact of the tougher police action:

Following dozens of raids on flats used by sex workers over the past 18 months, police have focused on vulnerable women working the streets of the Olympic zones' most impoverished areas who are least likely to benefit from any summer Games boom, say groups working with the women.

Strict bail conditions and threats of anti-social behaviour orders have sent many of the women underground, forcing them away from areas they know well and disrupting contact with workers monitoring their health.<sup>93</sup>

The action, the Independent continued, was not justified by an increase in prostitution because of the Olympics:

Police yesterday confirmed its monitoring work had not identified any increase in trafficking in the five Olympic boroughs, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Greenwich, Waltham Forest and Hackney.<sup>94</sup>

This article also included a quote from Andrew Boff, a Conservative member of the London Assembly member. The story was also picked up by the Guardian, with the lead for its article being that a 'celebrity' – Brooke Magnanti, better known by her alias, Belle de Jour – had written a letter, signed by several Members of Parliament, protesting about the police tactics. The article then quoted Boff and organizations, like Open Doors, that had expressed concern about police tactics:

Georgina Perry, manager of Open Doors – a sex-worker health project in Hackney – and another signatory of the letter, said outreach work, conducted at a sauna and flat used by sex workers, had convinced her there was increased pressure from police. Perry said the Met risked repeating the mistakes of other forces around the world. 'Every

major sporting event sees the same reaction from the police, which puts women in danger. But there is no evidence base to support their actions.'<sup>95</sup>

The article ends with a quote from a spokesperson for the campaign, who expresses the hopes of many different groups when she calls for a sea-change in the narrative about trafficking and sexual exploitation:

We hope the campaign will create a space among policymakers, the police and the general public for a sensible, evidence-based discussion on the question of policing and sex work.

Even though, by x:talk's own admission, the campaign probably made little difference to the policing of the sex industry in the run-up to London Olympics 2012, it contributed significantly to the visibility of this counter-narrative about the sex industry<sup>96</sup>. This has had contradictory results. On the one hand, an increasing number of voices are now advocating for a more human rights-based approach to the sex industry both with regard to trafficking and in general. There is a body of research that shows how the increasing criminalization of the sex industry has been detrimental to the human rights of all sex workers and, in addition, that the number of women who are trafficked into the sex industry is nowhere near as high as claimed by some media and government rhetoric.<sup>97</sup>

However, the official approach to this issue remains markedly unchanged. Despite the acknowledgement by the government of other spheres of 'forced' labour related to trafficking, the sex industry is still circumscribed as a separate sphere and there is a distinct lack of transparency within most institutional bodies or networks with regard to this issue. For example, the multi-agency Human Trafficking and London 2012 Network (hereafter the Network), consisting of some 60 governmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies, all working

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93 Peachey, P. How the Olympic clean-up put sex workers in danger. The Independent, 12 May 2012. <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/olympics/how-the-olympic-cleanup-put-sex-workers-in-danger-7737986.html>

94 Ibid

95 Doward, J. Olympic crackdown on sex trade condemned by Stop the Arrests. The Guardian, 9 June 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/jun/09/olympics-crackdown-on-sex-trade>

96 See <http://www.moratorium2012.org/more-information/> for a full list of all press that mention the campaign.

97 Doward, Jamie, op.cit.



on different aspects of trafficking, which was formed to consider the risks of trafficking associated with the London Olympic and Paralympic Games. This Network, which operated between March 2010 and October 2012 under the auspices of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, was coordinated through a steering group, comprised of governmental and non-governmental organizations.

This steering group was divided into two sub-groups: one, chaired by the Poppy Project, dealt with trafficking and sexual exploitation; and the other, chaired by Anti-Slavery International, dealt with forced labour. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that the Poppy Project, part of the Eaves for Women,<sup>98</sup> was funded by the government between 2003 and 2011 to provide support and help organizations for victims of sexual exploitation and, unsurprisingly, has a general abolitionist remit. Consultation documents that the Poppy Project published during 2003

and 2011 have raised serious concerns amongst the academic community as to the assumptions, methodology and lack of ethical protocol and procedures followed.<sup>99</sup> Assumptions include the views that, prostitution is inherently a form of violence against women, that the majority of sex workers have experienced physical and sexual abuse, and that most are dependent on drugs,<sup>100</sup> despite the fact that there is a body of evidence that refutes such claims. No sex workers are part of the project and, as such, the project is not receptive to narratives that propose the legalization of the sex industry or those that put forward a more evidence-based approach to the debate. It seems that, despite an increasingly visible voices advocating the inclusion of sex workers' voices to open up debates about legalization, policing, and the framing of anti-trafficking policies, government narratives about sex work continue along the same criminalization and abolitionist trajectory as at the beginning of the last decade.

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98 See <http://www.eavesforwomen.org.uk/>

99 UK Network of Sex Work Project, 2008. An academic response to the 'Big Brothel'. <http://www.uknswp.org/wp-content/uploads/AcademicResponseBigBrothelFinSept2008.pdf>

100 Bindel J. & Atkins H. 2008. Big Brothel: A Survey of the off street Sex Industry in London. [http://nordicbaltic-assistwomen.net/IMG/pdf/Poppy\\_Project\\_report\\_September08\\_INSIDE\\_BIG\\_BROTHELs.pdf](http://nordicbaltic-assistwomen.net/IMG/pdf/Poppy_Project_report_September08_INSIDE_BIG_BROTHELs.pdf)

## Not just sex work – other kinds of trafficking and labour exploitation

It is only in more recent years that the Home Office has begun to be more concerned with exploitation and trafficking into sectors other than the sex industry.<sup>101</sup> However, just as in the case of trafficking and sexual exploitation, figures show a low incidence of those found to have been trafficked in other sectors. A 2006 study conducted by Anti-Slavery International, together with Anderson and Rogaly of the Centre on Migration Policy and the Society at Oxford University documented 27 individual cases of trafficking for forced labour in 2005 and 46 individual cases of trafficking for forced labour in 2006.<sup>102</sup> In 2008, Operation Tolerance, a pilot project examining trafficking for labour exploitation from May–December 2008, reported on 35 women and one man identified by the POPPY Project and an additional 14 women identified by Kalayaan, the majority of whom were

trafficked into domestic servitude.<sup>103</sup>

According to a House of Commons report<sup>104</sup> between 100,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked into the EU every year, and a conservative estimate for victims of trafficking to the UK is 5,000. According to this source, 4,000 of these were trafficked into the sex industry, which suggests that the other 1,000 people were trafficked into other sectors.<sup>105</sup> Perhaps because of this greater acknowledgement in the past few years of trafficking for labour other than work in the sex industry it was recognized by all stakeholders that, as Anti-Slavery International points out, for the first time in relation to a major sporting event, significant emphasis was put on tackling trafficking for forced labour during the London Olympics. As x: talk states, there is hope that this ‘could mean a potentially more holistic approach, drawing together all forms of trafficking’.<sup>106</sup> But progress is slow. Today, just as during the London Olympics, anti-trafficking policies, government rhetoric and mainstream narratives still distinguish between sex work and other kinds of work,

101 Home Office, 2007. UK Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking. 2007: p. 9.

102 Anderson, B. & Rogaly, B. 2005. Forced labour and migration to the UK. London, Trades Union Congress

103 Charti, M., Pennington J., & Galos, E., 2012. Op.cit.

104 House of Commons, Home Affairs, Committee, 2008-9. The Trade in Human Beings: Human Trafficking in the UK.

105 Home Office. 2009. The Trade in Human Beings: Human Trafficking in the UK, Government reply to the sixth report from the Home Affairs Select Committee Session 2008-9 HC 23.

106 Home Office. 2009. The Trade in Human Beings: Human Trafficking in the UK, Government reply to the sixth report from the Home Affairs Select Committee Session 2008-9 HC 23.

particularly with regard to how it is policed, talked about and legislated.

In addition, effective intervention around the issue of forced labour in any sector continues to be hampered by the restrictive definition of trafficking, which means that the doubtless widespread exploitative conditions experienced by a range of women, both within and outside the UK, tends to be excluded from the discussion. Indeed, forced labour is not always related to trafficking but represents a continuum of exploitative employment practices ranging from coercion, which can be included within the rubric of trafficking, to poor employment practices at the other end of the spectrum. According to a study about forced labour in Northern Ireland, carried out by the Institute for Conflict Research, within the UK it is migrant workers who are most at risk of exploitative practices, not necessarily because of their nationality but because of their lack of English skills, limited access to social networks and a lack of local knowledge.<sup>107</sup>

The work of Kalayaan is of particular importance in reporting on mistreatment of domestic workers. It found, for example, that between January 2008 and December 2010 half of the migrant domestic workers registered with them were subjected to psychological abuse from their employer, while 20 per cent were subjected to physical abuse.<sup>108</sup> However, not all these workers were trafficked, which suggests that the focus on trafficking may be diverting attention from other types of on-going human rights abuses.

Anti-Slavery International and the Institute for Human Rights and Business coordinated a specific initiative for the London Olympics entitled The Staff Wanted Initiative.<sup>109</sup> This project was conceived because of the strong anecdotal evidence of forced labour in the poorly regulated sectors of construction, domestic work, cleaning, catering and hospitality. The police commended this initiative, particularly for identifying the risk, but also as a useful model of constructive

engagement with business. It helped business identify who is controlling cheap labour, how it is coming in and how much they were getting paid.

Such an initiative seems to have been a useful corrective to potentially exploitative practices within particular sectors of labour. The focus was on workers' rights rather than anti-immigration, trafficking or the abolition of any particular sector of work. It is an example of good practice that could perhaps, in future, integrate other sectors of work, in particular, the sex industry in order to regulate its norms and practices.

In addition to the exploitation taking place in the UK, it is important to draw attention to the global outsourcing of labour, which does not necessarily involve trafficking but within which women work in often exploitative conditions. As Beate Andrees, head of the Special Action Programme to combat Forced Labour at the International Labour Organisation (ILO), writes in the Guardian on 3 April 2013:

Much of the attention has focused on trafficking in persons in recent years, without addressing the broader dimensions of labour exploitation and coercion as well as their root causes. This has often led to a piecemeal approach where one set of measures is privileged over another. There is broad consensus among experts that prevention measures should receive greater attention but there is less agreement on what these measures should entail.

Attention was drawn to such issues during the course of the London Olympics, specifically by the Playfair 2012 Project, an international campaign that began in the run up to the Athens 2004 Olympics and continued during Beijing 2008. The UK Playfair 2012 campaign was coordinated by the Trade Unions Congress and Labour Behind the Label and was supported by a large number of trades unions and NGOs, including Anti-Slavery International, War on Want and People & Planet. Playfair was highly influential in its engagement with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and

107 Institute for Conflict Research, 2011. Forced labour in Northern Ireland. South Tyrone Empowerment Programme. Available at: [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)

108 Kalayaan, 2011. Policies that work to protect migrant domestic workers. London. Available at: <http://www.kalayaan.org.uk/documents/ANNUAL%20REPORT%2010-11.pdf>

109 See <http://www.staff-wanted.org/>

Paralympic Games (LOCOG) with regard to the issue of forced labour and the risks of labour exploitation related to the Games, particularly with regard to establishing some scrutiny of supply chains.

Alongside Playfair, these issues were also taken up by the multi-agency Human Trafficking and London 2012 Network. Although this Network was originally set up to consider the risks of trafficking associated with the London Olympic and Paralympic Games, its campaigns were focused on the broader issues of forced labour and human rights, rather than on a more restrictive definition of trafficking. As Anti-Slavery International points out, such an analysis is of prime importance because such supply chains extend 'into poor and undemocratic countries of the world where corruption is high, rule of law is poor and hence labour abuses are rife'.<sup>110</sup>

The individual CSO that made the most high-profile effort to force the issue of labour exploitation on to the public agenda during the Games was War on Want.

### The War on Want Campaign

A major focus of War on Want's campaign was the exploitation of the mainly female workforce of the major multinational sportswear manufacturers, such as Adidas, Nike and Puma. The Games provided a great opportunity for these big corporations not only to increase their merchandise sales but also to boost their public image and public recognition of their international brands. The multinational that invested most heavily in the London Olympics was the German company, Adidas, whose logo was everywhere, as an article in the Independent reported:

Herbert Hainer, the Adidas chief executive, explains: 'About 3,000 athletes in every sport will be wearing our shoes or clothes; every sport except horse-riding. Adidas has had champions wearing our

shoes ever since Adi Dassler [the founder] designed the first-ever running shoe. He took the first pair from Germany to Amsterdam in 1928 for Lina Radke to wear. She won gold for the 800m.'

Adidas has been decking out athletes at the Olympics ever since, and is one of the main sponsors this year in London. Mr Hainer says the company has spent £100m on sponsorship, marketing and advertising since the Games were first announced in 2007. It looks cheap at the price —Adidas is everywhere.<sup>111</sup>

What Mr Hainer was not so keen to talk about was the wages it pays to its workers, mainly women, who make its sportswear. However, largely because of the campaign run by War on Want, it was an issue that the Chief Executive repeatedly had to deal with in his interviews with journalists, as indeed happened in the interview quoted above:

Some say Adidas is not giving its overseas workers enough to feed their families. War on Want campaigners have been putting 34p price tags – the minimum hourly rate for workers in Indonesia – on Adidas products in their stores and protesting outside the Stratford Park against the low rates allegedly paid to workers for sweatshop Games merchandise.<sup>112</sup>

Mr Hainer knocks down the claims: 'It's completely false. It's a lie. We pay double the local rate for our workers – and we have assembly and manufacturing in many, many countries around the world where we work with non-governmental organizations on meeting the local rates and conditions.'<sup>113</sup>

The fact that War on Want helped set the agenda in interviews with Adidas officials was in itself, an indication of the effectiveness of its campaign. War on Want was campaigning to improve the rights of all garment workers, women and men, in the supply chains but it repeatedly pointed out that women make

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110 Anti-Slavery International Evaluation report for CAWN 2013 (unpublished)

111 Pagano, M. £100m in sponsorship – and the Olympics have Adidas written all over them, Independent 25 July 2012: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/100m-in-sponsorship-and-the-olympics-have-adidas-written-all-over-them-7973367.html>

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.

up the vast majority of the world's garment workers. In Bangladesh, for instance, 85 per cent of the three million workers in the garments industry are women. Moreover, War on Want highlighted the added burdens on women, linked to deeply entrenched cultural norms in many garment-producing countries, which require women to assume responsibility for most of the domestic work, as well as taking care of their families.

War on Want used a variety of tools to get its message across. One – probably the most effective campaigning tool used by any of the CSOs examined for this report – was a brief video in which an English woman, called Jeanette, describes her appalling working conditions and abuse at the hands of her employers. In the video, she recounts that her manager frequently slaps her across the face. She relates how, despite working long hours, she can barely feed her children with her wages and she describes how, on one occasion, she went for three months without being paid. In spite of this mistreatment, she is frightened of losing her job if she protests. This is a shocking testimony for a UK audience, who imagines that Jeanette is talking about her life in a UK factory, but, at the end of the video, it is revealed by Jeanette says that she is describing the life of Anisha who works in an Adidas sweatshop in a poor developing country. The video ends with the message: 'Exploitation is not OK here. It's not OK anywhere.' It's a powerful message, powerfully delivered. The video makes complex global trade and women workers' rights issues tangible and relevant, securing over 18,500 views during the campaign.

The campaign also engaged in traditional actions by calling on its supporters to email or send a card to Herbert Hainer, the CEO of Adidas. As a result, 2,244 people sent emails and 875 people returned completed action cards. War on Want also held demos outside

ADIDAS stores,<sup>114</sup> covered by the BBC,<sup>115</sup> and persuaded a minor celebrity – Glastonbury Festival founder, Michael Eavis, – not only to make a sizable donation but also to publicly support their campaign. Eavis told the BBC: 'The only sweat we want to see at the 2012 London Olympics should come from the athletes.' He added: 'The abuse of workers in sweat shops runs totally counter to the Olympic ideal of fairness, and no companies found guilty of such abuse should be part of the games.'<sup>116</sup>

Along with these tried and tested forms of action the campaign also developed new ways for supporters to engage with the issues. One was to get supporters to go into shops and attach tags to Adidas products, as was mentioned in the article in the Independent. These tags were designed to look like the company's own tags but, instead of giving the price, they contained information about the working conditions of the people making the goods and explained what action shoppers could take to help to an end such exploitation. The action was not technically illegal but it had an element of subversion and risk. Taking part in the tagging actions required both time and effort, thereby reinforcing a sense of personal commitment to the campaign. War on Want reports that the price tag action was a great success, exceeding expectations, with over 15,000 tags distributed to supporters around the country and with tags applied to Adidas products across the country from Exeter to Edinburgh. The tag campaign was covered briefly in the Metro<sup>117</sup> and the Telegraph<sup>118</sup>. Another tactic was to beam a 65-foot-high image on a building overlooking Olympic Park, as the 80,000 crowd left the stadium after the men's 100m final. The image, which bore Adidas's three stripes, had the slogan: 'Exploitation – not OK anywhere'.<sup>119</sup> It was an example of what admen call 'guerrilla tactics', in that it ambushed the public, turning the expected slogan on its head.

114 War on Want, New Olympic protest targets Adidas, 4 August 2012. <http://www.waronwant.org/news/press-releases/17618-new-olympic-protest-targets-adidas>

115 BBC, London 2012: War on Want criticises Adidas 'sweatshops', 7 June 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-18348247>

116 BBC, Glastonbury's Michael Eavis backs 'sweatfree' Olympics, 27 July 2011. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-somerset-14317045>

117 Metro, Adidas hit by Price tag protest over third world workers, 14 July 2012: <http://metro.co.uk/2012/07/14/adidas-hit-by-price-tag-protest-over-third-world-workers-494375/>

118 Bowater, D. Olympic sponsor adidas to be targeted by sweatshop protesters. Telegraph, 7 June 2012: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/olympics/news/9316697/Olympics-sponsor-adidas-to-be-targeted-by-sweatshop-protesters.html>

119 Malik Chua, J. Sweatshop Protestor Project Anti-Adidas Video on Olympic Park Building. Ecousterre, 8 July 2012. <http://www.ecouterre.com/sweatshop-protestors-project-anti-adidas-video-message-on-olympic-park-building/>

## Section Three

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War on Want worked with a filmmaker and the marketing company Media Gang to create the projection. 'Our aim was to create an image that would get shared widely on social media, which we definitely got', said Murray Worthy, War on Want's senior economic justice campaigner. 'We wanted it to raise awareness and put pressure on Adidas. The overall cost of the project was in the low thousands, and we're pleased with that because of the impact it made.' The first tweets about the projection were re-tweeted more than 500 times and a twitpic made the following day has been viewed more than 6,000 times. A video swiftly uploaded to YouTube was seen nearly 8,000 times and two Facebook posts about it were viewed more than 32,000 times and shared more than 500 times.<sup>120</sup>

As previously noted, War on Want was part of the UK Playfair Campaign 2012, the main objective of which was to get London 2012 to deliver on its earlier promises:

- to provide information about workplace rights and national laws to workers in its supply chains;
- to provide training to workers in the supply chain about their rights and how to complain if their rights were violated;
- to work with Playfair 2012 and the International Olympic Committee to ensure progress on respecting workers' rights is built on from games to games.

War on Want and the other members of Playfair used tried and tested tactics to get LOCOG (London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games) to meet them. One of these involved turning up with big delegation of trade union leaders at the LOCOG headquarters and when LOCOG refused to meet them, tipping off a couple of film crews to come and film their improvised demonstration. As a result of this tactic, LOCOG immediately changed its mind and received them.<sup>121</sup>

In its own assessment of its success, the UK Playfair 2012 campaign concluded:

As a result of engagement with Playfair 2012, LOCOG has required suppliers and licensees to comply with internationally- recognized labour standards (such as the ETI - Ethical Trading Initiative -Base Code) and has developed a complaints mechanism so that violations of the code can be reported, investigated and resolved. LOCOG has also signed an agreement with the Playfair 2012 campaign to publish 70% of the locations of remaining production sites; set up a worker hotline; deliver trainings on rights for workers in key supplier factories; and work with independent evaluators to write up lessons learnt and best practice developed in London to pass on to Rio games organisers.

Much of this is too little too late. Although the majority of production has already taken place, LOCOG is only now in the process of developing training for some workers, and workers across its supply chain have not been made aware in their local languages of their rights or how to use the complaints mechanism. LOCOG disclosed some of its supply chain locations in March, mainly in the UK and China, meaning that it is impossible for local unions elsewhere to verify its claims that its suppliers are respecting the human rights of workers.

Overall, LOCOG has gone further than any other Games organiser in taking steps to protect workers' rights. It is vital that the Rio Organising Committee builds on LOCOG's progress and makes advances where LOCOG has fallen short. Playfair 2012 continues to engage with LOCOG outstanding issues.<sup>122</sup>

Given the imaginativeness and effectiveness of the War on Want campaigning tactics, they received relatively modest coverage in the press. It is clearly far harder

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120 Rawstone, A. Case Study: War on Want. Third Sector, 11 September 2012. <http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/Communications/article/1148893/case-study-war-want/>

121 War on Want, No Olympics sweatpots!, n.d.. <http://www.waronwant.org/campaigns/love-fashion-hate-sweatshops/playfair-2012/17267-no-olympics-sweatshops>

122 See <http://www.playfair2012.org.uk/what-we-want/from-london/>

nowadays to interest the media in the 'boring' question of labour exploitation in poor countries than in the 'sexier' topic of sex trafficking. War on Want's most successful media achievement was to get double-page spread in the Observer for its report, the 'Race to the Bottom', published in March 2012 in the run up to the Olympics. The article began:

Workers producing sportswear for Olympic sponsors Adidas, Nike and Puma are beaten, verbally abused, underpaid and overworked in Bangladeshi sweatshops, a shocking investigation has discovered.

Workers for all three companies had been physically abused. In one Puma supplier, two thirds of the workers interviewed had been beaten, slapped, pushed or had their hair pulled by their managers.

Women working for all Adidas and Nike factories reported sexual harassment and workers for all three companies had to work illegally long hours for less than the minimum wage.<sup>123</sup>

The Observer sought a response from Adidas:

Adidas said: 'All our suppliers in Bangladesh are subject to regular audits, including monitoring visits by a women's NGO, which interviews workers and examines workplace conditions. We also run a telephone hotline to address worker complaints.'<sup>124</sup>

However, the subsequent collapse of a large building in Bangladesh housing factories making clothes for Benetton, Primark, Matalan, Mango and other major brands, in which over 1,100 mainly female workers' lives were lost, casts serious doubts on the veracity of such claims.

So what conclusions can one reach? War on Want achieved the press coverage it got by 'playing the media game'. It knew what the media wanted and made an effort to provide it with stories, without compromising in its message. It created events, such as the demo outside LOCOG; it came up with gimmicks, such as the tagging of Adidas products; it

used celebrities; and it strategically placed its message in places where it could not be ignored (such as the giant projection on the building overlooking the Olympic Park). As a result of all these efforts, War on Want representatives were frequently interviewed on television and radio. However, the campaign was not extensively covered in the print media. So, one lesson that can be drawn from this experience is that adopting a conventional media strategy is not guaranteed to provide adequate publicity. CSO campaigns also need to apply a wide array of campaigning techniques for mobilizing supporters and putting direct pressure on multinationals and the government. Both of War on Want's most effective actions – to produce the video and to tag Adidas products – were not geared principally at gaining media coverage but at mobilizing supporters and putting pressure directly on Adidas. Social media also played a key role.

Although the press was not systematically monitored for its coverage of labour exploitation around the Olympics, which fell outside the main scope of this study, a fairly cursory examination suggests that War on Want's experience was not exceptional. Relatively few stories linked to labour issues were covered by the press during this period. Two concerned exploitation of volunteers as free labour. In the one case, this was by the Olympics authorities and in the other case, by the BBC, which was accused of asking 500 of its staff to work for free. There was also considerable coverage of a report published by Playfair, which condemned 'severe workers' rights violations' in four Chinese factories. This paucity of press coverage on the issue of labour exploitation stands in stark contrast to the extensive coverage of stories involving alleged 'sex trafficking'.

Concerns about media coverage aside, it is also worth asking about the impact of these campaigns on government policy. War on Want's campaign achieved a high level of success in terms of raising awareness of labour exploitation and (the lack) of corporate responsibility but did it have an impact on policy? It is to concerns about that we turn in the final section.

123 Chamberlain, G. Olympic brands caught up in abuse scandal. The Observer 3 March 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2012/mar/03/olympic-brands-abuse-scandal>

124 Ibid.

## Conclusions and recommendations

This report has provided an overview of some of the narratives about migration, immigration trafficking and exploitation of women in relation to the London Olympics. In this section some observations are made about the need for a more integrated narrative or holistic approach and the imperative for coordinated advocacy and campaigning by CSOs, not just for changes in legislation but also for changes at the level of political ideology. This section also includes reflections on the role and responsibilities of the media. The report ends with some key recommendations for interventions around future sporting events.

### The imperative for a human rights and global justice approach

As noted in the first section, many of the dominant narratives circulating about migration, immigration, trafficking and exploitation of women stem from exaggerated and largely unsupported claims made by Members of Parliament, government ministers and/or other senior public servants. Such claims, further sensationalized by a compliant media, have often been used to stoke up a sense of fear and panic at the prospect of the country being run over by 'floods' or 'hordes' of migrants.

By contrast, the diverse narratives that were put forward by various CSOs over the Olympic period for

the most part did not achieve the same level of visibility and circulation, despite their success at mobilizing public support as a result of their often innovative use of a wide variety of social and other media.

As this report has argued, the issues of migration and trafficking require a more 'holistic' approach. While this is understood by most of the CSOs examined in this report, each organization tends to prioritise different aspects of the debate and their capacity to make their voices heard varies considerably from one to the other. In the case of War on Want, for example, this organization prioritized the imperative for labour rights during the Games and managed to achieve comparatively good coverage in the broadcast media. By contrast, the campaigns waged by LAWRS, which focused on the need for a more holistic approach to the issue of trafficking, did not gain much visibility. X: talk's convincing campaign achieved moderate success and struck a chord with other counter-narratives already circulating in the public domain, but it had very limited success in terms of achieving policy change.

Besides the issue of capacity and focus, most CSOs also face funding constraints. Funding, like policy, has its own imperatives and narratives and CSOs are constantly forced to jostle to meet the criteria for topics deemed by funders to be most 'deserving'. Yet, in light of press complicity with government in obscuring and distorting the impact of government policies and their effect on increasing global inequalities and injustice, it is more imperative than ever that CSOs work together to increase their visibility and impact.



The findings of this report illustrate the way that policies about trafficking and migration are made and narrated by politicians and law-makers according to political imperatives rather than any notion of human rights or global justice. As Bridget Anderson concisely puts it, trafficking:

mystifies labour and labour relations, it mystifies immigration and immigration controls, it essentialises gender and childhood, it confuses and obfuscates, and importantly it also acts against the interests of many that it purports to serve....It is not only that the authority of the state has to be invoked in order to protect the rights of the Victim of Trafficking (VoT), but that the state is directly and inescapably the source of the vulnerability and that the means of protection for VoT, border controls, directly and inescapably heighten that vulnerability.<sup>125</sup>

Revealing the charade behind the rhetoric and challenging these political imperatives, by communicating an integrated and holistic narrative about the issues, is of key importance for effective intervention and change. The findings of the report highlight some important lessons in relation to the achievement of this objective.

The example of the Playfair 2012 campaign reveals the importance of working with a variety of CSOs, of high-level campaigning and of continuity and pressure over time. Strategic use of the media, particularly at key junctures is also of prime importance. For example, it was noted that Playfair's early difficulties in engaging with LOCOG on issues relating to the supply chain or operations of the Games changed when the Sun newspaper published the results of an investigation that indicated the presence of forced labour in the supply chains for goods for the London Olympics<sup>126</sup> and Playfair 2012 published its second report detailing a series of abuses in factories supplying LOCOG.<sup>127</sup> As

was noted by Anti-Slavery International:

The shift from hypothetical risk to actual scandal finally galvanized action by LOCOG to collaborate more meaningfully with partners to establish a credible complaints and scrutiny mechanism on the Olympics supply chain.

As well as such evidence of good practice, focused campaigning for legislative change and the judicial use of media to 'encourage' institutional bodies to take heed, there is also a need to challenge often entrenched ideology and rhetoric. A global justice approach, that prioritizes the human rights of all, rather than a minority of state designated 'victims', and an approach that contextualizes migration, immigration and trafficking within the context of global insecurity (heightened by the UK's trade and development policies), carries a much stronger message to the public as well as to Westminster. As part of this narrative, sex work needs to be conceptualised as work, in order that the human rights of all women can be protected, not just those who work in an occupation that sits easily with the electorate. To this end, CSOs and governmental bodies need to work together, ideological differences notwithstanding, to ensure a more integrated and holistic approach to these issues.

In the words of feminist scholar Showden<sup>128</sup>, we should [discard the binary conceptions of women as 'victims' and 'heroes' and instead] look at 'the ways in which agency actually develops in all its messy, complicated and compromised inglorious drudgery'. Snyder-Hall similarly argues for a feminism that is inclusive, pluralistic and non-judgmental and that has a deep respect for women's self-determination.<sup>129</sup> In this context, governmental and non-governmental organizations would do well to discard their personal moralities with regard to sex work, and to listen to the voices of the women involved.

125 Anderson, B., op.cit.

126 Jones, D. & Chamberlain, G., Olympic Slaves. The Sun, 19 January 2012. <http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/features/4070879/Olympic-mascot-toys-retailing-at-20-made-by-Chinese-workers-getting-26p-an-hour.html>

127 Playfair, 2012. Fair Games. Human rights of workers in Olympic 2012 supplier factories. Available at: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/tucfiles/291.pdf>

128 Showden, C., 2011. Choices Women Make: Agency in Domestic Violence, Assisted Reproduction, and Sex Work. University of Minnesota Press.

129 Snyder-Hall, R.C., 2010. Third-Wave Feminism and the Defense of "Choice". Perspectives on Politics 8, pp 255-261.

### The role of a responsible press

Despite some examples of 'responsible' reporting, this review of press coverage of these issues in the British media in the lead up to the 2012 London Olympics revealed many shortcomings and misleading reporting, mostly in the tabloid press, but also to a lesser extent in the broadsheet papers.

Many tabloids indulge in 'lazy' journalism, often pandering to the perceived prejudices of their readers. They latch on to stereotypes, suggesting, for instance, that the Roma women who arrived in Marble Arch were prostitutes and beggars, without first checking their facts. In doing so, they target the victims and completely fail to explore and report on the social problems that push communities, such as the Roma, to travel to London. Even when they clearly get a story wrong – as they did when they predicted that London would be 'flooded with sex slaves' – the tabloids do not apologize or attempt to correct the record. Instead, they press on to the next story, which they will report with new misconceptions and half-truths.

On the other hand, there are the broadsheets and the BBC. They investigate their stories, they try to establish the facts, they attempt to see the broader picture, and they are less reluctant to admit it when they get things wrong. They produced some good reports on sex exploitation and sex trafficking during the period under investigation. But even the broadsheet journalists tend to be unduly influenced by the politicians and policy-

makers in the agendas they pursue, rather than talking to people at the grassroots. There are also examples of reporters who fail to check their facts adequately before going to press.

In sum, as argued in the preceding sections, for the most part, the press coverage of the issue of migration to the UK and its causes is both biased and lacking in a holistic perspective. Sensationalist press coverage, not only exaggerates the problem, but also fails to recognize the driving role of poverty and other root causes of migration to this country and elsewhere.

According to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women:

The root causes of migration and trafficking greatly overlap. The lack of rights afforded to women serves as the primary causative factor at the root of both women's migrations and trafficking in women. While such rights inevitably find expression in constitutions, laws and policies, women nevertheless continue to be denied full citizenship because governments fail to protect and promote the rights of women ... By failure to protect and promote women's civil, political, economic and social rights, governments create situations in which trafficking flourishes<sup>130</sup>.

Responsible press coverage of these issues must be embedded within a global justice framework and in the absence of such an approach, misrepresentation and falsification of migrant realities will always persist.

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130 Pearson, E., 2000. *Global Human Rights and Trafficking in Persons: A Handbook*, Bangkok, Global Alliance Against Traffic In Women (GAATW).

## Recommendations for future sporting events

This report has put forward the need for an integrated narrative that takes account of global inequalities and that views the phenomena of trafficking and migration within this context. As part of this, it is clear that trafficking legislation mostly hinders, rather than protects, the rights of those in exploitative situations and that a wider focus on forced labour and the rights of all migrants would be a more effective approach.

Drawing on the findings and analysis presented in this report, the following recommendations have been drawn up for the major stakeholders involved in future sporting events:

- Agencies should carry out their own research, based on sound investigative principles, rather than letting an ill-informed media set their agenda.
- Whenever possible, agencies should work together to develop a common agenda: a multi-agency, joined-up approach is more effective than CSOs working alone.<sup>131</sup>
- CSOs must create 'media events' to get their issues covered in the mainstream media.
- CSOs must use social media to mobilize their supporters independently of the mainstream media.
- Policy-makers should be encouraged to protect the human rights of all women, whatever their occupation and whatever their migrant status, and this should include listening to sex workers rights organizations.
- Governments should be encouraged to comply with international laws that protect the rights of migrants both in general and within the labour market.
- Corporations who stand to benefit from the sporting events should be encouraged to disclose their supply chains and to ensure workers' rights wherever the outlets are located.

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131 See <http://www.playfair2012.org.uk/what-we-want/from-london/>

# ANNEX

## Using intersectional analysis to tackle trafficking and exploitation of women

*This is a summary of a longer briefing paper prepared by Virginia López Calvo which is available from CAWN.*

There is a long-standing debate on the issues of trafficking and exploitation of migrant women related to concepts such as 'choice' in relation to income-generation options, 'voluntary' and 'non-consensual migration' and, more broadly, drawing the line "dividing forced labour, in the strict legal sense of the term, from extremely poor working conditions".<sup>132</sup> Exploitation can be defined as:

**Forced labour:** work that is extracted from a person through threats of violence, withholding of passport, non-payment, provision of false information about legal and employment rights.

**Labour exploitation:** work used to unfairly benefit the interests of an employer, typically from overwork or underpayment. Often working conditions do not comply with existing labour standards and regulations.

Those working to support women migrants who are abused and exploited know from their experience that the complexity of each case makes it difficult to accurately measure degrees of vulnerabilities, of deception and coerciveness in the person's recruitment and of exploitative conditions of work. The debate over the definitions of 'trafficking' and 'exploitation' of women can be entered from different angles although advocates' discourses vary widely and are not necessarily comprehensive and all-encompassing of these outlined below.

### Trafficking and exploitation as a prostitution / sex-work issue

Trafficking and exploitation of migrants in the sex-industry occur to a large extent due to the stigmatization and illegality associated with prostitution. They call for decriminalization of sex-work (the recognition of the trade/activity as work) and other measures that would ensure women who work in the sex-industry have their labour rights guaranteed and that exploitative practices would surface much more easily.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, those who see prostitution as inherently exploitative deem all women in the sector as exploited.<sup>134</sup> Trafficking policies tend to focus on sexual violation rather than forced labour<sup>135</sup> and sex work is frequently confused with trafficking.<sup>136</sup>

### Trafficking and exploitation as a labour issue

The demand for cheap and unprotected labour, in a global economic context that keeps pushing wages and other labour standards downwards, has been highlighted as a major and structural force. In the case of migrants, particularly undocumented migrants, precarious migration status often precedes their rights as workers, often risking deportation.

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132 O'Connell Davidson, J., 2006. Will the real sex slave please stand up?, *Feminist Review* 83: p. 9

133 x:talk project, 2010. Human Rights, Sex Work and the Challenge of Trafficking. Human rights impact assessment of anti-trafficking policy in the UK.

134 O'Connor, M. & Healy, G., 2006. The Links between Prostitutions and Sex Trafficking: A Briefing Handbook, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women and European Women's Lobby.

135 Bernstein, E., 2004. Crossing Borders for Sex: the New Global Panic around "Trafficking in Women" Nordic Baltic Project. 2008. Trafficking in Women for Sexual Exploitation, European Women's Lobby

136 Ham, J., 2011. What's the cost of a rumour?, Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women. English Collective of Prostitutes, Anti-trafficking - A justification for an increase in deportations and a moralistic crusade against prostitution, n.d.

Anti-trafficking measures, both those of civil society and governments, mainly focus on supporting a person after trafficking occurs and limited attention has gone to the push and pull factors that force women to seek employment elsewhere and to use risky means to migrate.<sup>137</sup>

### Trafficking and exploitation as a migration issue

Restrictive migration policies play a role in forcing many immigrants looking for livelihoods into the control of traffickers and to unsecure immigration status that increases their vulnerability to exploitation of different kinds.<sup>138</sup> The vulnerabilities generated by the mere process of migration, such as isolation, limited social networks, lack of knowledge of rights and the indigenous language, are also factors at the source of trafficking and exploitation of migrants.<sup>139</sup>

### Trafficking and exploitation as a criminal networks issue

This is an aspect often stressed by government agencies. Policies derive from this stance usually call for capacity-building of law enforcement officials, cross-border cooperation of police forces, and strengthening intelligence gaps; there is a strong focus on prosecuting traffickers and dismantling organized crime networks. Measures proposed in an international framing of the issue, stress the role of criminal networks and the need for protection of migrants such as “awareness raising measures which highlight the dangers of trafficking, work designed to build capacity in source and transit countries to deal with organised immigration crime” and “capacity building in a number of jurisdictions by helping to improve the investigation and prosecution of offences”. Combating poverty and social injustice through long-term development programmes is also referred to but not stressed sufficiently.<sup>140</sup>

### Trafficking and exploitation as a global economic justice issue

Unequal wealth distribution among countries, lack of economic opportunities, austerity measures and global trade and debt flows are key concepts to understand trafficking and exploitation of migrant women as a global economic justice issue.

Research suggests strategies for slowing trafficking: tackling governments’ corruption in both origin and destination countries, population control measures (poverty reduction and increase of educational opportunities) and tackling international inequalities in wealth

The connection between international neoliberal policies with migrant women’s labour exploitation<sup>141 142</sup> in the UK governments National Action Plan on Tackling Human Trafficking, does acknowledge the fact that in order to reduce supply trafficking must be tackled at source.

137 Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women. 2010. Beyond Borders: Exploring Links between Trafficking and Labour.

138 Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women, 2011. More “Trafficking”, Less “Trafficked”. Trafficking for Exploitation Outside the Sex Sector in Europe, GAATW Working Papers Series. Women in Development Europe. 2010. Women’s labour migration in the context of globalization. Nick Mai. 2010. Migrant Workers in the UK Sex Industry. Final Policy-Relevant Report, Institute for the Study of European Transformations. London Metropolitan University.

139 Anti-Slavery International et al, 2006. Trafficking for Forced Labour in Europe. Forced Labour. Report on a study in the UK, Ireland, the Czech Republic and Portugal’.

140 Home Office, 2009. Update to the UK Action Plan to Tackling Human Trafficking.

141 Franck, A. & Spehar, A., 2010. Women’s labour migration in the context of globalization, Brussels, Women in Development Europe.

142 Ibid

### Trafficking and exploitation as a gender issue

While global economic injustice and poverty makes whole populations more vulnerable, women are usually more exposed to such vulnerabilities due to gender discrimination and feminization of unemployment and poverty<sup>143</sup>.

The current UK Points Based System for migrants seeks to protect state security and reproduces inequalities by entrenching unequal access to opportunities between migrants considered 'high' and 'low-skilled' and by assigning traditionally female jobs, such those in the care and domestic sector, a low value<sup>144</sup>.

### Trafficking and exploitation as an ethnic/racial discrimination issue

Racism, xenophobia and prejudice against minority ethnic groups makes it much easier for employers, whether in the sex industry or any other sector, to tell themselves that exploitative labour practices are justified. The racially/ethnically "Other" worker does not count as fully human, and so can be used and abused in ways that same race/ethnicity workers cannot be. The migrant worker comes from an impoverished, "uncivilised", "backward" country, and so does not expect or deserve the rights, freedoms and respect that are due to local workers. Women and girls who belong to groups that are in general socially devalued, and socially, politically and economically marginalized are also devalued by both employers and clients, and thus socially constructed as the "natural" or "ideal" occupants of the lowliest positions in the sex industry<sup>145</sup>.

### Policy approaches in the UK

The UK government has adopted the UN Framework for Human Trafficking, the Palermo Protocol, as well as the EU instrument the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, of which the UK became a signatory in 2009. The UK framework reflects the main issues the government is concerned with: prostitution, criminality and illegal immigration regarding exploitation and trafficking of migrant women to and in the UK.

Most advocates from the voluntary sector in UK argue from one, or more than one, of the following discourses: prostitution as violence against women / female exploitation, labour rights (of sex workers in this case) and or migrants' rights. Discourses within civil society do not make the case for more stringent law enforcement and border control. Few do so from an international development or global economic justice stance.

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143 Nilanjana, R., 2006. Looking at Trafficking Through a New Lens.

144 Bhoomika, J., 2012. Sorted by skills, sealed by skill: "Low skilled" migrant workers and the Points Based System.

145 O'Connell Davidson, J., 2006. Men, middlemen, and migrants. The demand side of "sex trafficking".



This report is based on an extensive study of press coverage of trafficking and exploitation of women during the London Olympics 2012 and examines the range of narratives on these issues in the print media. Prior to and during the Olympics, and in general, media reports illustrate the very negative and stereotyped ways in which migrant women are portrayed, particularly in the tabloid press. 'Exploitation and Trafficking of Women' also includes an analysis of the campaigns mounted by five civil society organizations focussed on the exploitation of women in the context of the Olympics and, finally, makes recommendations that can be applied to other forthcoming global sporting events.

Dominant narratives conflate issues of trafficking with those of immigration and sexual exploitation and also frequently fail to employ the necessary analytical rigour as the 'moral panic' about trafficking during the Olympics was not backed up by any evidence. At the same time, very little attention is given to the global inequalities that drive women to seek a better life abroad or to the benefits the economies of richer countries enjoy because of the role of migrants in providing cheap labour.

CAWN believes that the problem of trafficking and exploitation of migrant women is a global problem requiring a global response.

**For over 22 years the London-based Central America Women's Network has worked to support the struggles of women in Central America. CAWN works in partnership with women's organisations in Central America, particularly those fighting for economic rights and the right to abortion, and those resisting violence against women and trafficking of women.**

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