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1. ABSTRACT

Human trafficking is a growing problem that concerns an increasing number of people worldwide. More than 90% of all countries have laws criminalizing human trafficking, but still have difficulties to tackle it (UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014, 1). The national governments, the international organizations (IOs) and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are trying to fight this problem, but their efforts are undermined by the loopholes of their data (Weitzer 2015, 84). Countries of origin of trafficking have additional difficulties addressing this problem because often they lack resources and skills concerning this topic.

This dissertation is an extension of my previous research on the topic, my master thesis. Carrying out a representative survey of the Moldovan population, I found that people from rural areas, with less education, with fewer economic resources, and from a lower social class are more informed about different aspects of human trafficking than urban and capital city inhabitants. These findings challenge the wide spread assumptions of the major counter-trafficking organizations in Moldova and they suggest that counter-trafficking organizations' prevention efforts, obviously, have been based on inaccurate assumptions. Therefore, I decided to explore further this phenomenon in Moldova.

This dissertation seeks to contribute to the scholarship on human trafficking by presenting a more rounded picture of human trafficking in Moldova, a country with some of the highest trafficking rates globally (IOM 2016; ILO 2015; Global Slavery Index 2013, 13; World Bank 2014, vii). One cannot get a fuller picture of human trafficking without looking at this problem from different angles. The angles, chosen for this dissertation, were to look at the present status of public perception of human trafficking in a country of origin and to evaluate

past research methods and approaches used in this field. My target audiences are the anti-trafficking organizations, policy makers, and academic researchers, and other social policy makers rather than criminal legislation agencies.

This dissertation fills a gap in human trafficking literature by using new methodologies to address the loopholes of data in this field, namely it is an empirical study (1), it is based on a representative sample of the Moldovan population (2), it applies a new approach to human trafficking (3), it addresses a ‘dark field’ of data (4), it counter-balances the ‘victim-centered’ data (5), and it selects an important object of research (6), which is a country of origin of a high number of trafficked victims.

I used a mixed methods research approach because the combination of qualitative and quantitative data helped to understand the broader aspects of perception of human trafficking in Moldova and to find answers to the following research questions: *Do counter-trafficking organizations have a rounded picture of human trafficking? Why do we need a complex picture of human trafficking to improve the anti-trafficking efforts? How can research in the field of human trafficking be improved?*

In part 8 of the dissertation, I found that people from a lower socio-economic class are less willing to migrate, while people from higher socio-economic classes are more willing to migrate. In this part I found support for the network theory of migration, namely that people with close family connections abroad are more willing to migrate compared to other groups. Additionally, previous work experience abroad also predicts a higher desire to migrate because people are familiar with living and working conditions abroad. On the opposite, perceived dangers abroad proved to decrease people’s willingness to migrate to a foreign country.

In part 9 of my dissertation, I found that the number of informative media sources and the frequency of news watching are accurate predictors of peoples' knowledge about human trafficking. Surprisingly, I found that the more sources of information people follow and the more frequent they watch news – the more likely they are to think that the rates of human trafficking are decreasing compared to previous years, which was not hypothesized. This is surprising since I expected that people who are more informed about human trafficking were prone to think that the rates of this problem were increasing, which is the official stance of the counter-trafficking organizations regarding the rates of human trafficking in Moldova.

In part 10 of my dissertation, I juxtaposed the counter-trafficking organizations' knowledge about this problem to the population's knowledge about human trafficking. All in all, the Moldovan public is well informed about different aspects of human trafficking and many of them think that the rates of this problem are high due to the bad economic situation rather than due to the lack of information. Unfortunately, most national and international anti-trafficking organizations do not share this view and continue to act on the assumption that people are trafficked because of the lack of awareness of this problem.

In part 11 of my dissertation, I found out that people from rural areas, from lower social and economic classes, with less education are more informed about human trafficking because they believe that they are more likely to be trafficked because they share the same characteristics with trafficked victims, this problem occurs in their communities, and they have been exposed to a lot of awareness campaigns on this topic.

While each part of this dissertation reports on distinct aspects of public perception of human trafficking, they are interrelated and interconnected and helped me develop an inductive theory explaining the overall findings, in part 13. My theory states that the lack of

communication between counter-trafficking organizations and the Moldovan public results in a dysfunctional relationship which undermines the anti-trafficking efforts of organizations to serve and provide help to people. On the one hand, organizations that do not know what people need and therefore fail to fully address those needs. On the other hand, people often do not trust counter-trafficking organizations and refuse to cooperate or seek help in trafficking situations. This lack of communication can lead to serious implications for anti-trafficking programs and policies. These empirical findings seek to serve as a useful reference for anti-trafficking policy makers, scholars, and legislators worldwide.

In part 14 of my dissertation, I make some suggestions as to policy reforms and recommendations based on the findings of this dissertation.

2. INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking affects all countries in the world, whether they are countries of origin, transit, or destination. It is often associated with modern-day slavery, sexual exploitation, forced labor, organized crime, migration failure, smuggling, and serious human rights violations. This social problem has been at the center of research and policy attention in varied fields – domestic and global security, politics, economics, human rights, migration, and public health (Dottridge 2008, 88-99).

According to Bales, over 27 million people are enslaved worldwide (Bales 2000, 462). Every year, thousands of people are trafficked in Europe alone (Konrad 2002, 261). According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), over 21 million people are trafficked, about 11.4 million females and 9.5 million males (ILO 2012, 1); about 19 million of victims are trafficked in the private sector and about 2 million are trafficked into the public sector. And up to 4.5 million people are trafficked in the sexual services industry (ILO 2012, 1-2)¹.

The human trafficking industry produces large profits; estimates vary from source to source. According to US government, human trafficking produces over USD 9.6 billion per year (US Government of State; NCJRS 2005, 13). According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the profit lies between USD 7 billion and USD 10 billion annually (UNICEF; Omelaniuk 2005, 3). According to the ILO, it generates over USD 44.3 billion per year (ILO; Belser 2005, iii). Forced labor alone generates more than USD 150 billion per year (ILO; Belser 2005, iii). The implications of using unchecked estimates are discussed later in the dissertation. While it is unclear how these numbers are estimated (Weitzer

¹ The source does not clarify what period of time it refers to.

2015), it is clear that the problem of human trafficking continues to raise concern among scholars, policy-makers, and civil society.

Definition of human trafficking

There have been debates over the definition of ‘human trafficking’. One of the most widely spread and internationally accepted definitions can be found in Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol²:

Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (Palermo Protocol 2000, Article 3)

Despite the above mentioned definition, human trafficking is associated with other phenomena such as slavery, sexual labor, organized crime, and migration failure, which are discussed in the section below.

Slavery

Slavery is defined in the Slavery Convention of the League of Nations as:

- (1) Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised. (2) The slave trade includes all acts involved in the capture, acquisition or disposal of a person with intent to reduce him to slavery; all acts involved in the acquisition of a slave with a view to selling or exchanging him; all acts of disposal by sale or exchange of a slave acquired with a view to being sold or exchanged, and, in general, every act of trade or transport in slaves (Slavery Convention 1926, 1).

² The Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (referred to as the Palermo Protocol) indicates the internationally accepted definition of human trafficking.

Slavery is defined as the process of owning 'another human being and exercise total control over that person' (Bales 2005, 4-5). Some argue human trafficking is a new form of enslavement that affects nations worldwide (Dottridge 2008, 99). Despite its prevalence, most countries forbid any kind of human exploitation (Bales 2005, 4). Nowadays, there are rare instances when people are sold and bought in a traditional way of slavery, but there are some common characteristics between a traditional and modern-day slavery (e.g. vulnerability, despair, victims treated as commodities) (Lee 2013).

Referring to human trafficking as *slavery* is a powerful statement, which has political and philosophical implications for the definition of human autonomy and lack of autonomy, between voluntary and forced labor, between paid and unpaid labor (Davidson 2010, 225). However, the set of elements undermining autonomy and freedom are not specific only to slavery, for example wives and children in some countries (Davidson 2006, 83).

'Dependency relationships, based upon race, sex and class, are being perpetuated through social, educational, and economic institutions. These are the linkages among Third World Women' (Lindsay 1980, 306). Lindsay argues that women in some developing countries are treated in ways that could be considered 'slaves' if one takes into consideration their dependencies (Mohanty 1988, 67). Women in developing countries struggle against class, race, and gender hierarchies and dependencies (Mohanty 1988, 67).

In Moldova, many people would fall under the category of 'slaves' 'according to this definition if we take into consideration issues arising from the right of ownership, wives and children (Davidson 2006, 6); even official employees can be classified as 'slaves' in some instances (Patterson 1982, Davidson 2005, Davidson 2006).

Modern-day slavery literature seems to refer to slavery as mainly labor exploitation, but without having defined boundaries between forced and voluntary unpaid labor (Davidson 2006, 83). However, it is more accurate to refer to slavery as one of the extremes of human trafficking rather than treating it as a separate isolated phenomenon (Littlefield 1998).

Human trafficking differs from slavery and other human and labor rights violations. Some scholars argue that referring to human trafficking as slavery does more harm than good because it limits the possibilities for effective political reforms and undermines the struggles, injustices, and exploitations experienced by many migrants (Davidson 2010, 245). Referring to human trafficking as slavery may result focusing only on extreme cases and ignoring all other forms of human trafficking.

Bales compares human trafficking to slavery while taking into consideration the distinctions between these issues (Bales 2000, 461). He argues that slavery still persists today. People get enslaved in many different ways, which differ from country to country, from region to region, from locality to locality. One common practice in slavery is bondage through debts, which oblige people to work without pay. Freedom, dignity and autonomy loss are specific for modern-day slavery (Bales 1999, 5). Modern-day slavery occurs in the grey zone of the job market, where people are often treated as disposable goods (Bales 1999, 4). Davidson and Bales mention wage slaves, which means that people are paid very little for their work according to the minimum paying regulations in the country where these practices occur. Wage slavery might be heavily criticized as being an illegal and unethical process, but it is not slavery because wage slaves are not owned, forced, or controlled by the person employing them; these people can choose to accept low wage or to refuse them (Bales 1999; Davidson 2006, 7). Bales fails to connect modern-day slavery to poverty and unemployment. He refers to slavery as a global

occurrence focusing on similarities across regions, cases, and institution, but fails to consider the local context and ignores the influence of social and cultural dimensions of this problem and institutions in each region analyzed.

At the same time Davidson raises additional philosophical questions about choices and poverty:

And setting up an opposition between 'total control' and 'choice' begs the question of how much choice, and choices between what? If debt - either real or fictional - is used as the means to control a worker, is this complete control or does the debtor have a choice about whether or not to comply with the demands of the person s/he is indebted to? Does an opportunity to quit represent a 'choice' even when it carries with it a risk of being reported to the immigration authorities and deported? (Davidson 2006, 7).

Sexual Exploitation

Human trafficking is predominantly associated with sexual exploitation (Anderson et al. 2008, 137). For many years, anti-trafficking efforts focused mainly on sex trafficking as it was seen as morally wrong and morally degrading. Trafficking of women in sex industry is also referred to as 'white slavery', which have increased public concern over migration safety of white women (Doezem1999, 24; Doezema 2010). The accounts of white slavery have been acknowledged as actual truths by many policy makers and scholars (Doezema 1999, 25; Irwin 1996, 4). At the same time, some academics doubt the extent of white slavery as it is represented by the moral crusade and prostitution abolition activist (Doezema 1999, 25; Doezema 2010).

Another explanation of an increased concern about sex trafficking can be that sexual workers are publicly more visible to civil society. As a result of increased concern over women

working in sex industry, a series of legislation/conventions have been passed³ (Doezema 1999, 25).

Sexual exploitation is different from sexual servitude or prostitution, but unfortunately these terms are often mixed up. There is a lack of progress and policy reforms focused on sex workers, sex slaves and human trafficking victims in general (Anderson et al. 2008, 138-139; Davidson 2006, 6). In addition, some scholars argue that most of the current feminist debate on prostitution does not take into consideration the rights of sexual workers, which is an important component that creates social and political inequalities. These inequalities influence market regulations, especially in prostitution (Anderson et al. 2008, 138-139; Davidson 2002, 84-85).

Sex work discourses vary across regions, therefore this issue has to be analyzed considering regional particularities, economic conditions, and globalization effects. These particularities play a role in determining factors facilitating the growth of sex industry. These discourses are used to criminalize prostitution and restrict immigration (Murray 1998, 414).

Feminist research on prostitution is divided between the *sex work* and the *abolitionist* movements, both sides are on the opposite side of the spectrum and fail to take into consideration people standing on the middle ground on this topic (Anderson et al. 2008, 138-139; Davidson 2002, 84). Over the last thirteen years, Davidson has found good arguments on the both sides of the debate, while conducting ethnographic and interview work (with prostitutes, with clients, and with those organizing prostitution, and clients) to research the issue of prostitution (Davidson 1998).

³ 1910 White Slavery Convention, 1919 Covenant of the League of nations, 1921 Convention for the Suppression of Traffic of Women and Children, 1930 Forced Labour Convention, 1933 Convention for Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of Exploitation of the Prostitution, 1949 Convention Concerning Migration for Employment, 1973 Migrant Workers Supplementary Provisions Convention, 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and 2000 UN Protocol for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children amongst other legislation (Trafficking in Persons in International Law 2015).

This essay argues that what is wrong with much contemporary Euro-American feminist debate on prostitution is that it disallows the possibility of supporting the rights of those who work in prostitution as workers, but remains critical of the social and political inequalities that underpin market relations in general, and prostitution in particular (Davidson 2002, 84-85).

Those concerned with the issue of prostitution focused on debates of over the moral aspects and attitudes towards sex work rather than discussing this issue from the perspective of migrants who decide to work as sex workers (Anderson et al. 2008, 139). Consequently, states' and scholars' opinions towards prostitution vary as well, polarized between *sex work* advocates and prostitution *abolition* advocates (Anderson et al. 2008, Davidson 2002).

Sex trafficking has become a politicized issue because of an increased concern over the morality and ethics of sex work in general (Anderson et al. 2008, Davidson 2002, Weitzer 2007).

Weitzer argues that the main pro and anti-sex work claims 'are problematic, unsubstantiated, or demonstrably false' (Weitzer 2007, 447) by looking at the social construction of sex trafficking and prostitution in the context of advocates pro/contra sex work. His analysis shows that the moral 'crusade's core claims regarding both trafficking and prostitution are generally quite dubious, yet activists have met with remarkable success in getting their views and demands incorporated in government policy, legislation, and law enforcement practices' (Weitzer 2007, 447). Moral crusades make false and inaccurate statements about the prevalence and nature of prostitution and sex work. Through a rigorous analysis of the diverse materials on this issue, Weitzer identified main claims used by moral crusades, which will be discussed in the sections below. 'Such claims are based on (1) an ideology that simply decrees that prostitution is immoral, a threat to marriage and the family, or oppressive to women; and (2) studies conducted by activists' (Weitzer 2007, 450).

For feminists advocating the abolition of prostitution, this phenomenon represents the male exploitation and domination of females (Dworkin 1997, Dworkin 1981, MacKinnon 1987, Weitzer 2007). For abolitionists prostitution is morally wrong, but this morality is not necessarily grounded in religious doctrines. However, there are instances when religious arguments against prostitution are obvious, especially for religious and conservative people (Barry 1979, Weitzer 2007). Kathleen Barry also advocates the abolition of prostitution:

We are really going back to the values women have always attached to sexuality, values that have been robbed from us, distorted and destroyed as we have been colonized through both sexual violence and so-called sexual liberation. They are the values and needs that connect sex with warmth, affection, love, caring...Sexual values and the positive, constructive experience of sex must be based in intimacy...Sexual intimacy precludes the proposition that sex is the right of anyone and asserts instead that it must be earned through trust and sharing. It follows then that sex cannot be purchased, legally acquired, or seized by force (Barry 1979, 227- 230).

Laura Lederer insists that this 'is not a legitimate form of labor. . . . It can never be a legitimate way to make a living because it's inherently harmful for men, women, and children... This whole commercial sex industry is a human-rights abuse' (Weitzer 2007, 451).

Prostitution is not only seen as an issue with violent incidents, but rather as an embodiment of violence itself, but there are no evidences that violence is persistent in prostitution (Weitzer 2007, 451- 452). Data on violence occurrence in prostitution are not representative because it is based on convenience samples rather than random samples (Weitzer 2005).

Prostitution abolition advocates claim that people buying sex are *sexual predators* abusing and dominating women and 'traffickers are vilified as predators, rapists, and kidnappers involved in organized crime and sexual slavery' (Weitzer 2007, 452). 'The central claim is that workers do not actively make choices to enter or remain in prostitution, and there is no such thing as voluntary migration for the purpose of sex work' (Rubin 1975; Weitzer 2007, 453).

Weitzer found different responses regarding ‘the degree to which workers feel exploited versus empowered and in control of their working conditions’ (Weitzer 2007, 453). There are limited reliable studies showing accurate evidences of voluntary and forced migration for the purpose of sex work, but some studies claim that a substantial proportion of migrants decided consciously to move abroad for sex work (Weitzer 2007, 453). A study of human trafficking from Eastern Europe to the Netherlands, based on 72 interviews with female sex workers, found that:

Few of the women were coercively trafficked, and that a “large number” had previously worked as prostitutes: For most of the women, economic motives were decisive. The opportunity to earn a considerable amount of money in a short period of time was found to be irresistible. . . . In most cases recruiting was done by friends, acquaintances, or even family members (Nijboer 2000, 383-384 quoted in Weitzer 2007, 453).

Prostitution and sex trafficking are often perceived as closely connected. Prostitution abolitionists argue that ‘prostitution more than anything else is the root cause of trafficking. Opposing trafficking without simultaneously fighting prostitution is seen as treating the symptom instead of the disease’ (Weitzer 2007, 454). Abolitionists want to use sex trafficking as an excuse to eliminate sex work and sex commercial industry altogether (Farley 2004, Leidholdt 2004, Raymond 2004, Weitzer 2007, 455). Moral crusades tend to exaggerate the size of this problem to attract media attention, to get donors and funding by providing usually unverifiable and inaccurate figures and numbers (Ben-Yehuda 2010, Weitzer 2007, 455).

A discussion of prostitution must accept the premise that prostitution as a phenomenon is the aggregate of social and sexual relations which are historically, culturally and personally specific. The only common denominator shared by the international community of prostitutes is an economic one: prostitution is an income generating activity (Murray 1998, 416).

Organized Crime

Organized crime refers to subnational and transnational corporate agencies that operate systematically outside the purview of law with the intention to turn in profits for its

members, especially the leaders. Organized crime is obviously illegal in nature, although it may have diverse connections both with the state agencies and legal markets (Väyrynen 2003, 2).

Human trafficking is categorized as an organized crime along with drugs and weapons trafficking. According to the United Nations (UN) agencies, organized crimes are the most profitable illegal activities lead by transnational criminal groups and have been placed in the organized crime framework by an UN convention⁴ (UN 2000, 41). As a result, many nations use this convention as the base for their anti-trafficking legislation. The reference to organized crime implies that border control needs to be strengthened, traffickers need to be punished, and explicit anti-trafficking legislation needs to be implemented (Bernasco 2004).

Mass media play a big role in portraying human trafficking as a serious organized crime, especially referring to sexual trafficking. Media reports on sex trafficking acts on assumptions that the majority of women are forced to work in the sex industry by the criminal groups (Murray1998, 421).

Human trafficking attracts organized crime due to prostitution prohibition and travel restrictions. 'Experts speak of syndicates systematically buying children from families in poor villages, of gangs working in cooperation with police and immigration officials to transport their purchases across national borders' (Murray 1998, 421).

There are several distinctions between the process of smuggling and trafficking. However, these two terms are often used interchangeably, which complicates the discourse on this topic. '[I]t is not easy to draw precise boundaries between the activities performed by those who are smuggled into Europe, whether they are provided such smuggling service by organized criminal groups or by officially registered agencies' (Ruggiero 1997, 238). Often, people can

⁴ 2000 UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime

move from the formal job market into the dark job market and the other way around. Unofficial and criminal activities exploited people for their own profit (Ruggiero 1997).

First, as we have seen, the trafficking in human beings generates profits in its own right, regardless of the firms and industries which eventually employ such human beings. In this case, profits are reaped by official or semi-official agencies, by organized criminal groups, and at times by joint ventures of these (Ruggiero 1997, 241).

‘Illegal immigration, including human smuggling and trafficking, is but an element of the larger problem of organized crime and the illicit global economy’ (Väyrynen 2003, 2).

It is important to distinguish between different types of organized crimes (trafficking of drugs, weapons, and human beings) and their particularities in each country. In Russia, for example, the organized criminal groups’ activities directly compete with the activities of the central government (Väyrynen 2003; Varese 2001, 6; Volkov 2002, 23). In the past years organized crime has ‘become more diverse in scope, more pervasive in its actions, and much more transnational in its reach’ (Väyrynen 2003, 2) and an organized crime ‘tends to be active in several countries, going where the opportunities are high and the risks are low’ (Väyrynen 2003, 2; Williams 2001, 60). Williams also points out that a transnational organized crime differs from a terrorist act as it tries to abuse ‘the weak legal and bureaucratic capacity and flawed politics of weak or failed states’ (Väyrynen 2003, 2; Williams 2002, 174).

Organized criminal groups have an active role in ‘illicit global economy’ by trafficking illegal goods and services transnationally:

Illicit global economy is a more narrow concept than, for instance, the underground economy or clandestine economy whose size is thus bigger and the mixture of illicit and licit elements is different. However, not even the illicit economy operates entirely on its own but it interacts in a number of ways with the licit economy and public agencies (Väyrynen 2003, 2).

National states have the power to criminalize transnational illegal activities, but often lack resources and skills to enforce and implement criminal legislation and regulation against

these organized crimes. The failure to enforce such legislation is due to the fact that the demand for illegal goods and services is very high (Väyrynen 2003, 2). Transnational criminals commit criminal acts when the government cannot implement criminal legislation '[t]he gap between the state's meta-political authority to pass prohibition laws and its ability to fully enforce such laws is the space where clandestine transnational actors operate' (Andreas et al. 1999, 11; Väyrynen 2003, 2; Williams 2002).

It is commonly assumed that the role of the organized crime syndicates is pervasive in illegal migration. However, many comments tend to confuse illegal migration and human smuggling/trafficking with each other which is less than helpful (this is done even by Global Report 1999: 223-25) (Väyrynen 2003, 3).

Mass media portray human trafficking organized criminal activity, which is not always the case. There are no doubts that organized criminal groups are involved in human trafficking, but 'many illegal human transfers can also take place without the criminal contribution' (Väyrynen 2003, 3). One should note that smuggling groups are often facilitated by relatives or acquaintances who have used before these services and not necessary involved in other type of traditional organized crimes (William 2001, William 2002).

Migration Failure

Human trafficking is also associated with migration failure. Existing migration trends, patterns, and legislation fail to protect migrants from being trafficked. Migration has two main by-products, human smuggling and human trafficking. Irregular migrants, economic crises, lack of stability and sustainable policies lead to migration failures. The migrants' exploitation has roots in economic, social, cultural, and legal explanations. Irregular migrants are more vulnerable to trafficking due to their unofficial or illegal status. Hence, irregular migrants often find themselves in grey areas of the labor market (Salt 2000, 32).

Migration is a political issue controlled by the governmental law regulation. Failure to regulate the process of migration leads to illegal and irregular migration of people across borders. 'Politicians tend to 'securitize' migration, and in particular illegal immigration, as a risk for the state which is regarded 'as a body or a container for the polity' (Väyrynen 2003, 3). Sometimes, migration is seen as dangerous 'for the integrity of the state and the nation, and thus a challenge to the principle of their sovereignty' (Bigo 2002, 68; Väyrynen 2003, 3).

Speaking in politico-economic terms, human trafficking is an economic activity treating people as commodities, where people are sold and used for the purpose of gaining profit (Väyrynen 2003). As we will see later, this definition refers to the *Economic Theory of Migration*, where trafficked people are commodities, traffickers are the suppliers, and demand in the destination country for cheap or even free labor (Anyaegbunam et al. 2015; Väyrynen 2003, 3).

In addition, the migrants turn themselves, often voluntarily, into transportable commodities because they expect to fetch in the target country a better price for their work. This creates a growing 'migration business' that has both legal and illegal elements. In fact, one may say, somewhat sarcastically, that people are a good commodity as they do not easily perish, but they can be transported over long distances and can be re-used and re-sold (Salt et al. 1997; Ghosh 1998, 23; Findlay 1999, 77; and Williams 1999 quoted in Väyrynen 2003, 3).

The Economic Theory of Migration has its benefits explaining some aspects of illegal migration, but it has some important implications at the same time. It simplifies 'the social and political environment' where human trafficking occurs and ignores factors and conditions causing it; it also ignores 'exploitative aspects of human trafficking which deprives its objects of any legal protection' (Väyrynen 2003, 3).

Some argue that having fully *open borders* in the international system is the solution to illegal migration and irregular people's movements (Balibar 2009, Bhagwati 2003). The border

control regulations determine the ways people cross these borders, ‘the more coercive and stricter the control, the more difficult it is for the undocumented migrants to enter the country’ (Dale 2001, 31; Väyrynen 2003, 3). Shortly, irregular migration is influenced by border control policies, ‘state boundaries and the intensification of their control by bureaucratic and paramilitary means increase the costs of entry to the migrants. To be able to cross the border, illegal immigrants may need the help of professional smugglers and their assistants’ (Teitelbaum 2001, 28; Väyrynen 2003, 3).

Stricter border control regulations increase the costs of migrating unofficially or illegally, hence increases the smugglers’ profits, ‘both the restrictive policies adopted by states and specific actions undertaken by the smugglers and traffickers affect the way in which the migration potential is actualized in international relations’ (Teitelbaum 2001, 28; Väyrynen 2003, 3). At the same time, some preventive migration policies can regulate and make safer the cross border movement of people (Ghosh 1998, 176; Väyrynen 2003, 3).

Speaking of illegal migration in Europe, especially to European Union from non-EU countries, some academics argue that the Schengen agreement has side effects on migration because it tightened the borders with its non-EU neighbors causing an increase in smuggling and irregular migration (Ghosh 1998, Teitelbaum 2001, Väyrynen 2003). *The Economist* magazine (1999) mentions that while Schengen agreement restricted the border regulation, the desirability of the Schengen area amplified because once an immigrant enters the Schengen area, the immigrant can move around very easy to other Schengen countries. Therefore, migrants who enter the Schengen area have broader spectrum of employment opportunities (The Economist 1999, Väyrynen 2003). ‘The free mobility of people within the Schengen area has not been yet

matched, however, by the EU harmonization of legislation pertaining to immigration and asylum' (Väyrynen 2003, 3).

Crime theories explaining human trafficking

This section will mention several crime theories explaining causes of human trafficking, in order to inform the readership about existing theoretical literature on human trafficking, although not all theories are used or tested in this dissertation.

Rational choice theory

Rational choice theory claims that traffickers decide to traffic people based on the assumption that benefits outweigh costs. According to this theory, actors take decisions after a careful analysis of the situation, circumstances, and all factors that might influence the outcome of the process for themselves and then they decide whether to commit the crime or not. Some factors taken into consideration by potential criminals are location, accessibility, and vulnerability of potential victims; ways to circumvent state authorities; and ways to avoid criminal justice. Some researchers say that traffickers are very different from each other depending on their skills, experience, reasons, and motivations to get involved in this organized crime (Lanier 2013, 2; Lanier 2004). Shortly, rational choice theorists think that three things are mainly important for explaining human trafficking: a rational decision making process, free will, and the cost-benefits ratio. Criminals identify their victims based on the assumption that the benefits are greater than risks involved, taking level of vulnerability of potential victims into account (Lutya 2012, 557).

Economic theory

This theory explains human trafficking taking into consideration activities, attitudes, motives, and behaviors to see if economic benefits outweigh costs involved in a crime (Anyaegbunam et al. 2015, 22). Potential criminal actors commit a crime if economic benefits are greater than risks involved. An important observation of these theorists is that lack of punishment encourages rise of human trafficking. It is one thing to be caught committing the crime and it is another thing to be prosecuted and punished for the committed crime. If the victims have no alternative means to earn a living or are afraid of the consequences of a report to the police, the risk for the traffickers is quite low. Traffickers as economists apply a self-maximizing approach during a decision-making process (calculating the costs and benefits of a potential crime) (Anyaegbunam et al. 2015, 22).

Demand theory

The demand theory looks at consumers' demand for goods/services depending on their prices. This creates the demand curve, which looks at consumers' desire for goods and services and the amount of that specific goods and/or services available at certain prices (Hicks 1986). Applying this theory to human trafficking, one can see that there is a continuous demand for cheap or even free labor and those willing to supply this demand. Demand theorists imply three main elements, (1) demand for exploited labor, (2) suppliers who provide people for exploitation, and (3) people who become the 'raw material' in this process (Lutya 2012, 557).

Victimology theory

Victimology theory explains human trafficking through the lenses of victims; it looks at the reasons why some people are more vulnerable to human trafficking than others. This theory looks at the lifestyle of victims and the relationship between victims and traffickers. According to this theory, there are three types of victims: innocent, who is forced into exploitation; precipitating, who stays with a romantic partner that exploits him/her to work in prostitution; and provocative, who choose this risky job on his/her own (Anyaegbunam et al. 2015, 22). Chances of victimization increase depending on how close is the relationship between the trafficker and the victim.

Constitutive criminology theory

Constitutive criminology theory states that crime is a product of society and human agents and that socio-cultural structures play a crucial role in this (Milovanovic et al. 2004, 228). Due to power relations and inequality, there are socially constructed differences that cause harm to social groups in subordination. The nature of crime is predicted based on the cultural and structural context of specific communities (Lanier 2013, 2; Lanier 2004). Constitutive criminologists claim, on the one hand, that traffickers are excessive investors in getting the desired outcome regardless of legal/ethical boundaries. And on the other hand, victims are weak subjects who are disadvantaged because of pain, loss, or humility (Milovanovic et al. 2004, 228). Cultural and structural contexts of victims can predict their vulnerability to human traffickers (Lanier 2013, 4; Lanier 2004).

Pull-push theory

This theory is the most frequently used theory among counter-trafficking organizations in Moldova (including the UN agencies and the IOM). According to this theory, economic insufficiency (poverty and unemployment), lack of information, gender inequality, and uninformed population represent the *push-factors* of human trafficking. Employment opportunity, relative prosperity and the prospect of a better life represent *pull-factors* of human trafficking. Other *push factors* include civil wars, collapse of political systems, and environmental disasters (Bales 2007, Jordan 2002).

Human trafficking of Moldovans

Moldova is primarily a country of origin of victims (IOM 2011, 5) and has some of the highest rates of human trafficking in the world (IOM 2016; ILO 2015; Global Slavery Index 2013, 13; World Bank 2014, 6). About 33.300 Moldovans are estimated to have been enslaved within the last years, which constitutes 0.94% of the overall population (UNGIFT; Global Slavery Index 2014, 18; Reuters 2013, paragraph 8). However, I would like to add that these estimates are replicated and cited by many scholarly studies without being questioned – this is highly controversial considering the small number of identified victims and unknown methods of estimation used to generate extremely exaggerated numbers.

Moldova has the lowest GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in Europe. A poor economic situation is a push factor for migration. In 2001, remittances⁵ of emigrated Moldovans constituted 23% of the Moldovan GDP (Global Slavery Index 2013, 54). Moldovans migrate

⁵ Amount of money Moldovan migrants send to their families back home.

mainly to Ukraine and Russia. The US, Israel, Germany, and Belarus are also popular destinations. In 2008, about 29.500 Moldovans were trafficked in the labor sector alone, according to the ILO (ILO 2015, 14).

In 2009, about 600.000 Moldovans of working age migrated abroad (IOM FAQ, 2012). According to the IOM statistics on migration, men prefer construction work in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries and women prefer the service sector in the EU region and Turkey. Moldovan migrants subsidize their communities at home by supporting educational institutions and infrastructure in Moldova. But in the last few years, remittances have been reduced due to the prevailing economic crisis (Saaristo 2009, 8).

Transnistria, a break-away territory, further complicates this problem. The Moldovan central government lost control over Transnistria in 1990, after its declaration of independence. Transnistria's independence is neither recognized by Moldovan authorities nor by the international community. *De jure*, Transnistria is a part of Moldova, but not *de facto*. The region has its own government, and parliament in Tiraspol (the region's capital city), its own military, currency, and infrastructure. It is speculated that Transnistria is a focal point for trafficking of people, arms, and drugs. But these speculations have not been proved by any evidence since counter-trafficking organizations have limited access to the region (Saaristo 2009, 10).

All numbers and statistic data cited in this section regarding Moldova have been provided by the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking (GRETA)⁶. In 2011, 154 victims were identified; in 2012 – 290 victims; in 2013 – 262 victims; in 2014 – 264 victims; and in 2015 – 310 victims were identified (GRETA 2016, 3). Of these victims, 70% were women and 13% were minors. In 2015, 45% of victims were exploited in sexual servitude; 44% of victims were exploited in forced labor (an increase of 15% since 2011); and 9% of victims were exploited for

⁶ Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)

begging. Victims were mainly identified in Russia, Turkey, Cyprus, and the Emirates (GRETA 2016, 3).

LaStrada has been running a national hotline since 2001. This hotline is used to inform people about different aspects of migration, trafficking, services and facilities available to victims of trafficking. In 2014, LaStrada reported 260 urgent calls related human trafficking (out of 10.605 total calls received). About 215 calls concerned 92 cases of adults and 45 calls concerned 20 cases of minors (GRETA 2016, 12; LaStrada website 2014). I shall provide further information in part 7 of the dissertation.

The main anti-trafficking actors in Moldova

In this chapter I focus on the on organizations which mainly deal with anti-trafficking in Moldova. These actors are grouped in governmental institutions⁷, international organizations⁸, and non-governmental institutions⁹. The following section sums up anti-trafficking efforts by each institution individually.

The National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (hereinafter referred to as National Committee) is a governmental consultative body that coordinates any activity of prevention and combating trafficking. It is an umbrella organization, which includes

⁷ Governmental institutions are the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Finance, the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Centre for Combating Human Trafficking, the Border Police, the Security and Intelligence Service, the State Chancellery, the Licensing Chamber, Găgăuzia an ATU, the Center for Assistance and Protection, and the National Bureau of Statistics.

⁸ International institutions are the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

⁹ Mainly LaStrada Moldova

representatives of the public, private, and international institutions, to carry out activities of prevention and combating human trafficking. It has an important role in combating human trafficking by coordinating prevention efforts with international, non-governmental, and civil society representatives; by submitting proposals to the Moldovan government regarding anti-trafficking state policy; by assisting improvement of existing policies of trafficked victims identification and eradication of trafficking; by monitoring its own performance; by collecting national human trafficking data (proportions, status, and trends); by developing proposals to improve the human trafficking legislation; by organizing awareness-raising campaigns for the population on problems related to human trafficking; by managing specialized institutions and committees in implementing anti-trafficking actions.

The National Committee monitors the implementation of the National Plan for Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (hereinafter referred to as National Plan). It informs the government and civil society about the achieved results (the National Committee in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2016, website antitrafic.gov.md).

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) performs several functions. One of them is the Prevention and Protection (the counter-trafficking) program, initiated in 2006 through the establishment of the National Referral System for (potential) Victims of Human Trafficking. This IOM program protects and assists current and potential victims of trafficking. In addition to this, the IOM offers proactive prevention. This program supports entities working with target groups, has launched a ‘trust’ hotline for victims of domestic violence, engages in capacity building of state authorities, raises awareness of human trafficking, supports assistance hotlines in Moldova and Transnistria (IOM 2016, about us: the IOM Mission to Moldova).

According to the IOM, trafficking victims can directly access the Assistance and Protection Centre (specialized in crisis assistance) or can be referred by the police or by social workers (IOM, Preventing Trafficking and Protecting Victims in Moldova, 2016, 1). The IOM anti-trafficking efforts also focus on potential victims by raising-awareness programs and campaigns.

Moldova has established a National Referral System for Assistance and Protection of Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking (hereinafter referred to as NRS). The NRS facilitates protection services by using referral procedures for identified and potential victims (IOM, Preventing Trafficking and Protecting Victims in Moldova 2016, 1).

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) tackles many human trafficking issues, such as human rights, rule of law, crime control, corruption, inequality, discrimination, economic policies, labor policies, and migration policies. In 2003, the OSCE established a Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, who assists Moldova developing and implementing anti-trafficking policies. Moreover, OSCE's Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings offers a framework to assist the anti-trafficking efforts. This Action Plan contains four main approaches, known as the "4 Ps": prevention, prosecution, protection, and partnership (OSCE 2015, 32). Prevention includes awareness-raising and tackling root causes; prosecution includes investigation and collaboration with international law enforcement; protection includes assistance and compensation for the victims; and partnership includes enhanced collaboration among international organizations and other anti-trafficking parties; it emphasizes joint efforts between public and private institutions in Moldova. The OSCE says that its activities have strengthened the national capacity to prevent and fight human trafficking, including assistance and prosecution efforts. The OSCE holds

training seminars and courses for border officers, police officers, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, social workers, religious leaders, and mass media outlets. In addition, it conducts studies, surveys, and information analyses for the public (OSCE 2016).

The International Labor Organization (ILO) is involved in many areas in Moldova such as employment, labor law, international labor standards, working conditions, gender equality, health, migration, child labor, social dialogue, social protection, and informal economy. The ILO technically and financially assisted the first Decent Work Country Programme for Moldova during the period of 2006-2007, 2008-2011, and 2012-2015 (ILO, About ILO in Republic of Moldova, 2016). However, the ILO's impact in anti-trafficking activities is limited to a couple of projects¹⁰ and a few studies¹¹.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) does not directly assist Moldova in addressing human trafficking, but indirectly through investments in inclusive growth, effective governance, handling climate change, environment, and energy¹². The UNDP promotes and helps women to participate in decision making and achieving leadership positions in the private sector. The UNDP and other UN Agencies help the Moldovan government to develop the next National Programme on Gender Equality for 2016-2020 and to support gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment (UNDP, 2016).

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is an absolute leader in strengthening and coordinating the criminal law to combat human trafficking since the 1990s, according to its own claims (UNODC 2017, 1). It is one of the most engaged and active anti-trafficking actors in Moldova. It helps Moldova to draft laws and implement anti-trafficking

¹⁰ Elimination of human trafficking from Moldova and Ukraine through labor market based measures (2006-2009)

¹¹ Elimination of human trafficking from Moldova and Ukraine through labor market based measures (2009)

¹² the Sustainable Development Goals and the European integration agenda

strategies, offers specialized assistance, develops local capacity and expertise, and encourages cross-border cooperation.

The UNODC is the guardian of the Palermo Protocol¹³, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2000 and which is a crucial international step to combat human trafficking. The UNODC addresses human trafficking through its Global Programme against Trafficking in Persons (UNODC 2017, 1). The UNODC's work in the human trafficking is categorized in “3 Ps”: prevention, protection, and prosecution (in comparison to the OSCE’s ‘4 Ps’, the UNODC focuses only on ‘3 Ps’).

UNODC's strategic approach to combating trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants is founded in the full and effective implementation of the Protocol, and can be best understood as having three interdependent and complementary components (UNODC, Human Trafficking, 2016, 3).

Three interdependent components are (1) research and awareness programs, (2) capacity-building and Protocol promotion, and (3) partnerships and coordination (UNODC, Human Trafficking, 2017). The UNODC still acts on the assumption that increasing awareness is one of the most crucial elements in combating trafficking.

LaStrada Moldova is an affiliate of the LaStrada International NGO¹⁴ and promotes protection of socially vulnerable people at individual, legislative, and executive levels. LaStrada is part of a European anti-trafficking network. The Headquarter of LaStrada International works in eight countries of origin and destination of human trafficking in Central and Eastern Europe. Its affiliate in Moldova was launched in 2001 (LaStrada website 2016).

LaStrada focuses on three main areas: (1) preventing human trafficking and informing populations about it, (2) assisting trafficked victims and integrating victims, (3) advocating and

¹³ Known as Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000)

¹⁴ Public Association International Center for Women’s Rights Protection and Promotion “La Strada” (International Center “La Strada”)

lobbying to end trafficking. Since 2002 three departments were set: (1) the Resource Center, (2) the Contact Center, and (3) the Center for Analysis and Lobby. LaStrada says that it has ‘a unique experience and distinctive competencies to protect the legal rights and interests of socially vulnerable groups, especially of women and children’ (LaStrada website 2016, About Us).

[LaStrada’s] activity focuses on the promotion and protection of civil, economic, social, personal rights and of the freedoms of women and children, on the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men destined to consolidate the values and status of women, on the encouragement and support in all professional, social and family media of the activities related to the study and connection of the Republic of Moldova law to the principles governing the rights of women and children, and their actual implementation (LaStrada website, About Us 2016).

The International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) promotes migration policies and facilitates exchange of migration information between governments and organizations (it is not mentioned what is meant by ‘organizations’) (ICMPD website 2017, ‘about us’ section, paragraph 3).

The ICMPD is not a major actor in Moldova, however it conducted a mission there in February 2013 at the request of the Border Police Department of the Moldovan Ministry of Internal Affairs (ICMPD 2013, paragraph 1). The ICMPD experts helped the Moldova government with the integrated border management strategy by suggesting to establish a document examination center. This center is meant to help the border police to eradicate illegal migration. During this mission, document control checks and examination systems were revised and modification proposals submitted.

The mission was a cross-cutting event of thematic area one (on support for the implementation of the IBM Strategy and Action Plan) and two (on document integrity and security, detection of forgeries and imposter recognition), which perfectly combined

both the capacity building and institutional building strengths of the EaP IBM FIT¹⁵ project (ICMPD 2013, paragraph 4).

The main anti-trafficking efforts to prevent human trafficking in Moldova

In the late 90s, many national and international organizations of anti-trafficking aimed towards prevention of human trafficking through raising-awareness campaigns and educational programs. These prevention efforts targeted, to a large degree, potential victims and the general public. However, the implemented prevention and raising-awareness programs' effectiveness have not often been evaluated (Bishop 2013). There is also limited research concerning the correlation between the effectiveness of prevention efforts and the punishment of perpetrators (Roby 2008). Only few scholars assume that education programs are effective in increasing levels of awareness (Bishop 2013).

The EU and the UN agencies further encourage the Moldovan authorities to raise awareness of human trafficking to the general public. The Council of Europe stresses the importance of informing the Moldovan population about gender equality, gender-based violence, and stigmatization of victims (GRETA 2016, 12). Moldovan authorities are dedicated to implement these recommendations by launching the website www.antitrafic.gov.md in 2013¹⁶.

In 2013, the Moldovan authorities in collaboration with LaStrada launched a campaign informing people about ways of getting legal protection in trafficking situations. LaStrada and the IOM broadcasted several informative programs through the radio station Radio Moldova and the national TV channel Moldova 1; two of the programs advertised the National Hotline 0 800 77777 (GRETA 2016, 12).

¹⁵ Eastern Partnership Integrated Border Management. Flagship Initiative Training Project (EaP IBM FIT)

¹⁶ The National Committee in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, website antitrafic.gov.md

In 2013, another informative campaign addressed the EU visa liberalization regime and risks of human trafficking. In 2014, one week of October was dedicated to raise awareness of human trafficking. The activities carried out included increasing awareness of risks of trafficking through debates, workshops, art exhibitions, and flash mobs. In addition, labor inspectors informed people what to do if persons are deprived of liberty, forced to work against their will, are not paid for the work, or deprived of their documents (GRETA 2016, 12).

In 2013, also the academic institutions focused on activities to prevent human trafficking via ‘information campaigns, workshops, meetings, round-tables with students, and annual meetings with parents’ (GRETA 2016, 13). The Moldovan Ministry of Education included projects on preventing human trafficking as part of the social sciences module in most universities across Moldova. Four universities adopted a full course on preventing trafficking in the social-work studies’ curriculum. LaStrada distributed online material (in total 41 courses & seminars) on the prevention of child trafficking to secondary education institutions (GRETA 2016, 13).

In 2012, GRETA and the Council of Europe praised the Moldovan government’s efforts to prevent human trafficking, but recommended that the Moldovan government should focus more on campaigns to raise awareness of trafficking:

While welcoming the initiatives undertaken by the Moldovan authorities in collaboration with international organisations and NGOs, GRETA considers that the authorities should further develop information and prevention campaigns in order to raise awareness among the general public on different forms of THB, including internal trafficking. Future awareness raising measures should be designed in the light of the assessment of previous measures and be focused on the needs identified (GRETA 2016, 13).

3. TO THE RELEVANCE OF THIS STUDY

Foremost, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the literature on human trafficking by addressing several loopholes of the data in this field. First, this study is an empirical analysis. Second, it is based on a representative sample of the Moldovan population. Third, it applies a new approach to human trafficking. Fourth, it addresses a ‘dark field’ of data. Fifth, it counter-balances ‘victim-centered’ data. Sixth, it selects a country with the highest rates of human trafficking.

Empirical study

Human trafficking is a global problem raising concern worldwide (UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2014; 1). According to scholars and policy makers, empirical research studies on human trafficking are scarce, but absolutely necessary (Bump 2008, Craggs et al. 2010). Most academic articles on human trafficking, published in social science, are based on secondary data and only a limited number are based on original data. The secondary data are problematic due to the fact that sources are often undisclosed by their distributors¹⁷ and it is difficult if not even impossible to double-check their accuracy (Zhang 2009; Weitzer 2015, 224). Fedina’s study argues that about 65% of revised publications on human trafficking lack original data and about 75% cite inaccurate information (Fedina 2015, 188; Weitzer 2015, 224).

Literature on human trafficking lacks rigorous evidences due to the lack of high-quality empirical research (Doezema 1999, 24; Molland 2013, 102; Vance 2012, 202; Weitzer 2015, 231). As a result, the problem of human trafficking is simplified and some important structural dimensions of human trafficking might be overlooked (Weitzer 2015, 224).

¹⁷ The data on human trafficking is very sensitive and it is highly protected by the organizations who possess it. The countertrafficking organizations in Moldova (such as IOM, UNODC, and LaStrada) argue that they never share their original data with anyone because it is against their *protection policies*.

The present dissertation is an empirical study based on original data. I seeks to contribute to the broader data base and perhaps might even uncover structural causes of human trafficking that have little to do with a lack of awareness.

National samples representing the Moldovan population

Recent discussions of human trafficking research have called to move beyond narratives based on unrepresentative samples and simplified images (Surtees et al. 2010, 1). It is important to consider whether trafficking data are generalizable as to larger population amounts if they are based on deductions from studies of small groups of people (Brunovskis et al. 2005, 22). Some scholars acknowledged that ‘there are no studies to date that can claim to be representative of all victims of trafficking within a region. Most current studies of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are based on studies of former victims described by, or discovered through, organizations or law enforcement bodies’ (Brunovskis et al. 2005, 22; Kelly 2002).

To address this problem, scholars have been calling for empirical human trafficking research at the national level for some time. Research at a national level is an important alternative to comparative international meta-analyses, which is so needed in this field (Weitzer 2015, 231). Bump and Godzdiak revised over 1,500 published articles on human trafficking and found that only 30% used empirical research findings. In addition to this, most of these studies have been criticized for using convenience samples or unidentified samples (Bump 2008, Weitzer 2015, 231). This dissertation uses a representative sample of Moldova’s whole population instead of a convenience sample. Even though the sample is small, it represents the

entire Moldovan population¹⁸, which meets another requirement of human trafficking scholarship.

In their defense, the criticized researchers argue that they use convenience samples because this is the safest way to reach out to victims of human trafficking, ‘recruiting respondents outside of assistance channels involves the risk of exposing individuals as trafficked to their families or communities, which may result in stigmatization, rejection by family, social ostracism and the possibility of threats and retribution from traffickers’ (Surtees et al. 2010, 13).

So Weitzer required in 2015 that a national survey of the respective population’s migration experiences was needed (Weitzer 2015, 231). Moreover, representative surveys of national populations’ trafficking experiences are extremely rare because of the issue being so sensitive and because of possible stigmatization. So this dissertation offers an important alternative approach to study this problem surveying Moldova’s population.

Importance of case selection

Moldova is an important case study of human trafficking because it has some of the highest rates of victims of trafficking in the world (World Bank 2014, 6). Second, it is essential to understand public perceptions of this problem in the country of origin of human trafficking (Robinson 2011, 272; World Bank 2014, 6). Third, public surveys and in-depth interviews with inhabitants of a country whose citizens are exposed to high rates of trafficking, can reveal new trafficking themes and concepts, which might be overlooked when focusing on victims only. Fourth, independent empirical research of high quality in countries of origin of human trafficking is needed, in order to get a fuller picture of human trafficking. Often, countries of origin lack capabilities and resources to conduct independent research studies using new type of data and

methodologies (Mismail 2012, Munteanu 2012, Rusu 2013). The methods used in this study represent possibilities to replicate it in other countries of origin of human trafficking, especially the Eastern European countries.

A new approach in this field: Public surveys

[S]tudies of victims are never going to lead to a comprehensive picture and understanding of trafficking. The problem does not necessarily lie with each individual project, which may have all the necessary caveats about samples not being representative and respondent sampling being constrained and so on. The problem perhaps lies more in the cumulative impact of similar studies, similar methods and, thus, similar findings which, in the end, perhaps restrict understanding more than advance it. Too much emphasis on one approach – one method, one perspective, one target group – does little to advance the field (Craggs et al. 2010, 29).

This dissertation uses an uncommon approach to study human trafficking – by exploring attitudes and factors influencing migration and thus the risk of human trafficking through a public survey. Rather than testing the macro-level causes of human trafficking, I tried to use an open approach and learn from the people about different aspects and attitudes towards migration and human trafficking. I have used an inductive approach by collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative information.

New methodological approaches to human trafficking are needed since it creates the base for anti-trafficking policies and prevention and victim assistance programs. Currently, many European countries collect and use data without taking into consideration the methodological limitations which present the ‘decreasing’ numbers of assisted victims as an indicator of successful anti-trafficking policies, this ‘lead[s] policy makers to believe that trafficking has been addressed,’ when in reality it was not (Craggs et al. 2010, 29).

[O]ur own research on why trafficking victims decline assistance finds not that victims (and, thus, numbers of victims) decline because the problem is decreasing but rather

because of issues in the assistance framework (e.g., victims go unidentified; they do not understand about identification and assistance; the assistance framework is not responsive to their needs); the personal circumstances of victims (e.g., families reject assistance, victims do not want or need assistance); and the social context of assistance (e.g., lack of trust in assistance, rejection of the victim label) (Surtees and Craggs 2010, 29).

Research and methods used without understanding the ‘deeper contextual meaning risk misunderstanding the reasons and meanings behind the numbers and the research and negatively impacting the persons they are ultimately intended to understand and assist’ (Surtees and Craggs 2010, 29).

Heckathorn (1997) tried to address the sampling problem by introducing a new approach known as ‘chain-referral sampling’, which is a respondent-driven approach using a ‘dual system of structured incentives’ He believed that his approach, based on *Markov-chain theory* and *Biased networks theory*, can reduce the chain-referral method’s biases in studies with ‘hidden’ populations (Heckathorn 1997, 174).

The common approaches to explain human trafficking have been criticized for offering inaccurate estimates and numbers. In addition, the past literature on human trafficking often accepted and replicated the uncritical figures provided by governments, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations (Doezema 2010; Weitzer 2015, 224). Molland argues that few policy makers and scholars question the credibility of these estimates and numbers ‘highlighting that numbers are grabbed out of thin air in the context of moralistic hyperbole...pointing out moral philosophical and political agendas underpinning much of the construction of trafficking and the dubious claims’ (Molland 2013, 101; Kempadoo et al. 2005; Weitzer 2005; Zhang 2009; Stefanizzi 2007).

[S]urprisingly this critical questioning of the enumeration of human trafficking as a problem has not resulted in much serious research on the anti-trafficking industry, with a few notable exceptions (Rosga 2005, Agustin 2007). To date, critiques of trafficking discourse tend to limit themselves to a narrow focus on prostitution and migration

policies where questions of criminalization and legalization are endlessly debated (Doezema 2010, Kempadoo 1998, and Gallagher 2001 quoted in Molland 2013, 101).

Shortly, these discourses focus on moral and ethical foundations of human trafficking rather than on ‘institutional context’ that is crucial for anti-trafficking efforts (Gallagher 2001). ‘Few researchers have considered the broader question of how trafficking laws, policies and programs translate into practice; that is, placing a serious focus on the practice of anti-trafficking in itself’ (Molland 2013, 101).

New methodologies of data collection – such as public surveys – could lead to new findings and insights that could be essential for anti-trafficking experts, policy makers, and practitioners (Craggs et al. 2010, 80). On a solid empirical basis anti-trafficking experts could draft, recommend, and implement anti-trafficking regulations and policies that really fit this problem in Moldova.

Public surveys are used successfully in politics to find out people’s attitudes and opinions about political candidates, public policies, or new regulations. Today’s marketing leaders are using public surveys to improve their products and to understand better how they can serve their customers. Public surveys have been used with great success in many areas, but have not been applied to study human trafficking by now.

In this dissertation, I use a public survey to study human trafficking aspects from the perspective of the general population of Moldova, which can offer a more rounded picture of human trafficking by complementing the existing knowledge on this topic.

If there is one central conclusion to be drawn from assessing assisted victims data, it is that already rich data can be further enhanced by looking to other sources and approaches (Craggs et al. 2010, 82).

The results of the public survey may even be able to help policy-makers and decision-makers to address the problem of human trafficking with better-suited anti-trafficking policies and programs.

Addressing the ‘dark field’ data

The ‘dark field’ data refer to ‘hidden’ population, where a sampling frame is lacking and people are not aware of people who have been trafficked or traffickers. ‘Accessing such populations is difficult because standard probability sampling methods produce low response rates and responses that lack candor’ (Heckathorn 1997, 174). Prevailing sampling approaches to human trafficking are biased ‘including snowball and other chain-referral samples, the key-informant approach, and targeted sampling, introduce well-documented biases into their samples’ (Heckathorn 1997, 174).

My dissertation addresses the problem of ‘dark field’ data in human trafficking by surveying the general population of Moldova on their knowledge of human trafficking. The ‘dark field’ data problem means that human trafficking occurs out of reach of the police investigations and beyond public eyes, which makes it difficult to collect and assess data about this phenomenon (Häufle 2014, 280). On the international level, many efforts have been made to improve the data collection methods and to find a way to address the dark field research of human trafficking.

Research on the nature and scope of human trafficking is very difficult, especially because it concerns hidden population groups:

Trafficking in persons is often a hidden criminal activity, and, as a consequence, the number of victims that come to the attention of the general public at any time is necessarily only a subset of the total population of trafficking victims. This leads to calls for estimating the “dark figure” of human trafficking statistics. There are various

methodologies for estimating total trafficking cases but it is important to note that most methods to estimate the unknown part of cases of TIP are based on some form of “hard data” on known or reported cases (UNGIFT, The Vienna Forum to fight Human Trafficking:13-15 February 2008, Austria Center Vienna :024 Workshop: Quantifying Human Trafficking, Its Impacts and Responses to it 2008, 2).

Because of the difficulties mentioned above it is problematic to detect and interpret new trafficking trends and estimate numbers in human trafficking. UN agencies operate under the assumption that this weakness can be addressed by getting more detailed and accurate knowledge on identified cases of victims of human trafficking (UNGIFT 2008, 2). However, I argue that it is not enough to focus on the small number of identified victims to get a more complex picture of human trafficking. Therefore, this dissertation aims to enrich existing victim-centered data by using a public survey.

Surtees and her colleagues call for a broader review of human trafficking research methods and approaches considering the overlaps within the dark human trafficking field, which includes ‘methods used in studying migration, prostitution, hidden and elusive populations and stigmatized/marginalized populations’(Craggs et al. 2010, 21).

‘As a population, trafficking victims are generally hidden and elusive in different ways at different stages of trafficking and, as a consequence, remain hard to reach for researchers’ (Surtees et al. 2010, 13). Brunovskis and Surtees argue that this happens because of several reasons. First, people are not aware of trafficking risks prior to the exploitation and trafficking situations. Second, trafficked people are often isolated and afraid to seek help from state authorities and other organizations providing social/legal assistance. Third, the majority of victims remain hidden because they are afraid of getting deported or arrested. Forth, many victims do not even identify themselves as *victims*, therefore they remain undisclosed and unidentified’ (Surtees et al. 2010, 13).

Following their return home they may wish to put the experience behind them and many never reveal their trafficking exploitation to family or friends. They may also fear identification in their home communities which can lead to discrimination, stigma and even violence. Even when they may be accessed – for example, through sampling in the prostitution arena, or following escape and/or identification – they may not feel sufficiently safe, comfortable or trusting to divulge information about their trafficking experience and, thus, shed light on the phenomenon in a meaningful way. At a more general level, because trafficking in persons is typically a criminal offence, it often takes place covertly and, in many countries, involves criminal groups, making it even more difficult to research and, thus, to understand’ (Surtees et al. 2010, 13).

As a result, most of human trafficking research is based on information gathered through trafficking assistance programs. This is done out of convenience ‘because the assistance framework is often the only site where trafficked persons can be ethically and safely identified and accessed for interviews’ (Surtees et al. 2010, 13). Brunovskis and colleagues argue that the access to research subjects through human trafficking assistance centers ensures some protection of those subjects; anti-trafficking service providers can be easily contacted if any problems arise during or after the interviews (Surtees et al. 2010, 13).

Counter-balances to ‘Victim-Centered’ Data

Most human trafficking studies are solely based on the information collected from assisted victims of human trafficking, known as ‘victim-centered’ data. In recent years, academics have started to question whether one can rely on this type of data and make representative conclusions and generalizations of all trafficked persons, considering the small number of identified victims.

In addition to this, it is difficult to get a representative sample because of the existing selection bias:

You’re looking for something that says Okay this is not random, but it may represent some larger phenomenon. And you look at who you are talking to and how you found them or how they found you... Obviously you’re bringing your own biases or whether its

service provider connections that is providing these connections, or something else out there, so that's a problem, plain and simple (Craggs et al. 2010, 57).

'Victim-Centered' data are not representative of all victims because these types of data contain information on few identified and assisted victims only. The information is further biased by the fact that most identified victims refuse assistance because they do not see themselves as *victims* or as people who have been *trafficked*, or they are not satisfied with the assistance offered to them, or they do not want to be forced to return home (Craggs et al. 2010, 61).

In addition to this, many victims cannot be identified because of a weak identification process, a lack of anti-trafficking professionals, a lack of understanding of the definition of a victim, and an avoidance to be identified (Craggs et al. 2010, 57; Surtees 2007; Surtees 2012).

The extent of both unidentified victims and identified unassisted victims is impossible to measure. It is unknown if/or to what extent these two categories are represented by the experiences and characteristics of assisted victims, so called 'victim-centered' information (Craggs et al. 2010; 57). '[T]he current body of victim-centred data cannot be viewed as representing all victims of trafficking (in all forms of trafficking). Too often, data from assisted victims have been presented and understood as "the" face of trafficking, rather than a sample from within a wider body of experience ' (Craggs et al. 2010, 64).

Current literature on human trafficking lacks alternative sources of data about unassisted victims. In order to see the broader picture of human trafficking, there is a need for new types of data and new data collection methodologies. It is important to understand that assisted victims cannot show the full picture of this complex problem. '[It] is essential in terms of knowing whose experiences are documented and needs are being met and, equally, who is not being researched and, by implication, assisted and protected. Identifying victims which are unidentified

and unassisted it has been an urgent topic in terms of the protection and assistance of trafficked persons' (Craggs et al. 2010, 65).

In this section I use the UK as an example to show the implications of using inaccurate estimates of victims of human trafficking. Julia Davidson questions the magnitude of sexual trafficking in UK and criticizes the exaggerated estimated numbers of victims of trafficking:

Given the undisputed and alarming magnitude of the phenomenon, and the fact that for at least the past five years, many international agencies and governments have given high priority and devoted extensive resources to combating the problem, it is puzzling to find that the number of people who have been identified as 'victims of trafficking' (VoTs) and assisted as such is very small (Davidson 2006, 5).

In 2000, it was estimated that up to 1400 women were trafficked into prostitution in the UK. However, in 2003, the UK immigration authorities found 295 immigration offenders from which only five offenders were identified as victims of human trafficking (Davidson 2006, 5).

According to the numbers provided by the Global Slavery Index and used by the UN agencies, about 33.300 Moldovans are estimated to have been trafficked (UNGIFT; Global Slavery Index 2014,; Reuters 2013, paragraph 8); in 2016 it was estimated that about 10,400 Moldovans were trafficked (The Global Slavery Index 2016, 67). However, in 2011 only 154 victims were identified; in 2012 only 290 victims; in 2013 only 262 victims; in 2014 only 264 victims; and in 2015 only 310 victims were identified (GRETA 2016, 3). Hence, Davidson's complaint about the inaccuracy of the estimates should be taken very serious and should make scholars question the estimates and numbers provided by the anti-trafficking entities more often.

4. METHODOLOGY

To get a representative sample of the Moldovan population, the multistage randomization was applied considering the group of regions, households and respondents. Three randomization stages were applied:

- Locality: selected randomly for each stratum using a table of random numbers.
- Household: in each locality, based on streets routes, which were designed depending on the number of interviews per locality.
- Respondent: when selecting the respondent, the next birthday method was applied.

After the random selection of locality (also depending on its size), the household was chosen from the center of the city/town/village following a route that will capture people from the center of the residential area all the way to its periphery. Further, the respondent from the household was selected according to the closest birthday. If the selected respondent was not present at that moment, the person with the next closest birthday was interviewed.

To avoid response bias, respondents were told that they would be asked personal-opinion type questions emphasizing that there were no wrong or right answers, but that the researcher was interested in their views on some social issues. During the pre-testing phase I have noticed that many people felt very uncomfortable to talk if they felt that I wanted to test or measure their knowledge. The sample could have been biased by getting more responses of people who are well informed about this topic and people who at least do not lack confidence in their knowledge. This is why it was extremely important to inform respondents that I am not testing them, but I would like to learn about their opinion concerning their satisfaction with life, society, economy, and, among others, some social problems. By using this method, I probably reduced the response bias of my sample.

Due to the fact that the data were also collected throughout the weeks, not only on weekends, and most people leave for work early in the morning and come back late in the evening, there could have been a bias by getting too many people in the sample who stay at home and do not work. To avoid this, local businesses were treated as households.

Mixed methods design

I decided to use a mixed methods approach and collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The combination of the two methods offers a more enhanced understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative method alone (Creswell 2012, 535). I used a mixed methods approach to collect, analyze, and use quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. In this process, I decided to interview anti-trafficking experts first, then I collected quantitative data, and during the collection of quantitative data I started collecting qualitative data as well.

The mixed methods research approach helped me using the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method generated data that could be statistically analyzed and provided the opportunity to evaluate the frequency of trafficking-related patterns, and offered the chance to draw conclusions based on a representative sample of the Moldovan population. On the other hand, the qualitative method generated data that have been used in-depth focusing on meaning rather than numbers, it provided varied and rich perspectives on the topic, and offered a more rounded and complex picture of human trafficking (Creswell 2012, 535). The combination both approaches provides the researcher with a very powerful research

mix (Huberman 1994, 42). By analyzing quantitative and qualitative data I could develop a more rounded picture of human trafficking in Moldova (Miller 1996, 7).

More data were needed to extend and explain the first set of collected information. I wanted to follow up my quantitative master thesis study with qualitative data to gain more detailed and specific information regarding some aspects of human trafficking. Therefore, I decided to use a mixed methods approach because I wanted to explain the statistical information using in-depth knowledge and to offer an alternative perspective in my dissertation. A policy maker said once, ‘this results in getting the *numbers* and the *stories* about an issue in one shot’ (Creswell 2012, 535).

Quantitative and qualitative data offer both a comprehensive analysis of the problem as well as the nuanced detail of the problem. In practice, mixed methods are very useful for the research in social science, however there are:

studies in graduate programs in which qualitative research has yet to be fully accepted and in which quantitative approaches are the norm. Although individuals in these programs may recognize the value of qualitative research, a mixed methods study is more acceptable than a “pure” qualitative study because there is still a component of quantitative research in the study. Also on a practical level, mixed methods studies are increasingly being published in the scholarly literature. Graduate students use mixed methods research in order to learn and experience this form of research design so that they are well informed about the latest research approaches (Creswell 2012, 535-536).

4.1 Quantitative data

The data were collected through face-to-face interviews of a national sample of people (aged 14 and older) living in Moldova between April 2013 and April 2017.

Quantitative sampling¹⁹

The first step in sampling was combining some of the regions in groups, then the randomization of units was done within each group. The sample size includes 250 respondents and represents the entire Moldovan population. So, it was calculated how many of the 250 interviews will be necessary in each region of Moldova. For example, in 2013, the Moldovan population was 3,559,500 people with about 671,800 people residing in the capital city Chisinau – this constitutes about 18.87 % of the entire population; this rate applied to 250 scheduled interviews means that about 48 interviews had to be conducted in the capital city alone.

Table 1: Socio-demographic composition of the sample (N=250)

	Percent
Residency	
Rural	50.8 %
Urban	27.1 %
Capital city	21.7 %
Abroad	00.4 %
Gender	
Female	54.9 %
Male	45.1 %
Region of the country	
North	22.2 %
South	15.2 %
Center	62.6 %
Social Class	
Lower	25.7 %
Middle	67.1 %
Upper	07.1 %
Salary	
Less than 300 USD/month	57.6 %
300 – 600 USD/month	25.0 %
More than 600 USD/month	17.4 %
Education	

¹⁹ Prof. Dumitru Slonovschi, the General Director of Magenta Consulting helped the researcher with the sampling method, especially grouping regions and localities.

Middle School	15.7 %
High School	47.1 %
Bachelor or equivalent	34.7 %
Master or higher	02.5 %

Note: Cell entries are descriptive statistics (frequencies).

Questionnaire:

The participants in the study were surveyed based on a questionnaire with fifty one questions. Trafficking related questions were mixed with other questions, including demographic information. Unfortunately, the percentage of those who refused to participate was not recorded. On the average about 2 people out of 10 refused to participate even before the interview started. Asked about the reason of their refusal, usually the most common response I got was that they were very busy and had no time to talk to me. Overall, these respondents usually refused to participate in the survey before they knew what the questionnaire was about. During the pre-test it happened that respondents did not want to participate because they felt that they were not aware enough of this topic. However, this shortcoming was addressed by changing the way of presenting the questionnaire to the potential respondents.

The questionnaire was translated into the two mainly spoken languages in Moldova, Romanian and Russian. Then the questionnaire was pre-tested by asking 10 people during the pilot research. This approach was helpful for identifying questions that could be misunderstood or misinterpreted by respondents. Subsequently, the questionnaire was improved and adapted to the target. Questions were framed to measure the rates of awareness and understanding of human trafficking among the Moldovan public.

Pilot research

A pilot research was used in order to validate the questionnaire. About 30 interviews were performed, 20 in rural and 10 in urban areas; 20 in Romanian and 10 in the Russian. The respondents for the pilot research were identified randomly.

Old quantitative data

The original data set contains more than 50 variables. Less than a quarter of the information was used for the master thesis due to time and space limitations. Consequently, most of the data were analyzed for the first time in the course of the dissertation.

New quantitative data

About 88 new interviews were conducted and added to data collected for the master thesis. However, instead of adding additional 88 interviews, these interviews replaced the initial 88 interviews. Hence, the data set was updated by replacing old 88 interviews by new 88 interviews. This was necessary due to the fact that the number of 250 interviews was tailored to represent the Moldovan population and changing the number of interviews would have had consequences on recounting the needed interviews and on the representation of people from each region in the sample.

Some meaningful questions were added to find out what are the characteristics of people who consider themselves as potential victims of human trafficking. These questions were important to understand what the factors are predicting population's perceived personal vulnerability to trafficking. This is one of the major components that might explain why some

people are more informed than others about human trafficking because people who consider themselves vulnerable are more likely to catch up on this topic.

Data were coded and exported into a SPSS database. The quantitative data set contains mostly nominal and categorical variables, and fewer numerical variables (such as age, years of education, number of family members, etc.). Hence, to run regressions in testing my hypotheses I created dummy variables. For example I created dummy variables for rural, urban and capital city and used them as independent variables along with education, access to information, gender and other control variables.

4.2 Qualitative data

Interviews with anti-trafficking experts

In-depth interviews with anti-trafficking experts from the IOM (Moldova), LaStrada (Moldova), and ICMPD (Austria) were conducted to get a fuller picture of the way these organizations collect, store, analyze, and use their data.

Interviews with a small sample of the Moldovan population

One section of this dissertation focuses on qualitative interviews of the Moldovan people. The questions were open-ended and semi-structured. The respondents were chosen from people who participated in the quantitative study. First, they were asked to respond to questions for the quantitative study (fully structured open-ended questions), when the first interview would have ended they were asked if they had time and wanted to take part in the qualitative study. Data

were coded manually. Some interviews were recorded using a voice recorder, other interviews were recorded using solely hand-written notes. Repetition of ideas and themes were tracked and recorded on a separate sheet of paper/ new document. More information is provided in the ‘methods’ section of part 10 of this dissertation.

4.3 Ethics

The questionnaire does not contain questions posing any psychological threat or pressure on the respondents; it was designed to measure how informed the population was regarding some aspects of human trafficking. No personal questions related to identity were asked in any of the interviews. It is impossible to track down the respondents in this study. Respondents in the qualitative interviews were told that they could skip a question if they felt uncomfortable to answer it and that they could stop the interview at any point. The experts from different national and international organizations were interviewed and recorded on a voice recorder. They were asked for the permission to use the voice recorder, to mention their names and their organization’s affiliation in the paper. They were told they could skip questions they found compromising or jeopardizing²⁰.

²⁰ Some respondents chose to share some of their personal views *off-record*; this information was used solely anonymously and it was not linked to the respondent’s identity.

5. OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN RESULTS OF THE DISSERTATION'S EMPIRICAL PARTS

This dissertation is an extension of my previous work on human trafficking, which I did for my master thesis. I have chosen this research topic since Moldova is one of the countries with the highest rates of human trafficking in the world (IOM 2016; ILO 2015; Global Slavery Index 2013, 13; World Bank 2014, vii).

My master thesis focused on testing the levels of awareness of human trafficking among the Moldovan public. Some research questions raised in my master thesis were: *Are people from rural areas trafficked more often because they lack awareness and understanding concerning human trafficking? Are there any differences between levels of awareness of human trafficking between people with different educational, economic, and/or social backgrounds?*

In my master thesis, I hypothesized, based on the prevailing assumption of the counter-trafficking organizations in Moldova that levels of awareness and understanding concerning human trafficking correlated negatively with a rural area of residency, lower social and economic status, and less education. However, my master thesis' findings suggest that people from rural areas, with less education, fewer financial resources, and from lower social classes, are better informed about different aspects of human trafficking compared to other groups.

These findings raised additional questions: What might explain that levels of awareness of human trafficking are higher in rural areas, among people with less education and fewer economic resources? If lack of awareness does not explain the high number of victims of trafficking, then what else does? How do the counter-trafficking organizations draft their anti-trafficking policies? Do migration motivations and economic deprivation play a role in targeting

them with awareness campaigns? What role do mass media play as to the Moldovan's awareness of human trafficking? Do mass media affect the people's perception of human trafficking?

This dissertation is divided into several main parts, which have a separate chapter on methodology, research questions, hypotheses, results, and summary. In the following sections I give an overview of selected parts of the dissertation.

The *level of awareness and understanding of human trafficking in Moldova* part is based on findings of my master thesis. This part looks at the awareness levels of human trafficking among the Moldovan population and lays out the impact of the residency area, education, and social class on the levels of awareness of human trafficking among Moldovans. It sums up the main findings of my master thesis, which are important for this dissertation since they are the base for understanding the logic behind the selection of the dissertation's research questions, which is to be outlined later in the dissertation.

The *From data collection to policy implementation in Moldova* part offers a clear picture of the loopholes of current anti-trafficking data and gives an explanation why anti-trafficking organizations operate under wrong assumptions concerning the levels of information of Moldovan citizens. This part is based on in-depth interviews with anti-trafficking experts from the IOM Moldova, LaStrada Moldova, and the ICMPD, focusing on their trafficking prevention measures. These organizations mainly try to prevent human trafficking by raising awareness because it is assumed that people from Moldova are trafficked because they lack awareness of this problem.

The *Migration and economic deprivation in Moldova* part looks at factors predicting Moldovans' willingness to migrate. Since there is a close link between migration rates and rates of human trafficking, it is important to understand the motivations behind migration rates. This

part looks at whether the motivations to migrate are influenced by the financial situation (respondent's unemployment, salary, and salary satisfaction in Moldova) and the existing family connections abroad, hypotheses are developed in part 8 of the dissertation.

The *Mass media effects on public perception of human trafficking* part looks at the role of mass media on levels of awareness of human trafficking of Moldovans. I considered important to analyze this phenomenon because the counter-trafficking organizations use mass media as a tool to reach out to Moldovan citizens. This part looks at the frequency of mass media usage regarding social problems, including human trafficking, news watching and respondents' in-depth knowledge of human trafficking.

The *Public perception vs organizations' perception of human trafficking* part juxtaposes the counter-trafficking organizations' knowledge of human trafficking with the public's knowledge of human trafficking. People understand and perceive social problems in a way very different to organizations; they base their perceptions on their individual experience, which might differ from case to case. Understanding public perceptions of this problem can help counter-trafficking organizations to enrich their knowledge on the actual levels of awareness of human trafficking in Moldova rather than using inaccurate assumptions and generalizations.

The *Perceived risks of being trafficked* part theorizes that rural residents have the most incentives to inform themselves about human trafficking because they believe they are more prone to being trafficked, they are more likely to know people who have been trafficked, and they have been targeted by anti-trafficking organizations for a very long time.

The *Public trust in counter-trafficking institutions* part analyzes to what degree the Moldovan public trusts counter-trafficking organizations and what might be the implications of a

lack of trust. Measuring the public trust in anti-trafficking organizations might even be an accurate predictor whether trafficked victims will seek help and services from them.

The *Connecting the dots: the organizations and public communication theory* part offers my own theory explaining the overall results of this dissertation. The theory states that the lack of communication between counter-trafficking organizations and the Moldovan public results in a dysfunctional relationship which undermines the anti-trafficking efforts of organizations to serve and provide help to people. On the one hand, organizations that do not know what people need and therefore fail to fully address those needs. On the other hand, people often do not trust counter-trafficking organizations and refuse to cooperate or seek help in trafficking situations.

The *Discussion and Conclusion* part summarizes the main empirical findings of the dissertation, elaborates on implications of these findings, and provides suggestions and recommendations to anti-trafficking policy makers.

6. THE LEVELS OF AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN MOLDOVA²¹

How informed is the general public about human trafficking?

Anti-trafficking organizations operate under the assumption that people from rural areas, with less education, from lower social and economic classes, and with limited access to information are more vulnerable to being trafficked because they are not aware of human trafficking. The anti-trafficking policies, including awareness programs and campaigns, have done little to decrease the number of trafficked people from Moldova. Moldova continues to be one of the countries with the highest rates of human trafficking (UNGIFT; Reuters 2013, paragraph 8; World Bank 2014, 6). Given the fact that the number of victims has not decreased over the years, it is important to ask whether the awareness and understanding of human trafficking influences the vulnerability of people to this problem; and whether the education and raising-awareness campaigns are effective in tackling human trafficking.

Push-pull theory of human trafficking

IOs, NGOs, and national entities base their anti-trafficking efforts on assumptions drawn from the *pull* and *push* theory²². Overall, economic insufficiency, lack of information, gender inequality, lack of awareness and understanding of human trafficking, and vulnerability represent the most common *push factors*. Employment opportunity, relative prosperity and the prospect of a better life represent *pull factors*. However, I hypothesized that the levels of awareness and

²¹ This part is based mainly on the findings of my master thesis; therefore it will be very brief without going into details.

²² This theory was discussed in detail in part 2 of the dissertation.

understanding concerning human trafficking are not significant due to a wider access to information among rural, urban, and capital-city residents. This hypothesis was rejected after testing empirically the public's perceptions of human trafficking through public opinion surveys of 250 respondents. The hypotheses are discussed in the next section.

While most anti-trafficking organizations operate under the assumption that poorly educated rural residents lack both resources and capability necessary to educate themselves about human trafficking, this part finds the opposite: Rural residents are in fact the best informed and educated with regard to human trafficking of any group surveyed. These findings add to the literature on human trafficking by challenging the mainstream assumption that people are trafficked (to a large degree) because they lack awareness of this problem. It is surprising, given the acuteness of this problem, that anti-trafficking organizations have been ignoring the population's perceptions of it.

Hypotheses and research questions

In this section, I argue that thanks to globalization and wider access to information, the difference in levels of awareness and understanding among rural, urban and capital city residents are not significant. Over the last few years all people from Moldova got access to the national mass media outlets. Although education programs and awareness campaigns were implemented in many rural areas, the effectiveness of these programs was not often measured; neither were levels of awareness of trafficking measured among these people.

H1: There is not a significant difference in the levels of awareness and understanding among rural, urban, and capital city residents.

H2: Levels of awareness and understanding of human trafficking are not influenced by the level of education.

Anti-trafficking experts claim that the level of education is directly correlated with the level of awareness and understanding of human trafficking – more education translates into a better understanding of human trafficking. However, I hypothesized that education levels do not have a significant impact on the awareness of human trafficking. Human trafficking is a serious social problem, which concerns all Moldovans regardless of their educational background.

H3: Levels of awareness and understanding of human trafficking are not influenced by social class or salary.

Human trafficking policy makers explain that poorer people from a lower social class do not understand the aspects of human trafficking due to – lower education, fewer economic resources, and less access to information compared to wealthier classes.

Methods

Survey variables

Age (1%, >15 years; 32%, 16-25; 17%, 26-35; 17%, 36-45; 14%, 46-55; 16%, 56-65; 4%, <66 years), gender (55%, female; 45%, male), residency area (51%, rural; 27%, urban; 22%, capital city), regions of Moldova (63%, Center; 22%, North; 15%, South), social class (67%, middle class; 26%, lower class; 7%, upper class).

Operationalization of variables

This chapter contains three dependent variables (human trafficking situation in Moldova, dangers abroad, and trafficking types) and four independent variables (residency, salary, social class, education).

Human Trafficking: Situation in Moldova. Respondents were asked to share what they thought was the human trafficking situation in Moldova compared to previous years during the data collection period (2013-2014). Their responses ranged from “do not know”, “increasing”, “no change”, to “decreasing”. This variable has been coded as categorical with three categories, treating “do not know” category as missing. About 50% of respondents thought that the situation was getting worse, 12% said it had not changed, and 20% thought it was decreasing compared to previous years. Participants in qualitative interviews were asked to reason why they thought that situation is not changing, aggravating, or decreasing.

Dangers Abroad. Respondents were asked if it was dangerous to travel abroad to an unknown country. The responses ranged from “not dangerous”, “it depends”, to “dangerous”. The opinion poll shows that 81% of respondents think it is dangerous, 12% think it is not dangerous, and 7% think it depends on many factors. Qualitative interviews and follow up questions were asked to find out if dangers were trafficking related or unrelated.

Type of Dangers Abroad: Respondents who said that it was “dangerous” to travel abroad or it “depends” were asked to what dangers they were referring. About 70% of them mentioned trafficking risks directly, 6% referred to trafficking indirectly, and 24% mentioned other risks that were not related to risks of being trafficked.

Trafficking Types. Respondents were asked to identify all types of human trafficking they knew. Based on their responses six categories emerged, 47% identified 3 types of human

trafficking, 37% identified 2 types, 12% identified one type, 9% identified 4 types, 3% identified 5 or more types of trafficking, and 1% was not able to identify any type of human trafficking.

Area of residency. Respondents in the sample are categorized in three distinct categories: rural, urban, and capital city residents. About 51% of respondents reside in rural, 27% in urban areas, and 22% in the capital city.

Education. Respondents were asked how many years of education they had completed (numerical variable). However, for the regressions a new categorical variable with four categories was created: Middle School (MS) – those who have had 9 or less years of education; High School (HS) – those who have had between 12 – 10 years of education; Undergraduate degree (BA) – those who have had between 13 – 15 years of education; Graduate degree (MA+) – those who have had more than 15 years of education. About 47% of polled people had an HS degree, 35% have had a BA, 16% have attended MS, and 3% have a master degree or higher degree.

Social Class. Respondents were asked to what social class they belonged. Therefore, their responses might have been biased, but there was no better way to find out what their social class was than asking them about it. According to their responses, 67% belong to the middle social class, 26% belong to a lower social class, and 7% belong to a higher social class.

Monthly Salary. Respondents were asked about their monthly salaries. They had the option to choose between three categories: less than 300 USD (coded as low salary), between 300 – 600 USD (coded as average salary), and more than 600 USD (coded as high salary). About 58% of respondents have low salaries, 25% have average salaries, and 17% have high salaries.

Salary to cover min expenses. Respondents were asked if their monthly salary covered minimum living expenses. Responses were coded as “yes” or “no”. About 56% of respondents said that they could not cover their living expenses from the salary alone.

Results

Generally, Moldovan population is well informed about human trafficking, 97% said that they knew about human trafficking, 75% mentioned 2 to 3 types of trafficking, 64% of polled respondents said that people of any gender could be trafficked, and 52% of respondents said that people of any age could be trafficked (see the table below).

Table 2: Definition of human trafficking according to Moldovans

Variables		Percent	N
What is human trafficking?	Don't know	2.4 %	6
	Know	97.6%	243
People of what gender can be trafficked?	Females only	36.5 %	91
	Males only	0 %	0
	Both genders	63.5 %	158
People of what age can be trafficked?	Young only (<18)	24.6 %	59
	Mature (18-35)	22.9 %	55
	Any age	51.7 %	124
What types of trafficking do you know?(# enumerate)	0 types mentioned	1.2 %	3
	1 type mentioned	12 %	30
	2 types mentioned	35.6 %	89
	3 types mentioned	39.6 %	99
	4 types mentioned	8.8 %	22
	5+ types mentioned	2.8 %	7

Note: N=250. The output was produced through descriptive statistics (frequencies)

Table 3: Factors predicting Moldovans' awareness and understanding levels of human trafficking

Factors	Situation	Dangers Abroad	Trafficking types
Residency (rural)	.20**	.08	.13*
Residency (capital)	-.25***	-.05	.05
Salary (low)	.13	.03	-.09
Salary (average)	-.17*	-.08	-.08
Social class (low)	.15*	.19**	.25***
Social class (mid)	.14	.32***	.16*
Education (MS)	.14*	.11	.10
Education (HS)	.21**	.06	-.008
Education (MA+)	-.25***	-.17**	.05

Note: Sample size =250. Cell entries are final standardized coefficients. These are separate linear regressions; a separate linear regression was run for each independent variable.

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

The results of the linear regressions show little support for the original hypotheses. Instead, it shows how counter-trafficking organizations have been operating under wrong assumptions. First, I found out that rural residents, in fact, are more likely to be informed about human trafficking, while capital city residents are less well informed. Second, the rural residents were able to identify more types of human trafficking compared to other groups. Third, the lower social class seems to be the strongest predictor of higher levels of awareness and understanding of trafficking. Fourth, the middle class people are the most concerned about potential risks when considering travelling abroad. Fifth, the higher education degree predicts less awareness as to human trafficking.

This chapter does not find support for original hypotheses, in fact it shows that residency area, social class, salary, and education play a role in predicting people's levels of awareness and understanding of human trafficking. People who reside in rural areas, from lower social and

economic classes are better informed about human trafficking. This points out to the fact that the counter-trafficking organizations in Moldova operate under wrong assumptions. Their assumptions are grounded on the argument that people from rural areas are more prone to be trafficked due to unawareness of human trafficking. This phenomenon has several explanations, which are to be discussed later in this dissertation (refer to part 7, 9, and 10).

Summary

It was hypothesized that residency, education, social class, and salary have no significant effect on people's awareness of human trafficking. However, this chapter demonstrates the opposite – these factors are accurate predictors of people's awareness and understanding levels, but in very surprising ways. This suggests that anti-trafficking organizations operating in Moldova such as the IOM, the UNODC, LaStrada, and the Moldovan government are operating under wrong assumptions. Operating under inaccurate assumptions can have serious consequences and can undermine the prevention anti-trafficking efforts carried out in Moldova.

7. FROM DATA COLLECTION TO POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN MOLDOVA

In part 3, I discussed the loopholes of current human trafficking literature and the way this study tries to address it. In part 6, I suggested that counter-trafficking organizations operate under wrong assumptions, namely about the levels of awareness among Moldovan people. In this part, I try to find out why these organizations operate under certain assumptions. The interviews with anti-trafficking experts from Moldova provide a comprehensive overview of the ways counter-trafficking organizations collect, codify, analyze, store, share, and use their data (Creswell 2012, 535) and offers a glimpse of the loopholes of current anti-trafficking data.

Some academics and researchers have started to acknowledge that data collected from victims of human trafficking are under-representative and often inaccurate (Molland 2013, 101; Kempadoo et al. 2005; Weitzer 2005; Zhang 2009; Stefanizzi 2007). The reason some policy makers and scholars have been calling for better research on human trafficking

is that it plays a role on trafficking which involves close collaboration with not only other UN agencies and NGOs but also state agencies. Owing to its coordination role, it becomes predisposed to place focus on broad policy responses to trafficking (Molland 2013, 105).

Some UN anti-trafficking officials ‘were growing tired of hyperbole media coverage and inexperienced NGOs implementing activities based on assumption (and even fabrication) rather than empirical evidence’ (Molland 2013, 105). However, this does not stop the UN agencies and governmental institutions from actually using these estimates and numbers (e.g. see report by the UNGIFT using information provided by the Global Slavery Index, Walk Foundation NGO).

Another scholar explains why reliable data and information are important in the field of human trafficking, ‘official data are extremely useful for learning about the functioning of the

[anti-trafficking] organizations which are engaged in producing the procedures for defining and limiting the phenomenon' (Stefanizzi 2007, 47).

However, there are few studies which have actually studied the implications of using inaccurate data and wrong assumptions about who is and who is not prone to human trafficking (Doezema 1999, 24; Molland 2013, 102; Vance 2012, 202; Weitzer 2015, 231). This dissertation was on a mission to find out why anti-trafficking organizations in Moldova operate under certain assumptions. The section below details the whole process of data collection, data processing, data analysis, and data usage by the leading counter-trafficking organizations in Moldova. This study finds scientific evidence of the negative implications of using under-representative data, but the interviews were designed not only to allow the reader to see the entire process of collecting and using data, but also to offer the possibility to identify the data loopholes.

Methods

This part is based on qualitative data, in-depth interviews with anti-trafficking experts who have work or have worked in Moldova and/or have an extensive knowledge of this phenomenon in Moldova. Questions were framed to find out the ways organizations collect, store, and use their data. I was interested in mapping the path from raw data collection to anti-trafficking policies implementation. Several major stages emerged, data collection, data codification, data analysis, policy drafting, policy recommendations, and policy implementations. Interviews were conducted with the anti-trafficking experts from the IOM (Moldova), LaStrada (Moldova) and the ICMPD (work carried out in Moldova).

The IOM Moldova case I (2017)

The information that will follow is based on an in-depth interview with Irina Arap, anti-trafficking and repatriation specialist at the IOM Moldova. She spoke on behalf of the IOM Moldova rather than sharing her personal views. In this section the IOM Moldova will be simply referred to as the IOM.

Ms Arap started the interview highlighting the importance the IOM has on anti-trafficking efforts in Moldova. While the IOM offices worldwide focus on different areas of migration depending of the country's needs, the IOM Moldova Prevention and Protection Programme (Counter Trafficking) places a special focus on combating and preventing human trafficking.

The Moldovan government has insufficient resources and capabilities to fully and independently address this problem [human trafficking], this is why the role of the IOM is so important in this field. It is worth mentioning that the IOM has close collaborative relations with the Moldovan state authorities and other anti-trafficking entities in Moldova and abroad. The Moldovan Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family is a key partner to the IOM in combating human trafficking. The IOM has a very strong lobby force in Moldova. Thanks to its efforts some very important changes have been made when it comes to national legislation of the repatriation process and return of victims and stranded *migrants/migrants in extremely vulnerable situations* from abroad to Moldova (Arap 2017).

Ms Arap explains that the repatriation reforms to Moldovan legislative system are very important since this extends assistance services not only to people who fulfill the criteria of a *victim of human trafficking*, but also to those who are classified as *stranded migrant*s. Before these reforms, the 'IOM has assisted in repatriation victims of human trafficking and stranded migrants, but since the amendment of the repatriation regulation, the state budget will assume expenditures for the repatriation of stranded migrants also' (Arap 2017). *Stranded Migrant* is a term used to classify migrants who have gone abroad to seek employment opportunities, but due

to unplanned circumstances cannot return home, this might have happened due to a lack of resources, severe health problems, lack or loss of identity documents that cannot be restored by themselves, lost relations with family members in the country of origin for example.

The IOM is mainly involved in the identification and return of victims of human trafficking. Embassies and consulates have a very important role in assisting the IOM to identify and return victims back home:

Consuls and other diplomats are very well trained and prepared to deal with cases of human trafficking. In fact the IOM provides a special guide book for them when they encounter a case of human trafficking, especially during the identification stage. They are also provided with special criteria to be applied in deciding who is a victim of human trafficking and who is not. The guide book is called 'guidelines in identifying a victim of human trafficking'. Diplomats working in foreign countries know very well what to do when people are seeking help in trafficking situations (Arap 2017).

Moldovan diplomatic missions abroad have a very important role in assisting the IOM with the return of victims back home, they take care of all the travel documentation necessary for these people. Ms Arap explains that people working at the IOM Moldova have had mainly positive encounters with diplomatic missions abroad. 'The IOM usually has very close relations with embassies and consulates since we have to cooperate very often on identification and return of victims. I would say the link of communication between us [the IOM] and missions abroad is very strong' (Arap 2017).

Many critics of the IOM²³ as a global actor voiced their concerns with overly strict definitions and criteria of who is and who is not a victim of human trafficking. However, Ms Arap assured me that this is not the case at the IOM Moldova, the IOM assists victims regardless if they fit specified criteria or not. She also mentioned that it is different when a victim self-identifies as opposed when a victim is referred to the IOM by other bodies such as social workers

²³The IOM here is referred as the IOM in general, not specifically the IOM Moldova

from NGOs. 'For example, all victims are referred to the IOM within the National Referral System (Arap 2017).

The primary information used by the IOM is received from the Assistance and Protection Centre, specialized in crisis assistance (IOM 2016). The center was established by the IOM. Later, the IOM transferred duties to the state national level, but the IOM still has a big say in the center's activities and programs.

Now the center is under the control of Moldovan state authorities. This center is the main provider of information to the IOM. The information is received from assisted victims of human trafficking and other vulnerable categories the IOM assists. These data are used to create the profile of a (potential) victim of human trafficking. Received information is used to identify new trends and patterns of human trafficking in Moldova. These trends and themes are later used to draft and develop anti-trafficking policies and regulations (Arap 2017).

Furthermore, data provided by the center were used to create a profile of a potential victim and to set a new program to assist potential victims. These programs are considered to be very effective in preventing some people from being trafficked. Ms Arap explains that people from rural areas, from a lower socio-economic class, with disabilities, and orphans are among those more vulnerable to human trafficking. She defines the term of 'socially-vulnerable as a social situation when a person does not have enough social support, often a person who has no relatives, no job, and no other sources of existence'(Arap 2017).

These potential victims have a profile similar to that of victims prior to their trafficking experience – vulnerable single-parent families, children, victims of domestic violence, persons with a low level of education, and those from poor rural areas with minimal opportunities (IOM 2016).

When it comes to the identification of victims, the IOM collaborates with the countries of destination of victims of trafficking from Moldova. I asked if victims of trafficking received help in countries of destination and Ms Arap said that 'sometimes victims can benefit from help offered in the destination countries, however the IOM is focused on identifying and returning

these victims home only on the basis of their written return consent. And that victims are offered help in the country where they have been trafficked to, but these are exceptions to the rule' (Arap 2017).

The IOM has strong ties to the Moldovan state authorities, to other international organizations, and NGOs. The work carried out by the IOM is possible thanks to private sponsors, donors, and collaboration with other anti-trafficking communities in Moldova and abroad. 'The IOM has long-term and sustainable cooperation ties with these anti-trafficking bodies. The IOM is very active in this area and plays a crucial role in preventing and combating this problem in Moldova' (Arap 2017).

Specially trained social assistants and psychologists collect primary information from victims assisted at the center, which is transmitted to the IOM. Hence, the IOM receives collected information from the center without being directly involved in data collection. Once data are received from the center, the IOM anti-trafficking experts apply different criteria and indicators to assess this problem. The IOM is very careful handling sensitive data; 'database contains all data and I would like to point out that the data is confidential and is not divulged to other persons' (Arap 2017).

It is important to track down every assisted victim since this information is used to justify expenses. The system to keep track of the beneficiaries is known as *MIMOSA* and it is used internally only. Every assisted victim has a *MIMOSA* identification number, this is used to protect the identity of every victim assisted (Arap 2017).

The data, collected at the center and other NGOs and later sent to the IOM, is used to understand new patterns of human trafficking. 'Above all, we have to consider that patterns of trafficking have changed drastically over time. For example before, anti-trafficking organizations used to focus on sex trafficking, but now these organizations also focus on labor trafficking. But

the IOM is not the only one, these are the changing trends which have been followed by many (Arap 2017).

Another pattern that emerged during the interview is the fact that many victims do not identify themselves as victims of human trafficking. This is an obstacle to assist these people. Therefore, it is also very difficult to get information or any type of data from these people. They remain undisclosed and unassisted. Ms Arap explains that this happens because people do not fully understand the definition of human trafficking because:

Trafficking trends are changing very fast and human trafficking it was not was it used to be. Few decades ago, traffickers were very violent and used harsh measures to recruit people into being trafficked, now however the situation has changed and traffickers operate in more gentle ways. Today, the process of human trafficking it is not so violent, no violence, not so much physical force. Traffickers became smarter in the way they recruit and exploit people. They tend to persuade people to come and work abroad for a very low pay. Then these people go abroad, they might be sometimes paid very little, and they are not always abused by the traffickers. Hence these people do not identify themselves as victims since they believe they have made an independent choice to work for cheap in the grey area of the employment market. This is one of the main reasons that the number of victims are going down in the recent years. Traffickers are gentler and victims do not see themselves as victims (Arap 2017).

However, there are still cases when people are deprived of freedoms. There was a trafficking case in Ukraine (2013), Moldovan citizens (women and men) were exploited for 11 months in the tobacco industry. They were deprived of their identification documents, kept against their will, and forced to work without pay in poor working conditions. After 11 months these people were identified by Hotline of International Center La Strada and repatriated to Moldova by the IOM. Some of the victims were in a very bad health and some of them even died because of health problems, which occurred during the exploitation period. Ms Arap mentions that nothing happened on legal grounds since the Ukrainian authorities did not classify this as a trafficking case. Consequently, this shows that a lack of an agreement over the definition of

human trafficking is very problematic. This is also the case when it comes to criminalizing this crime.

The IOM is an active actor in this field, however, it faces several challenges. First, the IOM still strives to ensure enough funding to help the Moldovan government in its needs in the field of prevention and combating this phenomenon. ‘Lately, funds and financial resources have decreased, this is a problem considering that the Moldovan government does not have enough resources and capabilities to deal with this phenomenon on its own, therefore the role of the IOM is a crucial one and financial resources are a key component in keeping the work of the organization going’ (Arap 2017). From her experience, Ms Arap said that some donors phase out since they expect the Moldovan government to assume more:

Donors often have very strict rules when it comes to money spending; they want to know how the money will be invested and what the long term goals are that can be achieved with this money. It is getting harder and harder to convince sponsors that the planned programs are worth investing in (Arap 2017).

Second, the Moldovan government has to offer more help to victims of trafficking. Third, the economic situation has to improve. ‘the demand for cheap labor will never end and people will not stop being exploited either’ (Arap 2017). Fourth, people have to be aware of the definition of a victim of human trafficking and be willing to identify themselves as victims, this will make the identification process easier.

Fifth, raising awareness of this problem among the Moldovan public is necessary. We have to devote more efforts to inform people about what human trafficking is and what the risks related to this problem are. There is a lack of information and understanding concerning this problem in Moldova. This, in addition to poverty and lack of economic opportunities, is a push factor of human trafficking (Arap 2017).

The IOM Moldova case II (2015)

The interview was conducted with Irina Todorova and Tobias Metzner, counter-trafficking experts who worked for the IOM. Ms Todorova spoke on behalf of the IOM Moldova and Mr Metzner spoke on behalf of the IOM in general, focusing on his experience with the IOM Austria and the IOM Haiti.

According to the IOM, the data collection is a very complex process that consists of four steps (data collection, data transfer, data validation, and data entry). The IOM uses two types of data, victim-centered data and trafficker-centered data. Data are very difficult to collect for ethical reasons and due to their delicate nature.

The relevant experts at the IOM provide information and average estimates of trafficked victims. People in the assisting cycle are used for data collection purposes; these victims are also encouraged and sometimes obliged to testify in courts. The assistance cycle starts by 'ticking' different categories such as identification method, a victim's legal status, family tracing, and so on. It is very hard to prove in courts that someone has been trafficked. This is why there are so few criminal cases against traffickers.

The IOM closely cooperates with local governments to draft and implement anti-trafficking policies. The 'IOM and Moldova's government's efforts go hand-in-hand'. Anti-trafficking policies are based on analyses of identified cases of human trafficking. There are new procedures every 3 years and laws and regulations change every 5 years. The duration of the procedures and laws updates depends on the country implementing these updates. Time is a big constraint in tackling the problem of human trafficking. National governments act and move very

slowly, which makes the process cumbersome. The IOM collaborates with ministries, judiciary chambers, police, border control offices, and others.

The Palermo Convention it is too broad and does not allow for effective measures to tackle the problem of human trafficking.

We [IOM] need to identify common indicators in the field of social justice and rule of law. Data limitations are due to the lack of common harmonized indicators measuring human trafficking and allowing to punish those involved in trafficking. We need a big amount of homogeneous data. Identification procedures differ from country to country, which makes it difficult to compare the data across countries (Todorova 2014).

There are also responsibilities towards donors and sponsors. The IOM is limited as to which ways it uses the received funds. There are specific funds for specific purposes. Funds are scarce and there is a big fight over who gets what money-wise. Countries have to prove that they need the money to fight human trafficking more than others.

Mr Metzner – he used to work for the IOM – thinks that donors need to be aware of the problems mentioned above. Counter-trafficking organizations have to stop using estimates and fake data. No one really knows how these estimates are estimated, but IOs and NGOs keep using these estimates. There are a variety of opinions when it comes to the use of estimates. People keep using estimates because it is easy and it favors their purposes when it comes to grants and funds applications. From his experience, officers at the counter-trafficking organizations operate under the slogan ‘Go on or go back’ when it comes to data analyses. ‘Go back’ refers to original data, to make a change to the original data collection methods, but who wants to do that? No one does. So, the majority ‘goes on’ with inaccurate data analyses. ‘There is an urgent need to be more careful about the conclusions the counter-trafficking experts draw based on collected data’. Another prevalent misconception at the IOM is that the reduction in cases of human trafficking signals the reduction of the actual number of trafficked people, which is not necessarily the case.

Mr Metzner mentions a study conducted by the IOM and Nexus institute on Moldova:

Data collected directly from trafficked persons is an important source of information and has proven central in efforts to understand and combat human trafficking. As one CT [counter-trafficking] professional remarked, there is a need to bridge the gap between research and data collection and operational work (Craggs et al. 2010, 27).

For the IOM, the data collected from assisted victims is central to its anti-trafficking efforts:

Research and data collection conducted within the assistance framework, such as the IOM approach, can shed light on a range of issues including risks and vulnerability factors, the need of different groups of trafficking victims (e.g. men, women, children, victim of labor and sex trafficking); the gender dimensions of trafficking; details of the trafficking process and, albeit it to a lesser extent, the perpetrators involved, their modus operandi, the routes used and so on (Craggs et al. 2010, 27).

Mr Metzner mentions that one has to be cautious using victim-centred information because it is not representative. In fact, many victims identified by the IOM have never been assisted. Hence, the IOM is less likely to collect information from victims who did not get assistance. Assisted victims represent a very narrow small group of people who were identified, willing to receive assistance.

The following paragraph from the IOM's website further expands the explanation of victim-centered data use in prevention efforts. It is very clear that victim-centred data are used to generalize the characteristics of identified victims. Then these generalizations are used to target people (potential victims as the IOM calls them) with similar characteristics.

These potential victims have a profile similar to victims' prior to their trafficking experience; vulnerable single parent families, children, victims of domestic violence, persons with a low level of education, and those from poor rural areas with minimal opportunities (IOM 2015; Hollis 2015, 17).

LaStrada case (2013)

The information that follows is based on an in-depth interview with Viorelia Rusu, vice-president of LaStrada Moldova. She spoke on the behalf of LaStrada rather than sharing her personal views.

LaStrada Moldova is one of several counter-trafficking centers in Europe. LaStrada collects its own data. LaStrada International (Headquarter) has only a secretary function; each branch is independent and decides on data collection and data usage on its own. LaStrada's relations with other LaStrada centers come in form of yearly meetings, sharing information, best practices, and useful strategies to combat human trafficking.

The information is collected from the organizations' activities and programs. LaStrada collects information from hotline calls (primary source). The calls are recorded, analyzed, and then classified as a trafficking case or non-trafficking case, a domestic case or an international case, etc. Ms Russu highlighted that the hotline was the main source of information used at the center. The first data entry started in 2001 and has continued until today (August 2013). For over 12 years LaStrada has been using the same database, but continues to add more cases to it. This data base is used for guiding purposes on new trends of human trafficking. 'The changes and trends modifications are tremendous over the past 12 years. The patterns of human trafficking changes so drastically that it is almost impossible to use the data we collected 10 years ago. Therefore, we re-modified our data base' (Rusu 2013).

Data changes and modifications took place mainly regarding the profiles of 'victims' of human trafficking. LaStrada knew from before that victims come from socially and economically vulnerable environments. However, in 2013, it started to pay more attention to the fact that victims from vulnerable environments are more likely to be trafficked. Valeria Russu adds:

We [LaStrada Moldova] understood that victims cannot return home, there's nothing waiting for them. No house, nor family members. Traffickers target the vulnerable people, people with no salaries, no sources of existence, and these people have no option of returning home (Rusu 2013).

Another observed trend is that victims are not willing to identify or label themselves as victims of human trafficking.

Our aim is to write reports, analyze new trends, and influence the anti-trafficking prevention efforts, we [LaStrada] focus very much on prevention efforts. We analyze the profile of identified victims, sum up their characteristics, based on those characteristics we can draw generalizations – what are the new trafficking trends, who is more vulnerable to trafficking, what are the places where people are mostly trafficked from, based on all of this information, we write reports, policy recommendations, and closely cooperate with the Moldovan authorities to change the prevention efforts accordingly (Rusu 2013).

LaStrada adapts and adjusts its raising awareness campaigns accordingly to the new information it gets from its updated database. It uses the main characteristics of the identified victims to change and update its raising awareness campaigns and education programs. It has re-oriented its prevention efforts. LaStrada is very proud to call itself an accurate source of information because it bases its policy recommendation on primary sources of information (from victims). It also uses the information and data base of its partners, who happen to base their efforts on information collected from victims of human trafficking, too.

Data collection is a very complex and time-consuming process. LaStrada uses its own twelve-year-old data base because it takes too much effort to collect new data using new methods. LaStrada rarely changes its data collection methods or data analysis techniques because it is a very cumbersome process.

According to Viorelia Russu, the counter-trafficking policies and regulations are drafted on principles based on information collected from victims of human trafficking. All policies and recommendations are based on in-depth analyses of information collected from identified and

assisted victims of human trafficking. In Moldova, anti-trafficking policy regulations and measures are implemented by governmental institutions through specifically set-up programs, mainly raising awareness of human trafficking via advertisements campaigns, mass media outlets, and educational initiatives. The main component of tackling the problem of human trafficking is by trying to prevent it. The main component of prevention is raising awareness of human trafficking. The main approach to decreasing the rates of victims of human trafficking is to prevent it by informing the Moldovan population. There are many actors involved in prevention measures, the ministry of education, judiciary, police, border control officers, and others.

LaStrada says that they do not take any measures to check the effectiveness and efficiency of their programs, nor do the Moldovan authorities have such a mechanism. The effectiveness of the implemented programs and projects is checked/guided by the number of identified victims. When asked about the levels of awareness of Moldovan population this is what Rusu said:

Rural people are least informed and urban people, of course, are most informed about human trafficking. Rural people are considerably less informed compared to urban people, especially people who live in rural areas further from the cities. Our special target are people from rural areas, we put an extra effort to reach out to them because they are more vulnerable to be trafficked. Rural residents are the main risk group to trafficking. The second risk group to trafficking are children from orphanages. These orphans are very vulnerable to trafficking because they have no choice, even if they're informed they are trafficked because they have no choice and no options. No durable, sustainable ways to integrate these children. As a consequence they are trafficked (Rusu 2013).

According to LaStrada, raising awareness campaigns have a very important role in tackling this problem. Inhabitants are more informed about human trafficking compared to 10 or 20 years ago. But the problem is that human trafficking has evolved, methods have changed and people do not recognize the trafficking situations. People need more information about human trafficking in

order to avoid being trafficked. Hence, raising awareness of human trafficking can make these people less vulnerable to human trafficking.

I asked what about the main approaches used to combat human trafficking in Moldova and this is what followed:

First of all, raising awareness; second, assistance to victims as prevention efforts; then - followed by the Moldovan authorities - punishing the traffickers. We notice a great progress, better cooperation with state authorities, victims have gained more rights since 2011. Victims have more rights and are less traumatized because Moldovan authorities have become more sensible and caring when it comes to victims of trafficking. It is also important to inform Moldovan authorities about new trends of human trafficking since this helps a lot to tackle this problem, and to identify more victims of trafficking (Rusu 2013).

LaStrada maintains very tight collaboration ties with Moldovan authorities such as police, judiciary chamber, the ministry of education, public schools, and other institutions. The Moldovan government offers help and assistance to LaStrada; it implements LaStrada's recommendations; it helps with reaching out and raising awareness campaigns by helping with marketing, information advertisements, and surveys. LaStrada also has strong ties with the IOM Moldova (partnership relations). The IOM finances LaStrada's initiatives, in return LaStrada reports victims of trafficking to the IOM.

Asking the question of how often LaStrada checked the levels of public awareness of Moldovans I was told the following: LaStrada does not check the public awareness levels because it does not have the money and it is not so important because the most valuable information for prevention campaigns comes from identified victims.

There are no occasions when foreign researchers get access to LaStrada's data base, the only possibility are interviews with people working at their center.

The ICMPD Case (2013)

The interviews were conducted with Mariyana Radeva Berket and Brigitte Stevkovski, human trafficking research analysts at the ICMPD. The questions were framed to understand better how the ICMPD collects, stores, and uses data. The information that follows is based on the information provided by the interviewees and represents the official views of the ICMPD.

The ICMPD is a cross-centered research center aiming to improve the migration policies by giving recommendations to governments and other migration-related organizations. It has very close collaborative relations to the national governments, IOs, and NGOs. ‘We work with all the institutions that deal in one way or another with migration, but especially with the governments. We are mostly interested in the governments’ (Berket 2013). I was told that the center was more interested in cooperating with the governmental bodies because it was more impactful when it came to the migration policies implementation.

There are many problems with the current migration and anti-trafficking data. The anti-trafficking bodies provide different estimates of trafficked people. This might also be explained by the fact that some victims are counted twice.

But even taking into consideration the double-counting of victims, it is still not clear how some institutions arrive at the current estimates. By the way, I have recently presented a power-point presentation on different numbers of trafficked victims based on the source (e.g. the ILO, the IOM, the UNODC). In addition, the data are not comparable across countries. There should be a tendency to harmonize data. There is a need of a political commitment to achieve and implement this (Berket 2013, Stevkovski 2013).

Summary

Interviewed experts from the above mentioned organizations say that they struggle with their data, especially when it comes to harmonization of data collection methods and harmonization of the human trafficking definition from a legal perspective. Harmonization of these two mentioned

themes can improve the anti-trafficking efforts by allowing comparing trafficking aspects across countries. This can also lead to better information sharing, replication of practices, and strategies to implement anti-trafficking policies.

Moreover, anti-trafficking experts say that it is important to clearly define human trafficking as a crime from a legal perspective. Currently, there are different legal indicators to classify human trafficking as a crime, which creates many difficulties. For example sex labor is considered a crime in some countries, but not in others. At European Union level, eight countries, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Greece, Turkey, Hungary, and Latvia, legalized prostitution. The rest of EU countries criminalize sex labor in varied ways.

Other important patterns emerged during the interviews. First, it is all about ‘victims,’ regardless of the stage of trafficking discussed, it has always been narrowed down to ‘potential victims’ and/or ‘current victims’, ‘assisted victims’ and/or ‘unassisted victims’, ‘identified victims’ and/or ‘unidentified victims’ – this clearly shows that anti-trafficking experts perceive the problem of human trafficking mainly from the perspective of the ‘victim’. This is nothing new, it is well known that counter-trafficking organizations prefer victim-centered data over other types of data. In part 3 of this dissertation, I discussed in detail the implications of using this type of data. Counter-trafficking organizations justify their focus on victim-centered data as the only reliable primary sources of information these organizations can get (Rusu 2013, Todorova 2015).

Second, the anti-trafficking recommendations, policies and regulations are also based on patterns and trends identified from *victim-oriented data* (Berket 2013, Rusu 2013, Todorova 2015, Stevkovski 2013). Counter-trafficking organizations use victim-centred data to understand human trafficking – this constitutes the ‘primary source of data about trafficking in the current

knowledge base', which is also the base of anti-trafficking policies. 'Moreover, a large number of trafficking research projects are based on victim-centred data, often accessing respondents through assistance programmes and, thus, overlapping in terms of informants with the information collected by assistance programmes' (Craggs et al. 2010, 26; Surtees et al. 2010).

Third, anti-trafficking organizations voiced their struggle to update their data and methods due to a lack of financial resources and time (Rusu 2013, Todorova 2015). However, Craggs and Surtees think that the problem might also lie in the fact that some anti-trafficking practitioners lack skills to fully assess their data. The anti-trafficking experts should ask themselves to what extent the case management data are sufficiently complete from a research viewpoint. 'While assisting organisations have access to victims (and thus victim-centred data), they do not necessarily have the skills to assess, analyse and present this data in the research field if they do not also have sufficient training in research and data analysis' (Craggs et al. 2010, 50). This can have serious implications for academic rigidity and research impartiality of findings based on victim-centered data.

Linked with the issue of whether data collected in a service provision context is sufficiently rigorous to support sound research are issues of objectivity and independence. Where research results or data collection somehow contradict the work or objective of an organisation, are such organisations willing and able to share this information? How much would a service provider reveal of their findings if the data challenges their programmatic approach? (Craggs et al. 2010, 50).

Fourth, anti-trafficking organizations still operate under the assumption that raising awareness campaigns are a successful tool to tackle human trafficking in Moldova. In 2014, the IOM Moldova circulated a document mentioning ways Moldova tries to combat this problem. Under the section entitled *What is being done to combat trafficking in Moldova?* The IOM (2014) enumerates several activities carried out in Moldova, including raising awareness:

There are also various proactive non-governmental organizations providing assistance and support to victims of human trafficking, implementing programs aimed at preventing this phenomenon among high risk groups through **public awareness raising campaigns** and through direct assistance to at-risk groups (IOM, Frequently Asked Questions - Moldova, Migration, Trafficking 2014, 9).

Fifth, one of the main strategies to prevent human trafficking are raising awareness campaigns (Berket 2013, Rusu 2013, Todorova 2015, Stevkovski 2013). The IOM (2014) continues to emphasize that raising awareness is an important strategy in trying to prevent human trafficking. Under the section of *What efforts has the government made to prevent human trafficking?* The IOM again refers to raising awareness:

The functioning of the state mechanism for fighting and preventing trafficking has been continuously supported by awareness-raising activities aimed to prevent the phenomenon. These activities focused on different target groups – victims of trafficking, vulnerable persons (particularly women and girls), youth, clergy, but also donors and partners. Among others, awareness-raising aimed to address the factors that increase the vulnerability to trafficking (IOM, Frequently Asked Questions - Moldova, Migration, Trafficking 2014, 9).

Sixth, interviewed organizations (mainly LaStrada and the IOM) lack a mechanism in place to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of their implemented anti-trafficking programs and policies, but they do not think that they even need one (Russu 2013, Todorova 2015). The lack of a mechanism in place to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of implemented programs and policies it is very problematic. How can an organization rely on measuring human trafficking rates based solely on few identified victims? The anti-trafficking experts from the IOM and LaStrada do not think such a mechanism is needed at all. This explains why there is a limited number (or even absence) of reports on the efficiency of anti-trafficking policies.

Eighth, the dialogue-communication between anti-trafficking organizations and the Moldovan public is lacking; communication flows only in one way – from counter-trafficking organizations to people, but not the other way around. During the interviews I found that these organizations still operate under the assumption that people in rural areas, with less education,

and fewer economic resources are less informed about human trafficking, and therefore more prone to being trafficked, which is wrong as this dissertation finds. It is not surprising that counter-trafficking organizations in Moldova operate under these assumptions considering that the public opinion is rarely asked on this topic.

8. MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION IN MOLDOVA

Migration from Moldova

Once Moldova re-gained its independence in 1991, Moldovan citizens got the possibility to move more freely across national borders. Labor migration was mainly directed towards Europe due to a severe economic crisis in the late 1990s. The number of economic migrants increased considerably by 2005: from 100,000 in 1999 to 400,000 in 2005 (Chindea 2008, 11). According to the IOM, migration of Moldovan citizens is mainly seasonal or temporary – less than 14% of migrants voiced their will to move and live abroad in the long term. On one hand, migrants who work in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries go there seasonally – about 52% of total migrants. On the other hand, people who migrate to European Union (EU) countries go there for long periods of time. Additionally, about 23% of migrants to EU countries voiced their wish to settle abroad in the long term. According to the IOM, travelling to EU countries involves higher costs and frequent illegal travel arrangements. Remittances constitute a significant source of income for many Moldovans – Moldova has some of the highest shares of remittances to the GDP in the world (Chindea 2008, 11). More than 40% of the Moldovans receive remittances to support their households. Additionally, remittances finance more than 50% of the current expenditures in Moldova (Chindea 2008, 11).

Stages of Migration from Moldova

First stage (1990-1994). During the first stage, effective emigration restrictions were developed in Moldova. The beginning of 1990s was dominated by so-called *shuttle* or *commercial* migration. Commercial migration from Moldova was mainly directed toward Turkey, Russia, Romania, and Germany. However, commercial migration decreased by (1) the visa regime of 1993²⁴, (2) strengthened customs control, (3) a price-normalization process in post-Soviet countries, and (4) post-Soviet enterprises' participation in import/export transactions. As a consequence, labor migration replaced commercial migration (N. V. Vremis 2012).

During the period of 1990-1994, many Jewish people permanently emigrated from Moldova²⁵; other people of German, Russian and Ukrainian origin also permanently emigrated from Moldova. Most emigrations 'were based on national/ethnic principles or on family reunification, and the armed conflict of 1992 had an important impact on this phenomenon' (Vremis 2012, 6). About 95% of permanent migrants from Moldova (1990-2003) are hosted by five countries: Israel, the USA, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine. 'The share of each state in the total Moldovan permanent emigration flow was as follows: Israel – 42.93%; the USA – 18.58%; Germany – 15.64%; Russia – 11.99%; and Ukraine – 7.29%' (Vremis 2012, 6).

Second stage (1995-2000). During the second stage, Moldova adapted itself to global migration trends, especially European migration trends. The economic situation (job market and labor force) of Moldova further deteriorated by the social and economic reforms and economic crisis. Moldovan authorities were not able to provide any support and protection to its citizens. As a result, regular and irregular labor migration drastically increased. 'Due to the clandestine

²⁴ On 19 June 1990 the Convention on Implementing the Schengen Agreement was signed, which entered into force on the first of September, 1993. See: http://www.migratie.md/topics/schengen_agreement

²⁵ this trend had already started in the late 1980s

nature of these migration flows, neither the statistics of receiving countries nor those of the country of origin give a clear indication of the most relevant receiving countries' (Vremis 2012, 6). Moldovan state officials on migration say that Russia, Italy, Ukraine, Rumania, Portugal, Spain, Greece, Turkey, and Israel, are the top destination countries of Moldovan migrants. Also during this period, the Moldovan authorities implemented measures to regulate better the labor migration (Vremis 2012, 6).

Third Stage (2001-2006). During the third stage, the Moldovan government promoted the legalization of labor migration and protection of migrant workers. Many European countries including Moldova attempted to implement labor migration regulations. Moldova started dialogues on labor force migration and migrant workers' social protection with 19 countries, 'bilateral agreements on labor force migration and social protection of migrant workers were signed, and consulates of the main states which were recipients of illegal migrants were established in Moldova (Portugal, Greece, and Italy)' (Vremis 2012, 7). As a result, temporary/seasonal labor migration was reduced. According to the European Commission, most labor migrants from Moldova were hosted by Russia (mostly men in the construction industry) and by Italy (mostly women in the service sector) (Lücke 2009).

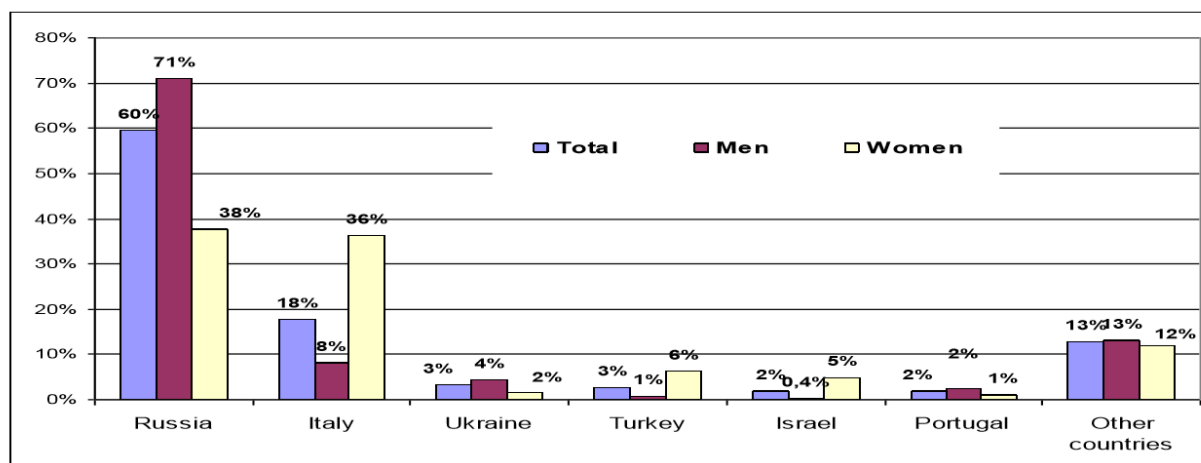
Fourth Stage (2006 –2011). During the fourth stage, Moldova re-considered its labor migration approaches to regulation; it enforced important reforms and strengthened its ties with the EU. As a result, irregular labor migration transformed slowly into regular and regulated migration. However, Moldovan national statistics mentioned that the top destination countries were still Russia and Italy for the period of 2006-2010 (Vremis 2012).

Table 4: Population from Moldova (15+ years) working or looking for work abroad, in thousand persons (NBS 2010)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
All countries	310,1	335,6	309,7	294,9	311,0
Greece	6,1	5,2	2,5	3,0	2,5
Israel	3,4	4,9	8,0	8,4	8,2
Italy	54,7	62,4	55,4	54,8	58,6
Portugal	9,6	7,4	5,6	6,4	5,1
Romania	4,5	3,6	2,1	2,4	2,3
Russia	192,5	210,8	191,1	177,2	191,9
Turkey	12,4	10,7	7,9	8,4	9,0
Ukraine	8,3	10,2	10,9	8,6	6,5
Other countries	18,6	20,3	26,3	25,6	26,9

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), database

Figure 1: Countries of destination for Moldovan migrants, (ILO/NBS 2008)



Source ILO, NBS, 2008

The European Commission experts said the new legislation facilitated the increase of Moldovan migrants in Italy, from 48,000 to 106,000²⁶ during that period (Eurostat 2013; Vremis 2012, 7). A positive trend emerged, illegal migration decreased during this period, while regular migration increased.

²⁶ Eurostat (2013): Population by sex, age and citizenship (migr_pop1ctz), in: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>, Statistics Database, Population and social conditions, Population (populat), International migration and Asylum, Population by citizenship and country of birth.

During 1990-2005, illegal emigration of Moldovans to the EU constituted a big problem that eventually led to human trafficking. But illegal migration decreased thanks to strengthened border security and liberalization of migration regulations. Moldovans migrate easier thanks to the family reunifications, social networks, and Romanian citizenships. Many Moldovan citizens acquire Romanian citizenship²⁷ to travel easier to and within the EU region. Moldovan citizens can travel freely (no visa required) to the CIS countries (Vremis 2012).

In 2010, an IOM study claimed that 19.8% of Moldovan labor migrants were working illegally (17.9% CIS migrants and 26.6% EU migrants from total number of illegal labor migrants) (IOM/CBS-AXA 2009). However, the number of illegal labor migrants has lowered by 10% in 2010 compared to 2008. In 2008, about 30% of labor migrants were illegal and in 2006 about 35% (IOM/CBS-AXA 200617, Lücke 2009). The decrease of illegal labor migration of Moldovans occurred also thanks to a simplification of the legal procedures in some receiving EU countries. ‘Of those individuals classified migrants in both 2006 and 2008, and without a residence permit in 2006, 65 per cent were legalized by 2008. These observations reflect in part the legalization campaigns in several West European countries, including Italy and Spain’ (Lücke 2009, 6). Thanks to EU countries’ efforts to liberalize and legalize some migration-related initiatives, many Moldovan migrants received legal status of residence and legal employment. The opposite has occurred in the CIS countries, due to harsher migration regulations, the number of Moldovan irregular migrants has increased, especially in Russia (Lücke 2009, 19). However, the migration regulations in Russia still allow for a regular residence permit application and its government has a quota of 1.25 million foreign workers (Vremis 2012).

²⁷ Since, historically, Moldova was a part of Romania, many Moldovans can get a Romanian citizenship as long as they can provide some proof of a Romanian ancestor (which is easily done since most Moldovans are Romanian descendants).

Human trafficking is considered a by-product of migration, especially irregular migration. However, Armenta argues that findings on labor migration and working conditions of migrants are often ignored (Armenta 2011, 530). The ILO argues that labor migrants are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking:

The vulnerability of temporary migrant workers needs to be situated in the context of a growing two-tier global migration regime that sorts migrants into rights-holders with access to social and legal citizenships and temporary workers with very limited or no rights whatsoever (Bélanger 2014, 88).

Review of theories of migration

Social researchers explain migration employing the neoclassical economics theory or pull-push theory of migration. The first theory states that migration is triggered by rational economic considerations of relative costs and benefits, usually in terms of financial well-being (Todaro 1970). The second theory states that migration occurs due to pull-push factors (J. R. Hicks 1932). Pull factors of migration are better employment opportunities, and hopes for a decent life (Lewis 1954). Push factors of migration are unemployment and deteriorated quality of life. Migration is caused by external economic opportunities and a lack of internal economic opportunities (Ravenstein 1885).

According to neoclassical theorists, changes in labor demand and supply lead to the change in wages across regions; people move from labor abundant nations to capital abundant nations; their argument is based on wage difference among nations (Zimmermann 1999). There is a linear relationship between migration rate and wage change assuming full employment; migration is predicted by expected earnings and the probability of employment under extended neoclassical examples (Massey 1993). However, some empirical replication studies did not find

a linear relationship between migration rate and wage difference. As the ability of movement depends on financial matters, most labor force is not provided by the poorest countries (Haas 2008).

Network theory explains migration in terms of collective agency and communities of migrants (Boyd 1989). Formal and informal networks are crucial in understanding migration. Migrants use informal networks to inform themselves about potential opportunities, offers, conditions, routes, and best practices. Family, friends, community members, and other personal relationships offer counseling and help in social and economic issues (Radford 2007).

Poor working conditions and the lack of control of labor markets create the problem of irregular migrant workers. Labor economic deregulations and use of informal workers led to the rise of an informal labor sector. The informal labor sector is one of the main pull factors for irregular migrants (Reyneri 2003). This is used by politicians as a tool to manipulate and polarize people around tighter migration policies. Migration and human trafficking are 'political objects insofar as they express, on the one hand the sensitivity of the [state] authorities towards the phenomenon and their capacity to provide adequate instruments of information, and ...[are] instruments for obtaining knowledge and confirmation of political decisions' (Stefanizzi 2007, 47).

The world systems theory explains migration through historical approaches (Wallerstein 1974). Migration happens thanks to globalization, interdependence of economies, and advancement in means of production (Massey 1993). Capital and labor mobility are dependent on each other and highly influence each other according to the world systems theory. These theorists see migration through the lenses of historical capitalist developments. People do not

have a choice in decisions to migrate; deterministic factors force people to move as a result of a larger structural process (Haas 2008).

Dual labor market theorists explain migration through economic structural changes. Demand for labor in economic markets is a key to change in migration patterns (Massey 1993). Demand for labor attracts migration, not supply of labor. Economies of developed countries created the need for low-paid and low skilled jobs, which target migrants rather than domestic citizens (Piore 1986). The need for low skilled and low paid migrants grows and migration policies change accordingly. However, this theory disregards countries of origin and overestimates the practicability of migrant labor recruitment practices; it fails to explain different migration rates in nations with similar economies (Kurekova 2011).

Migration hypotheses and research questions

Economic deprivation is one of the main push factors (in the pull-push theory of migration). This concept means inadequate resources to cover minimum living expenses or lack of basic material benefits that are a necessity in a society. Economic deprivation in this section was measured based on monthly salary and ability to cover minimum living expenses with the salary (earned at the moment of the data collection).

Based on pull-push theory and network theory of migration, the following hypotheses arise:

H1: There will be a negative correlation between monthly salary and desire to move and settle abroad.

H2: There will be a positive correlation between desire to move abroad and family members abroad.

The second hypothesis (H2) predicts that people want to migrate to get re-united with their families. People with more family members are more likely to move abroad than those with fewer; and those with closer relatives are more likely to move abroad than others. Personal connections and networks are important factors in predicting migration motivations. The degree of importance of connections plays a crucial role. Family members settle down abroad and then bring their extended family when their situation abroad is stable.

Methods

Survey variables

Age (1%, >15 years; 32%, 16-25; 17%, 26-35; 17%, 36-45; 14%, 46-55; 16%, 56-65; 4%, <66 years), gender (55%, female; 45%, male), residency area (51%, rural; 27%, urban; 22%, capital city), regions of Moldova (63%, Center; 22%, North; 15%, South), social class (67%, middle class; 26%, lower class; 7%, upper class).

Operationalization of Variables

There have been one dependent variable (motivation to migrate) and twelve independent variables (gender, residency, age, education, relatives abroad, aid from abroad, social class, salary, minimum expenses, work experience abroad, dangers abroad, lies about job/salary).

Motivation to migrate. Respondents were asked if they were willing to move and settle abroad if they would be offered this opportunity. Their responses ranged from “not willing”, “do not know”, “maybe”, to “willing” to move and settle abroad. Participants in qualitative

interviews were asked to reason why they wanted, did not want, or hesitated to move and settle abroad.

Area of residency. Respondents were asked if they were willing to move and settle abroad if they would be offered this opportunity, controlling for area of residency. The results show that 50% of rural, 41% of capital city, and 27% of urban respondents want to move and live abroad ($p < 0.000$).

Age. Respondents were asked if they were willing to move and settle abroad if they would be offered this opportunity, controlling for age. There is a negative correlation between age and desire to move and live abroad – younger people are more willing to be mobile ($p < 0.000$).

Education: Respondents were asked if they were willing to move and settle abroad if they would be offered this opportunity, controlling for education. Opinion polls show that the level of education positively correlates with the desire to move abroad ($p < 0.85$).

Relatives abroad. Respondents were asked if they had close relatives or friends working abroad. Their responses were coded as “yes” or “no”.

Financial Aid. Respondents were asked if they got any financial assistance from friends or relatives abroad. Responses were coded as “yes” and “no”.

Social class. Respondents were asked to what social class they counted themselves. Responses were coded as “lower social class”, “middle social class”, and “upper social class”.

Monthly Salary. Respondents were asked about their monthly salary. Responses were coded 1 for a salary lower than 300 USD – lower salary, 2 for a salary ranging from 300 USD to 600 USD – average salary, and 3 for a salary bigger than 600 USD – high salary. About 58% of respondents have a lower salary, 25% have an average salary, and 17% have a high salary.

Salary to cover min expenses. Respondents were asked if their monthly salary covered minimum living expenses. Responses were coded as “yes” or “no”. About 56% of respondents said that they could not cover their living expenses from the salary alone.

Previous work experience abroad. Respondents were asked about their previous or current work experience abroad. Responses were coded as “no work experience abroad” or “had work experience abroad”. About 44% of respondents have worked long or short time abroad.

Perceived dangers abroad. Respondents were asked if it is dangerous to travel abroad for work. Responses were coded as “not dangerous”, “dangerous”, “it depends”, “do not know”. About 12% of respondents think that it is not dangerous to travel abroad for work, 7% think it depends on other factors such as legal stay and level of familiarity with the destination country, 81% think it is dangerous to travel abroad for work.

Respondents were asked if they are willing to move and live abroad controlling for perceived dangers abroad. About 57% of respondents who think it is not dangerous and 37% of respondents who think it’s dangerous, are willing to move and live abroad ($p<0.02$).

Respondents who said that it is dangerous to travel abroad for work were asked to elaborate on potential dangers abroad. About 24% mentioned accidents and other health-related risks, 7% mentioned unpaid jobs, and 70% mentioned the possibility of human trafficking. About 51% of those who mentioned health-related risks abroad and 34% of those who mentioned human trafficking risks abroad, were willing to move and live abroad ($p<0.000$).

Lied about salary/job. Respondents were asked if they have been lied about the conditions or the nature of a job. Responses were coded as “yes” or “no”. About 40% of respondents were told lies about the conditions or nature of the job.

Analysis

Hypotheses were tested using linear regressions. The dependent variable was *the will to move and live abroad* tested by eight independent variables *relatives abroad, financial aid from relatives abroad, social class, monthly salary, ability to cover minimum living expenses with the salary, previous work experience abroad, perceived dangers abroad, and lies about the job's conditions or salary*.

Results

Results indicate that the presence of relatives abroad, higher monthly salary, and previous work experience abroad predict higher migration motivation levels of Moldovans. While perceiving greater dangers abroad, especially human trafficking risks, decrease Moldovans' motivations to move and live abroad.

The network theory is reinforced in the Moldovan case, the presence of relatives or close friends abroad correlates with a greater desire to move abroad. Qualitative interviews reveal that some people want to move abroad to reunite with their families, while others want to reunite with their families in Moldova, but the economic situation and lack of employment excludes this possibility.

Those who want to move abroad said they would use their existing connections abroad (this supports the migration network theory). Further, people with more family members (number of relatives) and those with closer relatives (degree of closeness) are more willing to migrate. This offers them the psychological comfort that they may return any time and that they

will be helped if things do not go as planned. Shortly, this introduces a new aspect to the importance of network and connections – confidence and the comfort level with the thought/idea to move and settle abroad. This offers a psychological reassurance that the risks of settling abroad are shared with their relatives who are ready to support them with any help.

Monthly salary positively correlates with the desire to move and live abroad – a higher salary means a more intense desire to migrate. Additionally, the higher the salary satisfaction is, the higher is the motivation to migrate. Salary satisfaction is measured on the basis of asking if it covers minimum living expenses.

Table 4: Moldovans' experience and attitudes about labor migration

Variables		Percent	N
Have you worked abroad?			
	Yes	44 %	86
	No	56 %	110
How long have you worked abroad? ²⁸			
	More than 1yr	48 %	32
	Less than 1yr	22 %	15
	Seasonally(3 months)	30%	20
When was the last time you worked abroad?			
	Recently (<1 yr)	38 %	27
	Few years ago (>1yr)	38 %	27
	More than 5yr ago	24 %	17
Do you have any relatives abroad?			
	Yes	95%	222
	No	5%	11
Do you receive any financial help from relatives abroad?			

²⁸ This question was addressed to people who said that they had worked abroad previously or currently worked abroad.

Yes	37 %	80
No	63 %	134

Would you like to move to live abroad
if you had the opportunity?

Yes	40 %	88
Maybe	7 %	16
No	53 %	115

Note: Sample size =196. Cell entries are results of descriptive statistics (frequencies)

Descriptive statistics show that almost half of the respondents have previous work experience abroad (44%). From the total number of people who worked abroad, about 48% worked abroad for extensive periods of time; about 38% returned home recently from working abroad, this suggests that many of them are seasonal workers abroad and were at home during a short period of time. People who work abroad in the European countries usually come home to Moldova during the summer. While people working in the CIS countries usually work abroad in summer. In CIS countries, summer is the most popular season for temporary workers. About 95% of Moldovans said that they had relatives or close friends abroad. From this total number, about 37% of respondents get financial help from relatives abroad. This is not surprising considering that the remittances make up more than 22% of the national Moldovan GDP. In addition to this, about 40% of people said that they would be willing to move and settle abroad if they were given the opportunity.

This information shows that most Moldovans have an extensive experience working abroad and even many more have relatives or close friends working abroad. The fact that many people have worked abroad recently, but were at home during the public opinion surveying suggests that many people work abroad seasonally rather than moving there permanently. About 37% of respondents said that they received some financial help from their relatives abroad,

which shows that one of the main reasons Moldovans seek job opportunities abroad is not only to cover living expenses for themselves, but also to cover living expenses of their relatives back home. Moldovan migrants usually take up jobs that citizens of the European countries would never take for the offered salary. In many cases working conditions are poor and the pay is very low for migrant workers compared to minimum salaries in the countries of destination. But even though the salary is lower than the recommended minimum, it is still greater compared to what these migrants would have been paid back home.

Table 5: Factors predicting Moldovan's motivations to migrate

Factors	Willingness to move and live abroad
Relatives abroad	.228*
Financial aid from relatives abroad	-.165
Social class	-.058
Monthly salary	.349*
Salary enough to cover expenses	-.115
Previous work experience abroad	.387*
Perceived dangers abroad	-.292*
Lied to about salary/job	-.007
Adjusted R^2	.320

Note: Sample size =71. Cell entries are final standardized coefficients.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Linear regression shows that relatives abroad account for 22%, monthly salary accounts for 34%, previous work experience abroad for 38%, and perceived dangers abroad account for 29% of respondents' will to move and settle abroad. While relatives abroad, monthly salary, and

previous work experience abroad predict an increase in the will to move and live abroad, perceived dangers abroad decrease respondents' will to move and live abroad.

Table 6: Previous working experience abroad and other factors (N=73)

Have you worked abroad?	‘Yes’		
Monthly salary	Less 300 USD 41% (N=37)	300-600 USD 43% (N=18)	More 600 USD 60% (N=18)
Working documents at your current job?	No documents (no) 83% (N=29)***	Have documents (yes) 35% (N=44)***	
Have you been lied to about a job/salary or remained unpaid ?	Yes 79% (N=38)***	No 42% (N=30)***	

Note: Sample size =73. Cell entries are crosstabulations results.
*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

These statistical results enhance findings about people's migration motivations and their socio-economic status. People with higher salaries were more likely to have worked abroad previously (60%).

The main findings of this section is that about 83% of those who worked abroad before are currently working in Moldova without official documents, which means that they work undocumented in the grey area of the job market. Additionally, about 80% of those who worked abroad previously were lied to either about the job conditions, salary or remained unpaid (in Moldova).

These findings shed some light on why some migrants work unofficially without complaining when they have been lied to about a job (or some aspects of their job) – because they face the same challenges back home.

In addition, this explains why some victims of human trafficking do not seek help in trafficking situations. Often, when people have been lied to about a job abroad (situation close to exploitation) – this is nothing new, they have been lied to back home, too. Sociologically speaking, if this experience is based on (a) previous case(s) of being lied to without being remunerated as a result of complaining, then one might expect that these people will not seek help again in similar situations. This also suggests that Moldovan people are not so familiar with the procedures of getting the necessary documents and information to get employed officially abroad if they have never worked officially back home.

However, there are other explanations why exploited people do not file an official complaint when trafficked. Many people do not seek help in trafficking situations because they do not think they are eligible for help. In fact many respondents said that they would look for help only if they were legal and would have been lied to about a job while working officially. On the opposite, many respondents think that seeking help in trafficking situations can only complicate their situation by being deported or forced to pay a fine, or even imprisoned.

One obstacle in seeking help in trafficking situations is the fact that many illegal migrants knew what they were agreeing upon. I am not talking about people agreeing to be trafficked, rather about the fact that people know that illegal job offers come with risks attached and indirectly many of them expect situations like this. Most of the respondents told me that it was useless to seek help when you knew from the very beginning that you work undocumented in the

grey area of a job market. There are many risks involved when one agrees to work unofficially, so when they are exposed to trafficking situations they blame themselves for what happened.

Another obstacle stopping people seeking help is related to the anti-trafficking organizations' efforts to prevent human trafficking. These organizations have done a great job using scare-tactics to stop people leaving Moldova. A lot of anti-trafficking efforts were invested in banners and programs with the message *that people who go abroad in search of employment opportunities most of the time end up being trafficked*. These campaigns have been around since the late 90's. In fact, these scare-tactics have not stopped people seeking jobs abroad, instead these tactics grounded in Moldovans' minds that human trafficking was the most probable inevitable option abroad. Hence, people who seek jobs abroad and end up being exploited or trafficked, do not seek help because they have been told that this precise thing will happen to them and they did it anyway. As one respondent (37 years) from a rural area, who worked in Russia for three months without being paid, explained his logic shared by many respondents on this topic:

So do I even have the right to ask for help these organizations which told me about these risks? They will not help me anyway, they will tell me that I was a fool to agree to those conditions and I have to thank God that I am alive. I am the only one to be blamed and no one will help me in this, especially these organizations which tell us what will happen to us abroad. Their job is to warn us, not to help us when these things happen. No one cares.

Weitzer also refers to the use of scare-tactics by the *moral crusades*²⁹ which inflate the size and gravity of this problem. 'They typically rely on horror stories and "atrocious tales" about victims in which the most shocking instances of victimization are described and typified. Casting the problem in highly dramatic terms by recounting the plight of highly traumatized victims is intended to alarm the public and policy makers and justify draconian solutions' (Weitzer 2007, 448). 'At the same time...crusade leaders consider the problem unambiguous: they are not

²⁹ Term coined by Ronald Weitzer.

inclined to acknowledge gray areas and are adamant that a particular evil exists precisely as they depict it' (Weitzer 2007, 448).

Discussion of qualitative results

The focus of qualitative interviews was to study people's perceptions and attitudes towards migration rather than actual rates of migration. The fact that people do not want to migrate when not being able to cover minimum living expenses does not mean they do not go abroad. In fact, many of them do. Working abroad helps them not only to cover their own living expenses, but also to support their whole family back home. Working conditions may be very poor compared to safety and working regulations in the country of destination, but again these conditions are still much better compared to the working conditions Moldovans get back home.

Qualitative interviews reveal that people who do not want to move abroad are forced to do so by the lack of options. Many of those unwilling to move abroad permanently actually have been abroad seasonally or temporarily, but they do not want to settle there. This can explain why some respondents do not wish to settle abroad even when having poorly paid salaries. An in-depth interview with a woman from a rural area (57 years), sums it up very accurately:

I work in agriculture, I do not work here [Moldova]. I work in Greece. There, I am paid so well that we can also save money. We always save. I do not work that much, mostly my husband works. His salary feeds our entire family (household of four people). We collect oranges. We just work there, I do not want to live there, we always keep coming back home. I would never settle there (even though her husband has been working in Greece for 13 years). In Greece, the life and people are totally different, they have a sad life. It cannot be compared with the life us Moldovans have. I love our Moldovan way. I also have a sister working in Italy (for 5 years), she also said the life in Italy is sad and different. I work abroad because I need to survive, I need to work to survive. I am in the agricultural sector in Moldova, one cannot earn enough to survive from agriculture, but in Greece I am paid very well for the same job, enough money for food and everything else.

What is more important is that we also save money. This would not be possible in Moldova.

Another concept that emerged is the fact that people know about potential dangers abroad, but still take risky job opportunities because at home they cannot cover their living expenses. As one man (40 years) from a rural area mentions 'It is very dangerous to travel abroad for work, we are very vulnerable, weak, exposed to manipulation. It is easy to fall prey abroad'. This man clearly understands the dangers for illegal migrants abroad, but at the same time he explains that staying in Moldova without any means of survival is not a solution either:

I have worked in so many jobs and changed them so often. My salary is not enough to cover the minimum expenses of my family. We keep borrowing money. I have been working abroad for 5 years [Russia]. There I am paid much better. I go to Russia seasonally and then I come back home and live from the savings. I would move abroad if I had the opportunity. We have relatives working abroad, everywhere, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Israel.

There is a negative correlation between perceived dangers abroad and the desire to move and live abroad. People who identified potential dangers abroad related to human trafficking risks were less likely to want to move and live abroad. Respondents' answers were categorized as related to human trafficking or non-related to human trafficking. As one woman (60 years) from an urban area said when asked about her motivations to move and settle abroad:

I would love to travel, but I would not want to move abroad. I will never move abroad because I love my country, my roots are here, I am rooted here. It can be very dangerous abroad, everyone can lie to you. You can be trafficked very easily. I would never travel abroad. We are an easy prey for them [traffickers], you can be trafficked in so many ways, you never know what terrible things might happen to you.

Work experience abroad correlates with a greater desire to settle abroad. Respondents with previous work experience abroad already know conditions and opportunities there; they feel

more confident in their decisions; and have more realistic expectations. One man (34 years) from a rural area said:

Of course I would like to move abroad, in fact I actually have worked abroad before. I like everything except the way I was treated. I was treated as a third class citizen. I felt discriminated against and not welcome there [Italy]. This is why I did not stay there for too long. But I have many relatives there who do not mind about the discrimination and attitudes Italians have towards them.

After some time the respondent told me that he returned to Moldova not only because he did not like the way Italian people treated him, but also because he had problems with Italian authorities regarding his illegal stay there 'I tried to travel with fake documents and I had many problems and this is how I learned my lesson. But I would not have stayed there [Italy] for too long anyway. I am too proud to endure that arrogant attitude'. The respondent was asked if he thought it was dangerous to travel abroad for work the way he did and if so in what ways it could be dangerous:

I can tell you from my own experience that it is very dangerous to travel abroad. First, you may not be paid for your work. Second, you can be dragged into illegal activities, I got an offer to get involved in some illegal activities, namely thefts, but I refused because it is very dumb to put yourself in such a kind of situations.

On the other hand, people who do not have previous work experience abroad are more hesitant to move abroad since this is something completely new, which implies uncertainty and fear of the unknown:

I like my country, my village. I would not travel abroad because it is dangerous to travel abroad. If I had decided to go abroad, I would have informed myself from my relatives already there. If one travels abroad uninformed, anything can happen. No one is waiting for us there, so it is very dangerous. You are on your own and no one will help you.

Respondents with higher salaries who can cover living expenses are more willing to settle abroad than others. Qualitative interviews reveal that they are unsatisfied with the quality of their

lives; they think that the economic situation in Moldova will become worse in the next years. Uncertainty and instability correlate with people's decreased confidence in a better future. While they have good salaries now, the uncertainty increases their fear to lose what they have.

Implications of findings

Migration is a global phenomenon. However, Moldovans tend to migrate at higher rates than citizens of other Eastern European countries. There are several reasons why people are motivated or even forced to migrate, some seek better living opportunities and others are escaping poverty and starvation. It is well known that economic deprivation and high unemployment are the main reasons forcing people to seek job opportunities abroad.

Studying residents' attitudes towards migration is important in several meaningful ways. First, their views can show who is more willing to migrate and why. The migration motivations and the actual rates of migration are two different things. One can be motivated to migrate, but still stay at home; while someone else might not be thrilled about migrating abroad, but is forced to seek job opportunities abroad. The differences between these two elements are important since in the first case, one might inform himself/herself about the details of moving abroad; while one who does not consider this option until one is forced to migrate means that this person might not inform himself/herself enough about the migration process.

This part of the dissertation looked closer to respondents' motivations to migrate and found that people from a higher socio-economic class are more willing to move abroad compared to people from a lower socio-economic class. The national organizations, especially the IOM, have to take these findings into consideration since this hints that people who actually migrate are the

least likely to be willing to migrate. Sociologically speaking if someone does not want and is not considering to migrate until this individual is forced to, there is the risk that this person will not have enough time and resources to inform himself/herself about all the details related to migration, especially seeking employment opportunities abroad.

People are less willing to migrate if they think that it is dangerous to travel abroad. This suggests that, instead of informing people on safe migration, the awareness campaigns of the counter-trafficking organizations in Moldova have been using scare-tactics to portray migration abroad as a very dangerous process that undoubtedly turns into trafficking situations. These types of campaigns are very dangerous because the only thing they can achieve is people not getting the necessary information about safe migration. Scare-tactics can keep at home people who have a decent life, but it cannot keep at home people who cannot cover minimum living expenses with their salaries or people who are unemployed. Therefore, these campaigns have to be reformed.

People with previous working experience abroad were more willing to move abroad because they were familiar with the working and living conditions abroad. This can be received as an evidence when people are well informed about safe migration and legal employment opportunities abroad they are more likely to consider it. Hence, the counter-trafficking organizations along with the IOM can achieve the same result by informing people about safe and legal migration and employment procedures abroad.

9. MASS MEDIA EFFECTS ON PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The press, radio, television, cinema, and internet are means of communication grouped together as *mass media*. This inherent traditional definition of *mass media* has been useful because we easily understand what it encompasses, but it can simplify the full scope of *mass media* (Bennett 1982). Walter Lippmann's famous 'world outside and the pictures in our heads' increased the interest of media experts to study the effects mass media has on public perceptions of social reality (Hoffman 2013). Academics from mass media studies, political science, psychology, and sociology have been trying to see the connection between mass media effects and public perception of social reality and public civic engagement (Almond & Verba 1963, Coleman 1990, Shah 1995, Inglehart 1997).

Most research on public perceptions of social reality has originated from the psychological and sociological field, which have found that mass media strongly affect social perceptions of problems (Bennett 1982, Anderson 1988, Mutz 1989, Hoffman 2013). Public perceptions of social reality in turn influence the way people act and behave (Hoffman 2013).

National governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations use mass media to raise public awareness of social problems, but without consistently assessing the effects on the public. However, few researchers have acknowledged the importance of having a rounded picture of human trafficking, which can be achieved by learning about the public sentiment towards this problem rather than by focusing on victim-centered data (Surtees 2010). Public sentiment toward human

trafficking is essential for anti-trafficking efforts since it can help policy makers improve the prevention practices and find appropriate practices to tackle this problem.

In Moldova, the mass media is a powerful tool used by anti-trafficking organizations to communicate with the public, but this communication is only one-way: a lot of information is sent out without assessing the effects of this communication. Ms Russu says that the IOM and LaStrada do not have any mechanisms in place to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of their prevention programs, they rather use the number of few identified victims as an indicator of the success or failure of their ? anti-trafficking efforts, which is clearly problematic. Since most anti-trafficking organizations world-wide consider raising awareness a key element in preventing trafficking, why do they not check the efficiency and effectiveness of these programs? Knowing how these campaigns affect people's perceptions of this problem can be very important in informing anti-trafficking experts about ways to improve these programs, if needed. Unfortunately, organizations very rarely measure the impact of their awareness campaigns. It is not a common practice, it is rather an exception.

This part of my dissertation looks at the way mass media influences the Moldovan population's awareness and understanding levels of human trafficking. First, I will review existing theories of the effects of mass media. Then I will test hypotheses related to efficiency of mass media as a source of informing people about human trafficking. These findings can help policy makers improve their anti-trafficking efforts by learning about the effects mass media has on the public, about more efficient ways to target some categories of people, about more effective channels to inform people about this problem based on what they already know and what they do not know yet. This part uses a quantitative public survey to learn about the Moldovans' attitudes and perceptions regarding human trafficking issues. The public survey

bridges the gap between the counter-trafficking organizations (and their use of mass media) and the Moldovan public.

Review of theories of mass media effects

This section will review existing theories of mass media effects to give an overview of the work done by other researchers in this field. Several important theories studying the effects of mass media have emerged in the last few decades. The cultivation theory claims that people's perceptions of life and the world are influenced by the amount of exposure to television (Gerbner et al. 1976). The social Action Theory assumes that the public actively participates in media-related communication and creates meaning from perceived content; the communication process constructs meaning rather than just delivering meaning (J. A. Anderson 1988). The agenda-setting theory reaffirms the power of the press while maintaining individual freedom; it implies that media agenda and public agenda are very similar. People who are curious and those who need orientation are influenced most by the media's agenda. This is more evident when media shapes the populations' interest in social, economic, and political matters (McCombs et al. 1972). McCombs and Shaw also use two important concepts of *priming* and *framing*. Priming is a psychological process when heavy media accent on specific matters increases the importance of those matters and activates the public's minds with information heard previously on the same matters. Framing is a process when the public reacts differently depending on whether more or less attention is given to some issues in real life (McCombs et al. 1972). The media dependency theory says that the public depends on media to reach aims and fulfill their needs; media outlets and social institutions work together to generate ideas, interests, needs in public. Frequency and

importance of information influences the degree of mass media dependency (Ball-Rokeach 1976).

There has been a lot of attention to the study of mass media-related aspects. Scheufele and Tewskbury have explained models and roots of the framing approach of mass media effects (Scheufele et al. 1999, Scheufele et al. 2007). Rubin explains media effects employing uses and gratification approach; he looks at the linkage between the use of media and the effects of media on a population (A. M. Rubin 2002). McCombs and Reynolds draw attention to the agenda-setting and agenda building approach in studying the effects of mass media (McCombs et al. 2009). Gerbner's students contribute to the cultivation theory by studying the public's perceptions of social reality (Gerbner et al. 2002); they look at the first and second order cultivation effects; and focus on the role of media on viewers' values and beliefs (Shrum 2002).

Media priming is a model used in different fields; media priming refers to the effects of media content on the public's judgment and behavior towards media content (Roskos-Ewoldsen 2002). Bandura adds social cognitive theory perspectives to media effects research; his model explains and predicts media effects on the public (Bandura 2002). Some scholars look at media effects using the theory of persuasion and elaboration likelihood model (Petty 2002). Other scholars look at media effects on civic life and civic engagement (Rojas 1996). Perloff says that media has a third person effect on the public (Perloff 2002). Media has been used in many fields and has varied effects on populations; some academics have found out that media increases violence among populations (Sparks 2002); others have looked at the role media plays in sex education and how it can increase sexual violence (Chapin 2000, Skalski 2010). Additionally, media influences the public's gender and ethnic-based stereotypes; researchers have found out that media affects viewers' views about race and gender (Mastro 2005, Mastro 2006, Mastro

2011). Marketing media effects on the public are especially widely researched (Glider 2001, Smith 2011). With online education on the rise, scholars have looked at the educational media effects on viewers and have compared different learning models; they argue that learning models based on interactive media are very useful (Fisch 2002, Fisch 2005). Mass media and politics go hand-in-hand; be it state owned media outlets or independent media outlets, be it television outlets, radio stations, or newspaper companies: their effects and role in public communication campaigns have been widely studied by experts from different disciplines (Valente 2001, Rice 2012).

In 1975, Hubbard and DeFleur were the pioneers who studied how mass media influences the public's conceptions of social problems. They found out that there was a weak relationship between media's emphasis on social problems and the public's views on those problems; there was a weak relationship between official authorities' information on social problems occurrences and media rates of reporting on those problems; however, they found a strong relationship between the public's views on social problems and the state authorities' information on occurrences of those problems. All in all, Hubbard and his colleagues argue that mass media does not affect public views on social problems in an impactful way; they found out that the public's concerns on social problems coincided with the real rate of occurrence of those social problems, while mass media reported and dragged attention to social problems that occurred less frequently. Therefore, mass media does not have the power to influence the public's perceptions and views on social problems, according to Hubbard and colleagues (Hubbard 1975).

Hypotheses and research questions relating to mass media effects

Governments, IOs, and NGOs act on the perceived belief that the proportions of human trafficking can be diminished if the public is well informed about this problem (IOM 2016). GRETA praised Moldovan authorities for their efforts to raise public awareness of human trafficking, but stressed the importance to further expand and continue raising awareness concerning this problem to potential victims and the general public (GRETA 2016).

In the late 90s it was believed that raising awareness concerning human trafficking would significantly decrease the number of trafficked people. And almost thirty years later, the counter-trafficking experts still act on the perceived belief that raising awareness is an effective tool in preventing human trafficking (GRETA 2016) if disseminated to potential victims and the general public. However, there is limited research and discussion as to whether the current anti-trafficking policy is efficient in preventing human trafficking (Roby et al. 2008, Bishop et al. 2013).

This part tries to analyze and measure the effects of mass media on Moldovan public perceptions of human trafficking by testing the following hypotheses:

***H1:** People who are more up-to-date with information on human trafficking are more likely to be informed about different aspects of human trafficking.*

***H2:** Following more media sources of information correlates with higher rates of awareness and understanding of social problems.*

These hypotheses arise from the *Agenda Setting Theory*, claiming that people who are curious and concerned about things that happen in their country are influenced by mass media most. People who use more sources of information will be better informed about social problems because this shows their greater concern towards political, social, and economic

problems. However, this does not mean that those who have access to more sources of information are, actually, following more sources of information.

Additional hypotheses (H3 and H4) arise from Ball-Rokeach's (1976) theory that frequency and importance of information influence the degree of mass media dependency:

***H3:** The frequency of watching news correlates with the level of information on and understanding of social problems.*

***H4:** The public associates a degree of acuteness of a social problem with the rate of its coverage in mass media.*

People who watch news more frequently are more likely to have a higher level of knowledge about and understanding of human trafficking. Frequency of following news correlates with a greater concern and curiosity concerning social problems, social occurrences, and governmental response to those problems. To test this hypothesis, I looked at the rates of concern about human trafficking and rates of following the news among the Moldovan public.

H4 arises from the *Agenda Setting Theory* that people seek orientation from mass media sources when the topic is highly relevant to them and the economic and/or political situation is highly uncertain, which can be said about the problem of human trafficking (Shaw 1972). This theory also states that mass media shapes public interest in social, economic, and political matters (Shaw 1972). The public relates the degree of acuteness of a social problem to the persistence of its coverage in the media. Hence, the public thinks that a problem is of major proportions if it is discussed regularly in mass media. A problem that has been discussed persistently in mass media for a long time and then gradually disappears from media's radar has significant influence on the public's opinion about the proportions of this social problem, contrary to what has been claimed by Hubbard and colleagues. I hypothesize that the Moldovan

public who hear about human trafficking regularly from media sources is more likely to think that human trafficking is prevalent and on the rise in Moldova compared to people who do not hear about this problem from media or any other source.

Methods

Survey variables

Age (1%, >15 years; 32%, 16-25; 17%, 26-35; 17%, 36-45; 14%, 46-55; 16%, 56-65; 4%, <66 years), gender (55%, female; 45%, male), residency area (51%, rural; 27%, urban; 22%, capital city), regions of Moldova (63%, Center; 22%, North; 15%, South), social class (67%, middle class; 26%, lower class; 7%, upper class).

Operalization of variables

This research part contains five dependent variables (level of awareness concerning human trafficking aspects: types of trafficking, rates of trafficking, gender and age of potential victims, population's level of information) and four independent variables (sources of information, number of sources, frequency of news watching, last time hearing of human trafficking).

Dependent variables

Human Trafficking Types. Respondents were asked an open-ended question of how many types of human trafficking they knew. This is a numerical variable, ranging from ‘zero’ to how many types respondents enumerated.

Rates of Trafficking. Respondents were asked an open-ended question of how they perceived the rates of human trafficking in Moldova compared to previous years. This is a categorical variable. The responses ranged from ‘do not know’, ‘increasing’, ‘no change’, ‘decreasing’.

Gender in Trafficking. Respondents were asked an open-ended question as to people of what gender could be trafficked. Their responses ranged from ‘do not know’, ‘females only’, ‘males only’, ‘both genders’. This is a nominal variable; a dummy variable for every source was created, but only the dummy variable for ‘both genders’ was used in the regression analysis (this is the most accurate answer to the question posed).

Age in Trafficking. Respondents were asked an open-ended question as to people of what age could be trafficked. Their responses ranged from ‘do not know’, ‘young only’, ‘mature’, ‘of all ages’. This is a nominal variable; a dummy variable for ‘of all ages’ was used in the regression analysis.

Informative Levels of Population. Respondents were asked an open-ended question as to how informed they believed the Moldovan public was about human trafficking aspects. Their responses were coded as ‘do not know’, ‘not informed at all’, ‘somehow informed, but not enough’, ‘very well informed’. This is a categorical variable.

Independent variables

Sources of Information. Respondents were asked what their most preferred source of information was. Responses included 'television', 'internet', 'radio', 'newspapers', and 'social event'. This is a nominal variable; a dummy variable for every source was created, but only the dummy variable for 'TV' was used in the regression analysis.

Number of sources. Respondents were asked how many media sources of information were available to them in general. Only different types of sources (e.g. newspaper, TV program...) were counted. The interviewer counted the number of options given by the respondents and introduced the numerical number of sources. This variable is numerical.

Frequency of News Watching. Respondents were asked an open-ended question about their habits of news watching. I only referred to TV news and internet news, but not to the press. Their responses ranged from 'never', 'rare', 'medium', 'often' as to the frequency of watching news. This is a categorical variable.

Last Time Heard about Human Trafficking. Respondents were asked when the last time they have heard about human trafficking was. Their responses ranged from 'during this week', 'months ago', 'years ago'. This is a categorical variable.

Analysis

Hypotheses were tested using linear regressions. Five dependent variables (level of awareness about human trafficking aspects: types of trafficking, rates of trafficking, gender and age of potential victims, population's level of information) were tested by four independent

variables (sources of information, number of sources, frequency of news watching, last time hearing of human trafficking).

Results

Descriptive statistics show that an overwhelming majority of the Moldovan population feels very informed about different aspects of human trafficking. About 78% of respondents think that they (personally) are well informed about this problem and 71% think that the population of Moldova is well informed about this problem. Respondents said that television was the most preferred source of information (53%), followed by internet (18%), and social events (15%). More than 70% of respondents have access to two or more sources of information. About 68% of respondents watch news daily. And about 70% of respondents have heard of human trafficking recently (during the data collection period). These statistical tests show that Moldovan residents are very much informed and concerned about human trafficking.

Table 7: Moldovans' mass media usage regarding human trafficking and other news

Variables	Percent	N
How informed are you about this problem?		
Very well informed	44 %	106
Medium informed	34 %	82
Not informed enough	22%	53
How informed is the Moldovan public about this problem?		
Very well informed	35 %	83
Medium informed	36 %	86
Not informed enough	28%	67
What sources of information are more informative to you?		
Television (TV)	53 %	117
Internet	18 %	40
Social Events	15 %	32
Newspapers	5%	10
Radio	3%	7
Nothing/none	6%	14
How many sources of information are available to you?		
One source	29%	60
Two sources	44%	91
Three sources+	27%	57
How often do you follow news?		
Daily	68 %	159
Often	27 %	62
Rare	6%	13
How long ago did you hear about human trafficking?		
During this week	38 %	78
Months ago	32 %	64
Years ago(>1yr)	30 %	61

Note: Sample size =250. Cell entries are results of descriptive statistics (frequencies)

Table 8: Media factors predicting the population's perception of human trafficking

Media Factors	Age in trafficking	Gender in trafficking	Trafficking types	Rates of Trafficking	Population info levels
Number of Sources	0.18 (.05)***	0.22 (.05)***	0.17 (.10)	-0.41 (.09)***	-0.13 (.08)
Frequency of News Watching	0.17 (.06)**	0.06 (.06)	-0.10 (.13)	-0.37 (.12)***	0.15 (.10)
Last Time Heard of trafficking	-0.02 (.04)	-0.01 (.04)	0.39 (.09)***	0.00 (.08)	-0.04 (.07)
Source of Information (TV)	-0.16 (.07)*	-0.06 (.07)	0.16 (.14)	0.25 (.14)	0.25 (.12)*
Constant	-0.17 (.24)	0.05 (.21)	0.81 (.49)	0.83 (.43)*	1.89 (.36)***
Observations	157	167	128	169	162
Adjusted R^2	0.12	0.11	0.15	0.15	0.32

Note: Total sample size =250. Cell entries are final unstandardized coefficients. Standard of errors in parentheses.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Linear regression shows that the number of informative sources account for 18% and frequency of news watching for another 17% of respondents' opinion that people of any age group can be trafficked, which is the most accurate answer. Additionally, the number of informative sources accounts for 22% of respondents' opinion that people of any gender can be trafficked. The variable 'last time heard of human trafficking' or 'freshness of information' accounts for almost 40% of respondents' knowledge of varied types of human trafficking. The number of informative sources accounts for 41% and 'freshness of information' accounts for almost 40% of respondents' opinion that the rates of human trafficking are decreasing compared

to previous years. Television as the preferred source of information accounts for 25% of respondents' opinion that population of Moldova is very well informed about human trafficking aspects. Surprisingly, the television accounts for 16% of respondents' opinion that only young or mature people can be trafficked, which is misleading.

Discussion

Preferred mass media sources of information

About 40% of surveyed respondents ranked TV as their number one choice to get informed about human trafficking; followed by 30% who mentioned social events; about 20% use the internet and another 20% use newspapers as their preferred source of learning about human trafficking; the radio is the least preferred source (10%). Linear regression shows that television accounts for the explanation of 25% of respondents' opinion that the Moldovan public is very well informed about human trafficking; they were more likely to think that people among them are watching televised information as well and therefore are informed about this problem (Gerbner, 1976).

Qualitative interviews showed that most people preferred television as their main informative source because it is easily accessible and wide-spread. Compared to the radio, TV uses graphics and images which produce lasting memories. Another characteristic of televised information is the short and concise information that is easily comprehensible (Potter 2013).

Social events were mentioned as the second most preferred source of information. Respondents said they remembered and understood information better though socializing and communication with others. This reinforces the arguments of *social action theorists*, people

prefer an active way to engage with others to learn about social problems. Additionally, social events are a great way of increasing people's concern about a social problem, to awaken their activism and passion for getting informed about different aspects of human trafficking (J. A. Anderson 1988).

The effects of the number of sources of information on public perception of human trafficking

Regression results find support for H2 and the *agenda setting theory* that people who are curious about things happening around them seek more informative sources (Shaw 1972) and are informed better about different aspects of human trafficking. The greater number of informative sources showed a better understanding of different aspects of human trafficking (e.g. age and gender of people who can be trafficked). Respondents who said that only females could be trafficked referred mainly to sex trafficking; while people who mentioned that both genders could be trafficked understand that men and women are trafficked into forced labor, servitude, removal of organs, illegal adoption, and begging. In addition, they are more likely to identify more types of human trafficking.

Qualitative interviews showed that respondents who have been following more sources of information in the last several years were usually very informed about the social, economic, and political situation in Moldova. These respondents said that the rates of human trafficking were going down compared to previous years because this problem is less frequently addressed in the news compared to previous years, which supports H4 that the public relates the rates of human trafficking to the rate of occurrence of this problem in mass media.

Media priming is also reinforced by findings of this part by showing that media accent on human trafficking increases the importance of this matter and activates the public's minds with

information previously heard and learned. Qualitative interviews show that those who said that the public was well informed about human trafficking, think that rates of this problem are high due to the economic situation. On the other hand, people who said that the public was not informed at all about human trafficking think that rates of trafficking are high because of this very reason – an uninformed public.

Media Selectiveness is a new concept that emerged during the qualitative interviews. Media selectiveness happens when people who have access to a greater number of sources of information are more selective in their choices compared to those who have less access to information. People who have more access to information are usually people from upper economic classes and those residing in urban areas; those with a limited access to information are people from lower social classes and people residing in rural areas. Access to information is a privilege in Moldova since not everyone can cover costs to get access to additional sources of information; upper social class people can cover additional fees to get more sources of information such as more television channels; and access to fast internet – that is still a luxury and not available to everyone. People with limited access to information get mainstream televised channels; radio channels, and newspapers.

The effects of frequency of news watching on the public perception of human trafficking

I did not find enough support of Ball-Rokeach's theory on *media dependency* (1976) and H3. Instead I found out that frequent news watching does not translate into a better understanding of human trafficking. Except for one instance, more frequent news watching affects respondents' understanding of the fact that people of any age can be trafficked. The same thing cannot be said about respondents' knowledge about types of human trafficking and rates of

trafficking in Moldova. Frequent news watching makes people more likely to think that the rates of trafficking in Moldova are going down, which contrasts the information shared by the Moldovan authorities, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (IOM 2016).

Quantitative data revealed that some respondents said that they never watched news. Qualitative interviews revealed that some people are skeptical about any type of information on national press, television, and radio. These respondents are dissatisfied with news reports and never follow any national source of information because everything they get is a biased and corrupt version of truth. By never following any source of information, they say that they avoid being brain-washed and manipulated by Moldovan authorities. These people are in a minority that represents those who rebel against the mainstream mass media. People from this category almost never follow any news because they are not concerned with what happens around them; they mainly get information from their relatives, friends, and neighbors; they show little or no interest in what happens in Moldova or in the world.

Public perception of rates of human trafficking based on rates of occurrence of this problem in mass media

The linear regression shows that the respondents who follow more sources of information more frequently are more likely to say that rates of human trafficking are decreasing in Moldova. Qualitative interviews show support for H4, a problem that has been discussed persistently in mass media for a long time and then gradually disappears from the media's radar has significant influence on the public's opinion about the proportions of this social problem. The exception is

people who have experienced or witnessed this problem in their community - they are more likely to think it is a major social problem even when it is not highly discussed in mass media.

Impact of freshness of information on the public perception of human trafficking

Linear regression shows only partial support for H1 and the *Agenda Setting Theory*, saying that fresher information means a more accurate popular perception of human trafficking. The freshness of information explains 40% of respondents' knowledge of more types of human trafficking. However, it does not explain the population's awareness of the gender and age of people who can be trafficked; nor does it explain the population understands of rates of human trafficking in Moldova.

Testing this hypothesis, I also found support for Mastro's (2011) theory that media influences the public's awareness of gender, ethnicity, and age of stereotypical victims of trafficking. When people hear the notion of human trafficking, immediately have the association of a young woman trafficked for sex exploitation. This is the image that counter-trafficking organizations have taught people in Moldova through its use of mass media. Because of the sensitive and moral nature of this problem, counter-trafficking organizations have heavily used it to reach out to people in Moldova. This approach still bears consequences in Moldova since many respondents were only able to identify sex trafficking as a form of trafficking. It is hoped that counter-trafficking organizations will take responsibility for the inaccurate and under-represented image of human trafficking they have created.

Summary

In this part, I found support for some theories of mass media effects. The *Agenda Setting Theory* is reinforced by the findings of this part since it suggests that media and public agendas are very similar – if mass media thinks that human trafficking is an important topic then the public will also think so. People who are curious and concerned about society in general are more likely to be influenced by mass media because they have higher incentives to follow media sources. On the opposite, people who think that media is corrupt are more likely to avoid any mass media usage. This also correlated with their lack of concern to what is happening in Moldova on social, economic, or political levels. From qualitative interviews I understood that *mass media skeptics*, people who avoid any media usage, are not concerned with any social problems because they do not see situation changing for the better. In fact, many of them say that mass media in Moldova is manipulated by the government, which has interests portraying news and events in a manipulative way.

Another concept supporting the *Agenda Setting Theory* is the population's need for orientation regarding different aspects of human trafficking, which is a highly relevant social problem in Moldova. However, evidences of progress are highly uncertain and invisible to the public. Respondents do not think that the government of Moldova puts enough effort into solving the problem of human trafficking because anti-trafficking efforts are not efficiently communicated to the public.

The *Agenda Setting Theory* is further re-enforced by showing that mass media in Moldova has shaped the population's interest in social, economic, and political matters (Shaw 1972) of human trafficking. Respondents are deeply concerned about social and political aspects

of this problem and their concern has to a large degree been shaped by mass media, or better said by the counter-trafficking organizations using mass media.

Media priming also finds support in this section, the media accent on human trafficking has proved to increase the importance of this matter among Moldovans and to activate public's minds by reinforcing information previously heard. People relate the degree of acuteness of human trafficking based on the frequency of its occurrence in the mass media.

The *Media Dependency Theory* has been validated only partly, in as much as frequency and importance of human trafficking information influence the degree of mass media dependency (Ball-Rokeach 1976). However, this was not exactly the case in this part, people were not only dependent on media, but on real-life stories in their communities.

Mastro's *Media Stereotyping Theory* is supported in this part by showing that people acquire stereotypes about victims of human trafficking from mass media. People tended to think of human trafficking mainly in terms of sexual exploitation of young women and begging of Roma people. These images have clearly altered the accurate definition of human trafficking, which is not limited to sex trafficking and begging.

The number of media sources and the frequency of news watching are accurate predictors of peoples' knowledge of the gender and age of those who can be trafficked. 'Freshness of information' predicts respondents' higher level of knowledge of varied types of human trafficking. The more sources of information people follow and the more frequently they watch the news – the higher the likelihood that these people think that the rates of human trafficking are decreasing compared to previous years.

All in all, the Moldovan public is well informed about different aspects of human trafficking and many of them think that rates of trafficking are high due to the dire economic situation rather

than due to a lack of information. Unfortunately, most national and international anti-trafficking organizations do not share this view and continue to invest more resources in awareness programs concerning human trafficking hoping to tackle this problem adequately.

10. PUBLIC PERCEPTION VS ORGANIZATIONS' PERCEPTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

This part of the dissertation juxtaposes the *counter-trafficking organizations' knowledge* of human trafficking with the *public's knowledge* of human trafficking. People understand and perceive social problems very differently from organizations; they base their perceptions on their individual experience, which might differ from case to case. Understanding public perceptions about this problem can help counter-trafficking organizations to enrich their knowledge on the actual levels of awareness of trafficking effects.

A serious social problem in Moldova

Human trafficking is a serious social problem in Moldova, shaped by public grievances and complaints about it (Fuller 1941, Hubbard 1975, Spector 1973). People perceive a social problem as a threat to their community values (Becker 1966, Blumer 1971, Fuller 1941). It is a product of collective behavior shaped and defined by society. Social problems develop depending on the ways official authorities treat these problems and the way the government engages to solve it (Blumer 1971).

Sociologists argue that such concepts as 'deviance,' 'dysfunction,' and 'structural strain' alarm about the existence of social problems; they identify social problems based on identifiable objective conditions such as occurrence rates; involved people's characteristics; people's number and type (Fuller 1941). Social problems have five distinct stages: emergence of the problem, legitimation of the problem, mobilization of action towards this problem, formation of a plan of action, and transformation of the plan to implementation (Blumer 1971).

Another scholar identified three stages of development of a social problem: awareness or problem consciousness, policy determination, and reform stage. First, the awareness stage implies that people should be informed about the existence of a problem. Second, policy determination stage implies that people debate and discuss solutions to solve it. Third, reform stage implies official authorities implement assigned policies of action (Fuller 1941). Understanding the public attitudes and value-judgments of human trafficking can enrich sociological literature on social problems (Waller 1936).

Methods

This chapter analyzes public perceptions of human trafficking focusing on in-depth interviews with a small sample of the Moldovan population. The questions were open-ended and semi-structured. The open-ended questions aimed at getting a better understanding of the public perceptions and knowledge of human trafficking. It is essential to get a better understanding of the Moldovans' perception and knowledge of human trafficking considering that they are residents of the country with high rates of human trafficking (Robinson 2011). The respondents were chosen from people who participated in the quantitative study. The qualitative data set contains over 30 interviews lasting 35 minutes on average.

These interviews were used to find explanations to some of the opinions people voiced during their participation in the quantitative study. Respondents were asked to participate in the qualitative survey based on a randomization (dice was used). Even though respondents for qualitative interviews were selected randomly, the method proved advantageous because cases contained people from different backgrounds.

The fact that I am a Moldovan citizen facilitated the process of data collection. I fluently speak both Romanian and Russian; this made me an insider in the eyes of the respondents. Furthermore, during the process of data collection I was aware of sensitive cultural issues and information, which could make respondents uncomfortable. For example, I was aware that people were not comfortable speaking about 'sex' and 'sexual intercourse', and 'prostitution'. I had to be very wary when I was inquiring about types of trafficking, many respondents referred to sex trafficking without using the word 'sex' or 'prostitution'.

Additionally, it was an advantage to speak both Romanian and Russian. In the North and South of the country people speak mainly Russian, while in the central part of the country people speak mainly Romanian. Human trafficking is a sensitive topic and it helped me to connect with people from all regions by speaking their mother-tongue.

Open-ended questions encouraged the respondents to elaborate on their opinion about different aspects of human trafficking, the Moldovan government, migration, mass media, and so on, in greater detail. Respondents were not only asked about human trafficking, but also about their daily lives in Moldova, challenges and obstacles, satisfaction and entertainment. I wanted to understand if they were happy or unhappy, satisfied or unsatisfied, concerned or careless, informed or uninformed about the political and economic situation of Moldova. This inductive approach was meant to lead to the public's perceptions of human trafficking in a broader context. In-depth interviews shed light on the population's perceptions of different aspects of the Moldovan economic and political situation, including their views on human trafficking.

Information concerning the respondents' identity was not asked. No compensation was provided. No names have been mentioned in this study, I have referred to them as 'one

person', 'a woman', 'a man', 'a teenager', 'a pensioner' by indicating the age, gender, and residential area.

Analysis and findings

'Institutions tend to consider social problems by focusing on their systemic causes. However, such an approach does not reveal anything about what actually happens at the community level and how the issue is perceived by the public' (Robinson 2011). Hence, this section tries to fill the gap by completing the counter-trafficking organizations' picture about what Moldovan inhabitants know on this topic.

Respondents identified several *push factors* of human trafficking (the Moldovan's government failure, unemployment, poverty, and corruption) and several *pull factors* (globalization, employment opportunities, and opportunities to save money to live a good life in Moldova), which will be discussed in detail in the section below.

Push factor: unemployment, poverty – the Moldovan government's failure

The government of Moldovan is the main cause of human trafficking, according to the Moldovan population. Respondents claimed that their government does not take care of its citizens, the unemployment rates are very high, inflation rates are skyrocketing, the salaries are shrinking, the taxes are going up, and the situation is getting worse.

Additionally, unemployment and poverty are two of the main themes explaining human trafficking according to Moldovans, which are closely interconnected to the failure of the

government to provide for its citizens. Poverty and unemployment are so prevalent that they force people to seek job opportunities outside Moldova. One respondent said that:

People working in rural areas are especially poor, people working in agriculture are poor, and they have always been so poor. Maybe people in the capital city have better lives, but these poor people, like myself, from rural areas are especially vulnerable economically. It is very hard in rural areas. One cannot imagine through what we have to go.

A man (37 years) residing in a rural area told me ‘human trafficking is a process when people end up being sold abroad. Everyone can be trafficked regardless of their age or gender. Most people are trafficked in forced labor, but other exploitations also exist, but mainly unpaid labor’. The respondent had a very good understanding about human trafficking. He seemed very concerned about this problem and blamed the Moldovan authorities for not creating jobs and thus indirectly forcing people to seek risky unofficial jobs abroad.

A woman pensioner (60 years) residing in an urban area defines human trafficking as ‘a process when people are sold into slavery, mainly for forced labor and sexual servitude’. She went on blaming the Moldovan government for human trafficking because ‘it [government] does not create employment opportunities and people leave because they cannot survive back home. The economic situation is critical in Moldova. People leave everything behind and go abroad’.

A woman (50 years) residing in a rural area also blames the Moldovan government: ‘Who is to be blamed for this [human trafficking]? Of course, it is the fault of the Moldovan authorities. They are not creating jobs. The [economic] situation keeps getting worse, many start doing drugs and consuming alcohol’. She connected the problem of human trafficking to other social problems in Moldova (e.g. drugs and alcohol). This points out to the deteriorating economic situation that has spill-over effects on Moldovans’ lives.

A woman (60 years) from an urban area has an average salary according to Moldovan standards (less than 200 USD), which is not enough to cover minimum living expenses in the city she lives in:

Salary is miserable. It is not enough to survive from salary to salary, I have to borrow money. But I am lucky to have my children living and working in Russia (Moscow). I get financial help from them. If I had not had financial help from them, I would not be in this world anymore because I would not have had any survival resources.

I wanted to find out if people worked unofficially (avoiding using the word ‘illegally’) and if they had been lied to about a job offer, working conditions, salary rates, and so on. When I asked a woman about incidents how (if) she was lied to about a job or salary, she told me ‘Of course, it happens every month. I am never paid in time. The rail station administration (which is state owned) fools us all the time. They lie to us all the time. So how are they better than those fooling us abroad? The same result, we are not paid’.

Push factor: corruption in Moldova

Another theme emerged – corruption. Respondents claimed that human trafficking was facilitated by the Moldovan government itself, which is extremely corrupt (e.g. police, border officers, visa/passport facilities, etc.).

A man residing in a rural area (43 years) asked the questions ‘Why does human trafficking occur in Moldova? And who is responsible for it?’, said:

I do not want to take sides, but the government is to be blamed and we bear also some responsibility. Our fault is that we believe lies and take risks based on fake promises. We live in poverty and there is no stability. Since Moldova’s independence [in 1991], no [Moldovan] administration has tried to change the situation of Moldova in the better way [economically]. All of the administrations we have had and will have, they want to use their power to their own advantage. Their only thought is ‘how to steal more’. They are not interested in doing something good for this country.

Another respondent said ‘The [Moldovan] government is not interested in informing its population regarding this problem [human trafficking]. Why would they? They do not want people to know more about this problem because they are involved in it most of the time’.

Push factor: lack of information of Moldovan public?

Overall, respondents think that people in Moldova are well informed about human trafficking, but due to the economic situation people are forced to seek risky job opportunities abroad.

A man (43 years) from a rural area, asked if he felt informed about different aspects of human trafficking said:

I would not say so, only what I hear from the news and the information I get from mainstream media, I don’t seek any additional information. I mostly inform myself from TV and radio. The last time I heard about this problem was several months ago, less than half a year ago. I think that people in Moldova are generally well informed about this problem. Already informed.

A pensioner (60 years) from an urban area thinks that ‘people are not informed about this problem at all, only those who are really interested in this problem and seek additional information on the internet’. She thinks she is informed much better compared to the rest of the population about this, ‘I am a very well informed person, I inform myself from different sources, usually from Russian speaking channels. I watch the news all the time, every single day. My job as a train attendant allows me to read a lot of news. I read a lot’.

A man (37 years) from a rural area thinks that people in Moldova are well informed about this problem, ‘but what can they do if here are no jobs? One can only starve and die’. He earns less than 300 USD per month and he is the only bread-winner of a household of four. His salary is not enough to cover the minimum living expenses and he has to borrow often ‘the money I get

is not enough to survive until the next salary, this is why I have to borrow and then give back, and then borrow again. It is frustrating, it is a tough life. I never worked abroad, but I really want to go abroad to find a job. Everybody goes abroad, so I can also go. I can earn more money to support my family'. His arguments spill into another important theme that emerged – *globalization* as a pull factor of migration and consequently of human trafficking.

Pull factor: globalization

People can freely move abroad if they have a double citizenship, which is very common for Moldovans. Most Moldovans have the Romanian citizenship as a second citizenship. However, others have Ukrainian, Russian, and Bulgarian citizenships. This means that they have options to travel abroad for work with fewer problems. Before, it used to be harder to travel abroad, there was limited information, and it was not so commonly practiced. In addition to this, legal migration was extremely difficult and many processes needed to be passed. Now on the opposite, it is much easier to travel abroad for job opportunities. There are so many people already working abroad, it is a well-connected network of entire communities of Moldovans in many European countries.

Pull factor: employment opportunity abroad

When a man (37 years) from a rural area was asked if he went on vacation abroad, he laughed and said the only vacation he could afford was going fishing or swimming to the neighbouring village which had a lake. This man works very hard to support his family, but it gets frustrating considering that the economic situation in Moldova has been deteriorating over some time. He said that he considered migrating to a different country because people and life

were much better abroad. ‘I am waiting for my Romanian citizenship and then I will go abroad: first for a job, to see how it is, and soon when I will have settled there I will bring my family’. When asked about the steps he would take to move abroad once he would receive his Romanian citizenship, he said that he would contact his relatives abroad to help him find a job and housing. ‘When I need help I can always rely on my relatives abroad, they will borrow me money when I need it’. The respondent mentioned Romanian citizenship because many Moldovans can apply and get a Romanian citizenship considering the fact that Moldova was a part of Romania historically (Romanian citizenship allows Moldovans to freely travel and work in European Union).

Another woman respondent (60 years) from an urban area said she would love to travel, but she would not want to move abroad. ‘I will never move abroad because I love my country. My roots are here. I am rooted here’. She thinks that it can be very dangerous abroad and ‘everyone can lie to you. You can be trafficked very easily. I would never travel abroad. We could be easy prey, you can be trafficked in so many ways, you never know what terrible things might happen to you’. This woman seemed terrified by the mere thought of traveling abroad for work. She said she has seen and heard so many sad stories with fatal endings that she would never consider going abroad. This is a result of a scare-tactic that has been commonly used in Moldova by counter-trafficking organizations to discourage people from migrating.

Push factor: lack of opportunities in Moldova for youth

A teenager from a rural area said:

Human trafficking is a major problem in Moldova at the moment. Human beings can be trafficked home and abroad depending on the process. Humans are trafficked for organs. Mostly young people are trafficked because their organs are healthier. Women are

trafficked more compared to men because they are physically weaker and cannot defend themselves.

She said that she informed herself, mainly, from radio news because she listened to music very often and the news are running every hour. Additionally, she is exposed to a lot of news watching when her dad is home (most of the time he works in Russia and comes home several weeks a year only). I asked a follow up question how she liked living in her village (she was born there, but studied in the capital city):

I am bored in this small village. It is boring, no activities or entertainment, I am always home. I would like to move somewhere else. In my village, there are no opportunities for young people. I would like to take part in entertaining activities and social events, to be more involved in social activities. I would like to move, but not abroad. I would never travel abroad because it is dangerous. You are always a foreigner, you do not belong there, and they can hear your accent and understand that you are not from there and will never be a local. It is hard, very hard.

Summary

Human trafficking is a severe social problem in Moldova which fulfills five criteria of a social problem (Blumer 1971, Fuller 1941). First, it emerged in the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Second, it became a legitimized problem in the late 1990s when cases of human trafficking started being identified. Third, anti-trafficking actions started in the late 1990s. Fourth, an anti-trafficking plan of action was consolidated once the SNR³⁰ was established in 2006. Fifth, anti-trafficking efforts started being implemented in the early 2000s by the IOM and LaStrada.

Respondents' perceptions and knowledge differ from the organizations' knowledge of the causes of human trafficking, which was demonstrated by juxtaposing their views.

³⁰ Implementation of the National Referral System (hereafter SNR).

Push Factors: The Moldovan public sees several connections between human trafficking and the socio-political situation in Moldova. Several causes of trafficking emerge (1) from the failure of the Moldovan government, (2) unemployment and poverty, and (3) corruption.

Pull Factors: respondents mentioned several common themes of factors pulling them to migrate and eventually fall prey to trafficking: (1) globalization, (2) employment opportunities abroad, and opportunities to save money and to provide for family members at home, (3) promises of a better life and working conditions.

Macro-economic causes of human trafficking are somehow similar to the organizations' views of this phenomenon, with the exception that the Moldovan public does not think that raising awareness about trafficking plays a role in solving the problem. The difference between public views and organizations' views is significant because of a lack of communication between the public and counter-trafficking organizations.

The current anti-trafficking policies could be reformed based on the findings of this study. These organizations should focus less on raising awareness about human trafficking and focus more on informing people about safe migration, working rights for migrants, and sources of help in countries of destination. Some counter-trafficking organizations in Moldova have mentioned some of these aspects, but not often enough. People still do not know who exactly is entitled to seek help in trafficking situations and they do not think that these organizations can really help them; this is another issue – lack of trust. I will discuss the implications of the lack of communication and recommendations later in this dissertation.

11. PERCEIVED RISKS OF BEING TRAFFICKED

Previous findings and theoretical explanations

Previous findings of this dissertation show that people from specific backgrounds are better informed about human trafficking than others. These findings raise additional questions such as *Why can some demographic characteristics predict so accurately the Moldovan population's levels of awareness of human trafficking?* This part detangles this dilemma by offering three explanations.

The first explanation states that people with specific demographic characteristics were better informed about human trafficking than others because these people had been targeted more often by the counter-trafficking organizations. The counter-trafficking organizations in Moldova operate under the assumption that people in rural areas, with less education and fewer economic resources, and with less access to information, are more vulnerable to trafficking because they are unaware of this problem. As a result, people from particular backgrounds were more informed about human trafficking than others because these organizations specifically targeted them. This explanation emerged after qualitative interviews with anti-trafficking experts and practitioners about their preferred targeting patterns in preventing human trafficking, especially when it comes to awareness campaigns.

Second explanation claims that some categories of people were better informed about human trafficking because it occurred in their communities. People are sooner incentivized to learn about a social problem when the problem happens in close proximity to them: in their community, locality, village, town, or any other type of neighborhood (R. A. Anderson 2008, 144). Since most victims come from rural areas, I explained that this is the reason they are better informed about trafficking – because this problem occurs more often in their communities.

Qualitative interviews offered another layer to this explanation: I observed that in small communities (such as villages and suburb areas) information is shared more rapidly than in urban areas. It is not that much about the information circulation as it is about the way people perceive this problem. This concept it is not new, on the one side people tend to emphasize things that happen in close proximity to them; and on the other side they tend to de-emphasize things that happen further away from them. When a social problem occurs in someone's community, one is more likely to think that he/she is at greater risk to be exposed to this problem as well. This explanation paves the way for the third explanation.

The third explanation reasons that some people are better informed about human trafficking when they think that they are at a greater risk of being trafficked compared to others. This explanation emerged from the previous two explanations. First, counter-trafficking organizations targeted people with specific characteristics and convinced them that they were prone to being trafficked. Since the late 90s, people from rural areas, with less education, with fewer economic resources, and less access to education, have been told that they are the most vulnerable group of people to human trafficking. Second, since many people in rural areas experienced instances of human trafficking in their own communities indirectly, they were more likely to think that this might happen to them as well. Hence, these two key elements played an important role in convincing people coming from specific backgrounds that they were more prone to being trafficked than others. This explains why some people were more likely to identify themselves as being potentially at risk of being trafficked than others.

All in all, people who think of themselves as potential victims of human trafficking are more likely to inform themselves about this phenomenon and take additional care when traveling abroad for work.

Hypotheses

From the explanations discussed above, the following hypotheses emerge:

H1: *People from rural areas, from lower socioeconomic classes are more likely to think that they may be trafficked if they travel abroad uninformed.*

People coming from rural areas, with lower salaries, from lower socioeconomic classes, and with less education are better informed about human trafficking because they are more likely to think that they are prone to being trafficked and have more incentives to inform themselves about it.

H2: *People from rural areas, from lower socioeconomic classes are targeted more often by the counter-trafficking organizations when it comes to preventing efforts, especially raising-awareness campaigns.*

People from rural areas, from lower socioeconomic classes, with less education are better informed about human trafficking precisely because the counter-trafficking organizations have been targeting them.

Methods

To test H1, I ran statistical tests checking if residency area, education, salary, and social class influence people's perceptions of being trafficked. To test H2, I conducted in-depth interviews with experts from main counter-trafficking organizations in Moldova: the IOM, LaStrada, and the Department of Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova. Data were collected through personal interviews. The questions were framed to find out what

areas and segments of society were targeted more by anti-trafficking organizations (for more information see part 7 of this dissertation).

Survey variables

Age (1%, >15 years; 32%, 16-25; 17%, 26-35; 17%, 36-45; 14%, 46-55; 16%, 56-65; 4%, <66 years), gender (55%, female; 45%, male), residency area (51%, rural; 27%, urban; 22%, capital city), regions of Moldova (63%, Center; 22%, North; 15%, South), social class (67%, middle class; 26%, lower class; 7%, upper class).

Operationalization of variables

The dependent variable is *personally perceived vulnerability towards trafficking* and four independent variables (*residency, gender, salary, and education*), which were transformed into new dummy variables for linear regressions. Linear regressions were necessary to measure to what degree each independent variable influenced a respondent's personally perceived vulnerability to trafficking. Dummy variables were necessary for linear regressions considering that original data are mainly nominal and categorical.

Trafficking risks. Respondents were asked if they believed they might be at risk of being trafficked if they travelled to a new country uninformed. Their responses were coded '0' for 'no' and '1' for 'yes'. About 65% of people think they are at risk of being trafficked if they travel abroad uninformed.

Area of residency. Respondents in the sample are categorized in three distinct categories: rural, urban, and capital city residents. About 51% of respondents reside in ‘rural’, 27% in ‘urban’, and 22% in ‘capital city’. This variable was re-coded into three new dummy variables, *area of residency (rural)*, *area of residency (urban)*, and *area of residency (capital)*. Each dummy variable was coded ‘1’ and the rest was coded ‘0’.

Education. Respondents were asked how many years of education they had completed (numerical variable). However, for the regressions a new categorical variable with four categories was created: Middle School (MS) – those who have 9 or less years of education; High School (HS) – those who have between 12 – 10 years of education; Undergraduate degree (BA) – those who have between 13 – 15 years of education; Graduate degree (MA+) – those who have more than 15 years of education. About 47% of polled people have an HS degree, 35% have a BA, 16% have an MS, and 3% have a MA+ degree. This variable was re-coded into four new dummy variables, *education (MS)*, *education (HS)*, *education (BA)* and *education (MA+)*. Each dummy variable was coded ‘1’ and the rest was coded ‘0’.

Monthly Salary. Respondents were asked about their monthly salaries. They had the option to choose between three categories: less than 300 USD (coded as low salary), between 300 – 600 USD (coded as average salary), and more than 600 USD (coded as high salary). About 58% of respondents have low salaries, 25% have average salaries, and 17% have high salaries. This variable was re-coded into three new dummy variables, *salary (low)*, *salary (average)*, and *salary (high)*. Each dummy variable was coded ‘1’ and the rest was coded ‘0’.

Results

Descriptive statistics show that an overwhelming majority of rural inhabitants think they may be trafficked if they travel abroad uninformed (62%), followed by a quarter of inhabitants of Chisinau (25%), and a small number of those who reside in other urban areas (10%). Women are more likely to think that they may be trafficked compared to men, 69% and 31% respectively. The difference between these categories is very wide and it means that there is an explanation why some people think that they may be trafficked while others think there is no risk for them.

Table 9: Moldovans' perceived risks of being trafficked based on area of residency and gender (N=78)³¹

Can you be trafficked?		‘Yes’	
Area of Residency	Rural 62.5% (N=30)	Urban 10.4 % (N=5)	Capital City 25% (N=12)
Gender	Male 30.6% (N=11)	Female 69.4% (N=25)	

Note: The output has been produced through descriptive statistics (crosstabulations)

³¹ The question about the personal risks of being trafficked if traveling abroad uninformed (respondent) was added at a later stage of the study. Therefore, the sample contains only 78 entries.

Table 10: Factors predicting the Moldovans' perceived risks of being trafficked

Factors	Trafficking Risks
Residency (rural)	.07
Residency (capital)	-.05
Residency (urban)	-.22*
Salary (low)	.18*
Salary (average)	.04
Salary (high)	-.17
Education (MS)	.11
Education (HS)	.06
Education (BA)	-.34**
Education (MA+)	.22*

Note: Sample size =88. Cell entries are final standardized coefficients. These are separate linear regressions for each independent variable.

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

These results support H1 – that people from rural areas, from a lower economic class were more likely to think that they might be trafficked if they travelled abroad uninformed because they thought that they were at a greater risk of being trafficked. The qualitative interviews revealed that these respondents acknowledged that the majority of trafficked victims come from similar backgrounds like they themselves.

In addition to quantitative results, I conducted in-depth interviews asking the reasons why people think they might (or might not) be trafficked if they travelled abroad for work. In the following sections, I outline several responses that sum up their general reasoning:

A man (37 years) from a rural area told me:

Yes, I think I may be trafficked. I think that it can be very dangerous to travel abroad, especially uninformed. One can fool me or sell me into slavery. People going abroad uninformed and unprepared would be very soon disillusioned, they are very vulnerable because they do not speak the local language, they are not familiar with the place, one can definitely be fooled and trafficked. So, yes, I think I can be trafficked.

A follow-up question of how and where the respondent would look for help, he told me that he would try to find a police station, 'I will seek help from police. From there, the police will re-direct me to further sources of help in this situation'.

A teenager (14 years) said:

Yes, I may be trafficked if I travel abroad because I do not speak the language and I am not familiar to the place. Even a little child can fool me because I do not know anything there. I would always feel like a stranger and everyone else there will know that I am not a local and that I do not belong to their community. This is why I would be so vulnerable, I would feel that no one wants me there and that I cannot seek help out because I would be alone.

I asked a follow-up question, what she would do in a trafficking situation 'If I were trafficked, I would not ask for help in Moldova, it is useless, no effect from their [Moldovan authorities] side. Abroad, I would try to seek help at the Embassy. But it is very hard to ask for help if your documents are not fine, if you are not legal you cannot ask for help'.

I found partial support for H2 that people from rural areas, from lower social and economic classes are targeted more often by the awareness programs of counter-trafficking organizations. Anti-trafficking experts from Moldova confirmed this hypothesis. IOs, NGOs and other counter-trafficking entities have targeted mainly people from rural areas, from lower socioeconomic classes mainly because most identified victims have had the same characteristics. For them it has seemed rational to target those who are at risk of being trafficked, namely people from rural areas. Hence, there was not a particular interest to reach out to people from higher socioeconomic classes residing in urban areas.

Summary

In this chapter, I developed a theory explaining why people from rural areas are better informed about human trafficking, by grounding it in four arguments. Rural inhabitants are better informed about trafficking (1) because they tend to think that they are more likely to be trafficked, (2) because they share the same characteristics with trafficked victims, (3) because they are more likely to know families who have lost members to traffickers, and (4) because anti-trafficking organizations mainly targeted them. As a result, rural residents have a better motivation to inform themselves about this problem.

12. PUBLIC TRUST IN COUNTER-TRAFFICKING INSTITUTIONS

Importance of the public trust in counter-trafficking organizations

The definition of the *public trust* means ‘the degree to which external stakeholders, such as the public, hold a collective trust orientation toward an organization’ (Schepker et al. 2010, 124).

The public trust definition:

is consistent with trust as fundamentally a psychological state (Kramer 1999 quoted in Schepker et al. 2010, 126) in which one willingly relies on another based on a positive expectation of the other’s intentions or behavior (Rousseau et al. 1998 quoted in Schepker et al. 2010, 126). The key distinction, however, is that public trust relates two groups: the public and the organization; whereas personal trust focuses on an individual’s trust of another person. Public trust, therefore, represents an aggregate perception of trust to a singular entity, which is similar to that of organizational trust: the extent to which members of one organization hold a collective trust orientation toward another organization (Zaheer et al. 1998; Zaheer and Harris 2005 quoted in Schepker et al. 2010, 126).

While the public trust in organizations is an important topic, the literature on it is lacking (Schepker et al. 2010, 124). Generally, organizations do not know how to build relations of trust with the public because this topic has been understudied (Schwartz et al. 1999). Some scholars believe that organizations need to learn how to regain the public trust in them after they failed to perform properly in the eyes of the public (Bunker et al. 1996). Furthermore, regaining the public trust can decrease negative consequences triggered by the failure of organizations (Bunker et al. 1996, Schepker et al. 2010). ‘Failure to appropriately acknowledge and respond to trust violations can only further harm the organization’s reputation and legitimacy in the marketplace’ (Bradford and Garrett 1995 cited in Schepker et al. 2010, 126).

Shanley and Fombrun argue that understanding how the public forms reputation of an organization can help explain how to overcome those obstacles in building a positive reputation and trust in that organization (Shanley et al. 1990). Shanley and his colleague found that the

public constructs 'reputations on the basis of information about firms' relative structural positions within organizational fields, specifically using market and accounting signals indicating performance, institutional signals indicating conformity to social norms, and strategy signals indicating strategic postures'(Camerer et al. 1998; Shanley et al. 1990, 233). The reputation of organizations is important because it can be used to accomplish its aims and gain competitive benefits (Shanley et al. 1990). The reputation is also essential for organizations to survive in the long-run (Schepker et al. 2010). Other scholars have studied the public trust from different perspectives – the collective trust perspective, the effects on organizational outcomes perspective, and 'damaged relationships' perspective (Schepker et al. 2010, Zaheer et al. 2009, Singh et al. 1998). However, the literature on the public trust in organizations is still limited (Shanley et al. 1990, Schepker et al. 2010, Singh et al. 1998).

Some scholars have been advocating for more research looking at the ways to restore the public trust in organizations (Dietz et al. 2009). Looking at this issue from a systemic perspective, they argue that there is a difference between restoring the trust in organizations as compared to restoring trust in individuals. In their study, they theorized 'how each component of an organization's system shapes employees' perceptions of the organization's trustworthiness and can contribute to failures and effective trust repair' (Dietz et al. 2009, 127).

Horowitz and colleagues think that public trust in 'government and nongovernment organizations is essential to the public's willingness to donate and to support those organizations' (Horowitz et al. 2015, 4967). They measured public trust in charity organizations by analyzing people's perceptions of the efficiency of those organizations. The charity organizations analyzed were 'aid delivery' organizations offering help and assistance to people who suffered from the earthquakes of 2013 in China. Studying public perceptions concerning

people's trust in aid delivery, they found that the decline in trust of those organizations negatively correlates with people's perception of corruption of local governments in China (Horowitz et al. 2015, 4967). The authors want to highlight the importance of the public trust in charity institutions and their perceptions of corruption. Their *take home* message is: people do not trust corrupt institutions and are less likely to donate to those institutions. These findings are pertinent to developing countries lacking effective regulations and suffering from corruption (World Bank 1997 and Chatterjee and Ray 2012 in Horowitz et al. 2015, 4979).

Based on above mentioned studies, I argue that public trust in NGOs is important because it can predict the public's willingness to cooperate and interact with these organizations. This chapter analyzes to what degree the Moldovan public trusts counter-trafficking organizations. Generally, this is important for the organizations offering social services in human trafficking-related situations because they often directly interact with people. Measuring public trust in anti-trafficking organizations might even be an accurate indicator whether trafficked victims will seek help and services from these organizations.

Hypotheses

Later in this dissertation, I discuss in detail a new theory – the organizations and public communication theory (part 13 of the dissertation). Based on that theory, I had to check to what degree people in Moldova trust counter-trafficking organizations. According to this theory, on the one hand, counter-trafficking organizations are not aware of public perceptions and knowledge of human trafficking, and on the other hand people are not familiar with these organizations. Furthermore, people tend to lack trust in organizations with which they are less familiar; in this case NGOs. However, people tend to be even more distrustful of organizations

with which they are familiar, but which they perceive as corrupt; in this case Moldovan state authorities. In addition to this, people have a tendency of not trusting organizations which they perceive as inefficient.

In short, public trust in organizations depends on the way people perceive these organizations. The perception of the organizations is very important because it might predict the public's will to cooperate and interact with these entities. Of course, there are organizations which tend to polarize opinions and invoke sharp views, but in this paper I focus on public trust in counter-trafficking entities, namely NGOs and Moldovan national authorities. Unfortunately, I have only few questions regarding public trust in counter-trafficking organizations because this theme emerged only after I developed the organizations and public communication theory.

Based on the *organizations and public communication theory*, the following hypotheses arise:

H1: *People will trust NGOs more than Moldovan authorities (e.g. police).*

H2: *Poorer people are less likely to seek help from counter-trafficking organizations in trafficking situations.*

H3: *People who have been previously lied to about a job offer/salary are less likely to seek help from counter-trafficking organizations.*

H4: *People residing in rural areas are less likely to seek help from counter-trafficking organizations.*

H5: *People from lower social classes are less likely to seek help from counter-trafficking organizations in trafficking situations.*

Methods

Survey variables

Age (1%, >15 years; 32%, 16-25; 17%, 26-35; 17%, 36-45; 14%, 46-55; 16%, 56-65; 4%, <66 years), gender (55%, female; 45%, male), residency area (51%, rural; 27%, urban; 22%, capital city), regions of Moldova (63%, Center; 22%, North; 15%, South), social class (67%, middle class; 26%, lower class; 7%, upper class).

Operationalization of Variables

Variables used were one dependent variable (*public trust*) and seven independent variables (*monthly salary, lies about job/salary, minimum expenses, residency, gender, part of Moldova, and social class*). Other independent variable were used as well, but were not included as they did not show statistically significant results.

Public Trust. Respondents were asked two separate questions whether they would seek help in a trafficking situation from (1) police, and whether they would seek help in a trafficking situation from (2) NGOs. Their responses ranged from “No, I will not seek help from the source just mentioned”, “do not know”, “maybe”, to “Yes, I will seek help from the source just mentioned” in a trafficking situation.

Monthly Salary. Respondents were asked about their monthly salary. Responses were coded 1 for a salary lower than 300 USD – lower salary, 2 for a salary ranging from 300 USD to 600 USD – average salary, and 3 for a salary bigger than 600 USD – high salary. About 58% of respondents have a lower salary, 25% have an average salary, and 17% have a high salary.

Lied to about salary/job. Respondents were asked if they had been lied to about the conditions or the nature of a job. Responses were coded as “yes” or “no”. About 40% of respondents were told lies about the conditions or nature of the job.

Salary to cover min expenses. Respondents were asked if their monthly salary covered minimum living expenses. Responses were coded as “yes” or “no”. About 56% of respondents said that they could not cover their living expenses from the salary alone.

Residency Area. Respondents were asked where they resided. Responses were coded “1” for “rural area of residency”, “2” for “urban area of residency”, “3” for the “capital city residency – Chisinau”, and “4” for “not residing in Moldova, but abroad”.

Gender. Respondents’ responses were coded “0” for males and “1” for females. They were also given the option of choosing “3” other, but none chose this option.

Part of Moldova. Respondents were asked in what region of Moldova they resided. Their responses were coded as “1” for the “North of Moldova”, “2” for the “South of Moldova”, “3” for the “center part of Moldova”, and “4” for “abroad”.

Social class. Respondents were asked to what social class they counted themselves. Responses were coded “1” for “lower social class”, “2” for “middle social class”, and “3” for “upper social class”.

Analysis

Hypotheses were tested using crosstabulations. The dependent variable *the public trust* was tested by seven independent variables *monthly salary*, *lies about the job’s conditions or salary*, *ability to cover minimum living expenses with the salary*, *residency area*, *gender*, *part of Moldova*, and *social class*.

Results and discussion

These results show that almost 40% of respondents said that they would not seek help in trafficking situations from police or other state authorities and almost 20% said they would not seek help from non-governmental organizations. Other people said that they were not sure if they would seek help from any of the mentioned sources because it would depend on the circumstances of the situation. Furthermore, qualitative interviews revealed that those who said that they would seek help from state authorities and NGOs were very unsure that they would have received any support or help. Considering the lack of resources and capabilities of counter-trafficking organizations, there have been little incentives for people to seek help from them. A respondent summed it very accurately ‘Why would I even complain? I do not see why I would waste my energy and time to try and seek help when I know that nothing will be solved anyway. So why complaining or trying to seek help when I already know that nothing will come from it’.

Table 11: People’s opinions about seeking help in trafficking situations from police/state authorities and NGOs

Variables	Percent	N
Would you seek help from police/state authorities?		
No	39 %	85
Depends	8 %	18
Yes	53 %	117
Total		220
Would you seek help from NGOs?		
No	18 %	38
Depends	5 %	12
Yes	77 %	167
Total		217

Note: Sample size =217. Cell entries are descriptive statistics (frequencies)

Generally, people said that they would rather seek help from NGOs than from the state authorities. The reason people trust in NGOs more than in state authorities is due to the fact that state government is perceived as corrupt and dysfunctional without interests or capabilities to help its citizens.

The following statistical results show what particular characteristics predict someone's proneness to seek help in trafficking situations from police and/or NGOs (table 12).

Table 12: People who said that they would not seek help in trafficking situations either from police/state authorities or NGOs, controlled by several variables

Variables		Those who will NOT seek help at the police (%)	Those who will NOT seek help at the NGOs (%)
Monthly Salary			
	300<	47	26*
	300-600	40	14*
	600>	34	10*
p		(.09) N=160	(.01) N=156
Have you been lied about a job?			
	Yes	60**	41***
	No	26**	10***
p		(.001) N=120	(.000) N=117
Salary enough to cover minimum expenses?			
	Yes	37**	11*
	No	48**	27*
p		(.007) N=166	(.03) N=162
Where do you live?			
	Rural	39*	25*
	Urban	49*	11*
	Capital	24*	6*
p		(.01) N=211	(.02) N=209
Gender			
	Female	38	14*
	Male	48	25*
p		(.3) N=178	(.03) N=180
From what part of Moldova?			
	North	30	23
	South	33	12
	Center	42	16
p		(.03) N=211	(.5) N=208

Social class?

	Lower class	55	37*
	Middle class	52	16*
	Upper class	40	11*
p		(.7) N=118	(.04) N=119

Note: Sample size =209. Cell entries are crosstabulations results for answer ‘No’ to the question ‘Would you seek help from police/state authorities in a trafficking situation?’ and ‘Would you seek help from NGOs in a trafficking situation?’.

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Based on the results in the table above, I will hereafter refer to the lack of proneness to seek help in trafficking situation taking into account both (police/state authorities and NGOs). Overall, salary correlates negatively with people’s willingness to seek help in trafficking situations; those who said that their salary was not enough to cover minimum expenses were also less likely to say that they would seek any help in trafficking situations.

There are several accurate indicators that can predict if someone would seek help in trafficking situations. First, *monthly salary* – the lower the salary is, the less likely people are to seek help. Second, *salary enough* – the less people are satisfied with their salaries, the less likely they are to seek help in trafficking situations. Third, *social class* – the lower their social class, the less likely people are to seek help. Fourth, *gender* – men are less likely to seek help compared to women. Fifth, *lies about jobs/salary* – people who have been lied to before about a job offer, salary, or working conditions, are less likely to seek help.

All in all, these findings suggest that people from lower socioeconomic classes are less likely to seek help in trafficking situations, be it state authorities or NGOs. This has serious implications since counter-trafficking organizations try precisely to target these categories of people with their anti-trafficking prevention measures and assistance programs. Counter-trafficking organizations operate under the assumption that these people are more vulnerable to

being trafficked, but these results demonstrate that these people are less likely to seek any help in trafficking situations. These organizations have to reconsider their targeting methods since it seems that they still have not gained the support and trust of the population. People do not trust that these organizations can help them or can fully assist them with what they need.

Another theme that emerged is the fact that since the Moldovan public perceives this problem differently, it also perceives help differently. People realize that the rates of human trafficking are high because of the economic situation, lack of opportunities, therefore even if they have been exposed to trafficking situations, they are less likely to seek help because this is not a long-term solution. They will again need to take up risky job offers because there are no alternatives back home.

13. CONNECTING THE DOTS: THE ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATION THEORY

This dissertation seeks to contribute to the literature on human trafficking by presenting a more rounded picture of human trafficking in Moldova, a country with some of the highest trafficking rates globally (IOM 2016; ILO 2015; Global Slavery Index 2013, 13; World Bank 2014, vii). One cannot get a fuller picture of human trafficking without looking at this problem from different angles. The angles chosen for this dissertation were to look at the present status of public perception of human trafficking in a country of origin and to evaluate past research methods and approaches in this field. This is why I build my arguments around several empirical parts, each with its own separate section on theory and hypotheses, methodology, results, and discussion. While each part of this dissertation reports on distinct aspects of the public perception of human trafficking, they are interrelated and interconnected. I argue that these aspects are important in seeing a broader picture of this phenomenon in Moldova. These empirical findings might even serve as a useful reference for anti-trafficking policy makers, scholars, and legislators worldwide.

My inquiry into empirical human trafficking research helped me develop an inductive theory explaining the overall findings of this dissertation. First, I explain this new theory in general terms, and then I apply it to this study. This theory states that the lack of communication between organizations and the public results in a dysfunctional relationship which undermines the efforts of organizations to serve and provide help for people. On an explanatory level, I argue that on one hand, organizations that do not know what victims need and want will fail to fully address those needs. On the other hand, people who do not trust those specific organizations will refuse to cooperate, to support, or seek help from them. Besides, the only thing people know is that

these organizations have always been warning about going abroad, although this often seems to be the only possibility to survive. As a result, if someone has been exploited abroad, he/she will not address these organizations due to his/her bad conscience caused by ignoring their warnings.

The *organizations and public communication theory* is grounded on observations of the communication between the counter-trafficking organizations and the Moldovan public. Two main sets of findings have assisted me in the development of this theory: that organizations operate under wrong assumptions, and that people do not know about the work carried out by these organizations. On an intuitive level it seemed presumable from the beginning, but in the end this explanation emerged only after a comprehensive analysis of different aspects of human trafficking.

I highlight two key aspects of this theory, *omniscience* of organizations and *ignorance* of people. First, organizations operate as if they were omniscient actors who know and understand everything about the problem of human trafficking without the need to find out about people's real perceptions and needs in this respect. Neither do they put effort in finding out what the effects of their prevention programs and campaigns on people are (Bishop 2013, Roby 2008). On the opposite, people are treated as unknowing actors who do not know and/or understand this problem (Arap 2017, Munteanu 2012, Todorova 2014, Rusu 2013), therefore the raising-awareness campaigns are still very prevalent in Moldova (Arap 2017, Tudorova 2014, Rusu 2013). It is not that these counter-trafficking organizations decide on their own how to go about their prevention efforts. Donors and sponsors put a lot of pressure on these organizations when it comes to raising-awareness campaigns (GRETA 2016, 13)³². The counter-trafficking

³² 'While welcoming the initiatives undertaken by the Moldovan authorities in collaboration with international organizations and NGOs, GRETA considers that the authorities should further develop information and prevention campaigns in order to raise awareness among the general public on different forms of THB, including internal

organizations are not totally wrong in their assumptions; while the Moldovan public does not lack awareness of human trafficking as such, it lacks awareness about the efforts of counter-trafficking organizations in this field.

The Moldovan public, who tends to be very concerned about human trafficking in Moldova, is not familiar with the work carried out by the anti-trafficking organizations; therefore, the public is very critical of the counter-trafficking state authorities. Almost 70% of respondents of the public survey blame the Moldovan government for this problem. About 55% of polled people said that the government of Moldova did absolutely nothing to solve this problem, while another 28% said that the government did so little that it had no effect. This supports the argument that people do not know about anti-trafficking efforts carried out by both state authorities and other counter-trafficking organizations. Qualitative interviews revealed that people have heard about some of these organizations, but are not familiar with these organizations' anti-trafficking efforts and services (refer to part 9, 10, 11). At the same time it should be noted that people blame the government for the lack of jobs and economic opportunities, which will be discussed later in this paper.

This section further elaborates on the findings of my research and the theory explaining it. On the whole, I argue that a lack of communication explains why these two entities have incorrect assumptions about one another. On one side, organizations have the wrong assumptions about the levels of awareness of Moldovan people; on the other side, Moldovan people generally have misconceptions concerning counter-trafficking organizations. Counter-trafficking organizations assume that people from rural areas, with less education and fewer economic resources, are more prone and vulnerable to human trafficking because they are not aware of this

trafficking. Future awareness raising measures should be designed in the light of the assessment of previous measures and be focused on the needs identified' (GRETA 2016, 13).

problem and the risks associated with it (please refer to part 6 and 7 of this dissertation). So these organizations continue focusing on initiating awareness programs and campaigns to prevent people from being trafficked (Arap 2017, Tudorova 2014, Rusu 2013). However, my study challenges these assumptions and provides evidence countering the claim that people from rural communities do not understand the risks of human trafficking (refer to part 6, 9, 10, 11).

My argument is that problematic assumptions about the education levels of rural people result from the fact that anti-trafficking organizations do not know what people know due to their failure communicating with the people about their needs regarding this social issue. At the same time, these organizations hold inaccurate assumptions because they base their knowledge on information collected mainly from very few trafficked victims. But they do not take into consideration the general public, which includes unidentified victims of human trafficking as well (refer to part 3, 6, 7 of this dissertation).

On the other hand, there are three arguments explaining why Moldovan people have inaccurate assumptions thinking that nothing is done to combat this problem in Moldova.

First, people lack awareness of the current anti-trafficking policies, legislation, and programs implemented. This happens because these organizations do not communicate their work to the public effectively. Usually, only people who have a deep interest in this field, such as researchers and academics, are informed about the anti-trafficking efforts carried out in Moldova. However, the general public lacks access to this kind of information, which is not easily accessible to those who are not familiar with the topic. Unfortunately, anti-trafficking efforts are rarely communicated to the general public; when they are communicated, they are usually delivered in too sophisticated and technical terms, which are not comprehensible for those not familiar with this field of study. Although some counter-trafficking organizations think that the public is not

capable of understanding or deeply analyzing the issue of trafficking, they still do not try to inform the public in a more simple and comprehensive way.

Second, people think that little is done to solve this problem because the mass media inform them about high rates of trafficked victims. My claim is that if the mass media focus mainly on extreme cases of human trafficking rather than on the work carried out in this field, this induces people to think that nothing is being done by the counter-trafficking organizations to solve the problem. This is a twofold argument. It is true that these organizations want to inform people about the risks and dangers related to trafficking, but they fail to realize that this strategy is in fact a scare-tactic, which backfires. More precisely, instead of informing people how to deal with the risks, they only scare them. Hence, using a scare-tactic has a negative effect on public perception: what public perceives is not the fact that they are being informed, but the fact that the Moldovan government is not doing anything to solve this problem except for warning them not to go abroad. This seems counter-productive because, on one hand, many Moldovans have to emigrate to find a job abroad and, on the other hand, the government relies on money sent from Moldovans working abroad, which constitutes an important economic factor for Moldova (refer to part 9 of the dissertation). This is exactly the opposite of what these organizations hope for, but again these organizations are not aware of these negative consequences because they do not communicate with the people they target (Arap 2017, Rusu 2013).

Third, I argue that the communication between organizations and people is further undermined by the fact that they have different perspectives of the causes of human trafficking. While counter-trafficking organizations think that the high number of victims can be explained by the public being uninformed, people think the high number of victims is a result of poverty and unemployment. Consequently, organizations act on the assumption that an increase of

awareness can prevent people from being trafficked, an argument with which the public disagrees. The Moldovan public thinks that only an improved economic situation and job creation can solve this problem. Since people think that human trafficking is caused by poverty and unemployment, they tend to think that the government does nothing to solve this problem until it focuses on improving the economic situation of the country. Surprisingly, Moldovan people seem to see a more realistic picture of human trafficking and how it can be tackled than some counter-trafficking organizations.

In short, both parties blame different phenomena and tend to prioritize different causes of human trafficking. Therefore, the information transmitted via mass media is perceived differently by each entity – one side thinks that this will prevent trafficking, while the other side gets more concerned with the government's inactivity in this field.

Implications and recommendations

To sum it up, organizations do not know what people think, and hence do not know what these people need, and how to address this problem better. On the other hand, people often do not know about the existence of these organizations, hence do not know what these organizations do, and do not know what these organizations can offer to them. Unfamiliarity with these organizations increases public distrust in them and limits the desire of the public to seek help and advice from them. This lack of communication can lead to serious complications for anti-trafficking programs and policies. For example, anti-trafficking policy makers do not target the root causes of trafficking (which are poverty and unemployment), but they are still focusing on increasing awareness about this phenomenon. One might argue that this is the second-best strategy, considering that the economic situation is not going to improve any time soon, but I

would bring a counter-argument to this. While I agree that the counter-trafficking organizations cannot influence the economic situation, I argue that these organizations can take measures to build a stronger relationship with the public they serve; for example they can inform people about labor legislation, trade unions, and anti-trafficking organizations in the countries of destination. Another implication of the lack of communication is the distrust and unfamiliarity of the public with these organizations; that, then, imposes additional obstacles to the programs, focusing on the identification of victims of human trafficking.

Based on this theory, several recommendations emerge. First, counter-trafficking entities need to get to know the public. At the moment, anti-trafficking organizations still focus on few identified trafficked victims mainly – this is important, but should not be the sole source of information. In fact, victim-centered approaches severely affect the accuracy of the assumptions held by organizations. In order to overcome this weakness, organizations need to focus on the general public, which will broaden their horizon of knowledge about human trafficking. Moldovan people are citizens who reside in a country with some of the worst indicators of human trafficking in the world (IOM 2016; ILO 2015; Global Slavery Index 2013, 13; World Bank 2014, 6), therefore it is essential to learn what these people know and think about this problem and why they go abroad, even if they know about the risks. Learning what people really know will help the counter-trafficking organizations develop suitable anti-trafficking programs and policies.

Second, the counter-trafficking organizations need to create an open dialogue rather than a monologue. By ‘dialogue,’ I mean a way for information to flow both ways - from people to organizations and from organizations to people - with the possibility of constant feedback throughout the whole process. An open dialogue will facilitate the process of these counter-

trafficking entities to learn from the people about their knowledge, views, opinions, perceptions, and needs on this topic. Being aware of these things will facilitate the process of addressing some of the aspects of human trafficking. For example, knowing that people of lower socioeconomic status are less likely to seek help in trafficking situations might help organizations reconsider their programs, in order to target people from these categories (refer to part 10, 11, 12 of this dissertation). As another example, knowing that people from a lower socioeconomic class are less likely to seek help in trafficking situations if they are undocumented residents of a country might help these organizations focus more on a clear definition of who can seek help and in what circumstances and from which NGOs or public authorities in the countries of destination.

Third, counter-trafficking organizations need to involve the public directly in the search for better programs to prevent and combat human trafficking. This can be done by preliminary testing or evaluation of some anti-trafficking programs and opening up a subsequent discussion with the Moldovan public. One would be surprised how useful it might be to get feedback on specific issues from the public, which in turn would be positively influenced by these prevention initiatives and programs. For example, when asked if people think that there is need for more information on this issue, they said ‘no,’ they think they get enough information. What they do not get, however, is ‘jobs and economic security,’ which eventually leads them to seek risky opportunities in the grey area of the job market abroad (refer to part 10, 11 of this dissertation).

These recommendations go both ways: people also have to make an effort to familiarize themselves with the work carried out by these organizations. Second, the public should try to learn to trust these institutions, which would facilitate the self-identification process of the victims and potential victims (Arap 2017). The public needs to participate in the dialogue with

the counter-trafficking organizations when the opportunity arises; only in this way can both sides have a productive and lasting communication system, which can strengthen the anti-trafficking efforts.

Theory applicability

The *organizations and public communication theory* states that studying the communication quality between organizations and the public can predict the effectiveness of work carried out by those organizations, especially organizations whose work affects people at large. This theory can be applied to all organizations or institutions dealing with social problems. One might argue that any organization which tries to solve a social issue without taking into consideration the views of those who are affected by it would eventually fail to address that issue effectively³³.

Generally, politicians, policy makers, and anti-trafficking organizations need to acknowledge that human trafficking is a very complex problem and it needs more research within sociological analysis, more sociological approaches looking at the link between the public and organizations serving the public.

³³ It goes beyond the purpose of this dissertation, but in my future work I hope to focus on developing a concrete scale measuring the types and strengths of communication between organizations and the public. Organizations and the public will be grouped in typologies according to different criteria and/or measurable indicators. For example, one criterion or a measurable indicator can be the ‘omniscience of an organization’, which can also be translated as the ‘level of arrogance’ of an organization when an organization acts as if it knew everything about an issue without taking into consideration the opinion/views of the public or/and other organizations.

14. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This dissertation seeks to contribute to the literature on human trafficking by introducing the *organizations and public communication theory* that explains why organizations operate under inaccurate assumptions and why people are not familiar with these organizations. This study shows that people in Moldova do not know what the government does to solve trafficking. The Moldovan authorities' anti-trafficking efforts are unnoticed by the public and this increases people's distrust in the government to solve social, economic, and political problems. Many are sceptic about information provided by the Moldovan mass media outlets, which further complicates the communication between the people and the government. This theory can be used to explain and/or predict the effectiveness and efficiency of anti-trafficking efforts based on the strength of the communication between organizations and the public.

In addition to this, using a mixed methods approach by combining quantitative and qualitative survey data from a sample representing the Moldovan population regarding different aspects of human trafficking, I have extended the human trafficking literature concerning countries of origin of trafficking in several ways. Specifically, I have demonstrated the importance of having a more rounded picture of human trafficking to tackle this problem more efficiently, namely to know the socioeconomically characteristic consequences of migration motivations on Moldovan inhabitants, the effects of mass media on public perception of human trafficking, the comparison of counter-trafficking organizations' knowledge concerning trafficking and Moldovan population's knowledge concerning this problem, and the theoretical contribution in explaining the reason why some inhabitants are better informed about human trafficking than others. Below, I discussed my key findings and their theoretical implications.

Migration and economic deprivation

First, as indicated in Chapter 8, my analyses revealed that people of a higher socioeconomic status are more willing to move and settle abroad. I found support for the network theory because people who have relatives abroad are more willing to move to a foreign country. Previous work experience abroad increases the probability that people are willing to move abroad because they are more familiar with the living and working conditions in a foreign country. On the other hand, the perceived danger abroad decreases people's willingness to move abroad. These findings suggest that motivations to migrate and actual rates of migration are different things – people from lower socioeconomic classes tend to migrate at higher rates than other people, although at the same time they are less willing to migrate.

Mass media effects on the public perception of human trafficking

Second, as explained in Chapter 9, my findings demonstrate that the number of mass media sources and frequency of news watching are accurate predictors of peoples' knowledge concerning human trafficking. Also, the more people have heard of human trafficking recently, the better they can identify existing types of trafficking. Generally, Moldovans are well informed about human trafficking, and they say that rates are high because of poverty and unemployment.

Perceived risks of being trafficked

Third, as indicated in Chapter 10, my findings suggest that people from rural areas, from lower socioeconomic classes, with less education are more informed about human trafficking because they believe they are more likely to be trafficked. These people think that they are more

vulnerable to being trafficked because they share characteristics with trafficked victims, because they are more likely to know families that have been affected by trafficking, and because they have been targeted by the counter-trafficking organizations.

Public perception vs counter-trafficking organizations' perception about human trafficking

Fourth, as indicated in Chapter 11, I juxtapose the counter-trafficking organizations' knowledge concerning causes of trafficking with the population's knowledge concerning causes of human trafficking. My findings suggest that there are some themes that overlap, but there are also differences in the way people and organizations see the roots of human trafficking in Moldova. The major difference is that while counter-trafficking organizations continue to focus on raising awareness of this problem hoping to prevent people from being trafficked, the Moldovan public does not think that there is a lack of information about this problem, but rather that there are no alternative choices than seeking risky job opportunities abroad.

Implications

Some findings suggest that people are less willing to migrate if they think that it is dangerous to travel abroad. This happens as a result of the counter-trafficking organizations using scare-tactics instead of informing people on safe migration. These organizations need to come to a realization that scare-tactics cannot keep people at home when they cannot earn a living there; what scare-tactics can do instead is to stop people informing themselves about safe migration and legal employment opportunities abroad. When poverty and unemployment do not

leave a choice for them but to seek jobs abroad, they are not prepared very well and at an even greater risk to become victims.

Recommendations

My dissertation highlights the importance of increasingly exploring new approaches and methodologies to get a fuller picture of human trafficking. This is essential to address this problem effectively. Anti-trafficking policy makers and practitioners shall base their efforts ‘on a solid empirical basis, make informed decisions in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of their anti-trafficking responses’ (Craggs et al. 2010, 80).

This dissertation shows that counter-trafficking organizations have to use new approaches and methodologies to get a more rounded picture of human trafficking. It is impossible to get a holistic picture of human trafficking by solely focusing on information collected from assisted victims, which often mislead anti-trafficking practitioners diagnosing causes of this problem. Counter-trafficking organizations are recommended to revise their data collection and data usage. It should be stated very clearly what conclusions and generalizations can be drawn from victim-centered data. These practitioners should ask themselves what this information tells or does not tell them about trafficking (and trafficking victims). The anti-trafficking community needs to pay ‘greater attention to the exploration of the methodological and ethical issues in the context of the research done and findings presented’ (Craggs et al. 2010, 81).

While counter-trafficking organizations have been praised for generalizations made based on information collected from assisted victims, there is more work to be done in advancing the methods and approaches to get a more complex picture of trafficking. Anti-trafficking experts should be mindful of key issues like ignored factors that lead to human trafficking, migration

motivations, the role of the mass media, and the efficiency of prevention programs. Craggs and Surtees also call upon anti-trafficking entities to move ‘beyond an analysis of data collected from only one source and one group of victims to include other data sources, employing multiple methodologies’ (Craggs et al. 2010, 81).

This dissertation does not claim that victim-centered data are obsolete; it acknowledges their importance but also highlights their limitations. Having more perspectives on human trafficking will ensure that anti-trafficking efforts are more efficient. Public surveys are one example of how to look at this problem from another perspective.

This dissertation supports Surtees’ arguments that long-held assumptions need to be questioned and debunked. Very rarely is the information collected from assisted victims analyzed along with information collected from other socially vulnerable people. Surtees and Brunovski studied human trafficking against the background of both domestic violence and illegal migration, finding important similarities. Analyzing ignored aspects of social vulnerability will enhance not only our understanding of human trafficking, but will also enhance effectiveness of anti-trafficking prevention and protection efforts (Surtees 2010, p 28).

Raising-awareness campaigns, especially those focused on scare-tactics, have to be replaced. The counter-trafficking organizations in Moldova should not focus on preventing people from migrating, but rather informing people on safe migration, employment abroad, the circumstances under which people can seek help in countries of destination. Some attempts have been made to inform people about these issues; but this is not enough (Arap 2017, Tudorova 2015, Rusu 2013).

Counter-trafficking organizations have to develop new ways of reaching out to people who are forced to move abroad against their will. The reason for targeting these people is that many

do not inform themselves well enough about safe migration because they primarily do not want to move abroad. When they do not have any other choice, they have to seek employment opportunities abroad without having knowledge about safe migration and opportunities abroad. Anti-trafficking efforts in Moldova should change their perspective on migration and human trafficking. Once these organizations change their perspective, they can change the way they tackle this problem.

Another suggestion for anti-trafficking organizations is to change the image of *who is a victim of human trafficking*. Too often we see that anti-trafficking organizations in Moldova mainly focus on sex trafficking of young women, which is a skewed representation of victims. These misrepresentations have huge consequences on anti-trafficking efforts since they give the impression that only young women are trafficked and mostly in sexual exploitation, which is not the case. It is worth mentioning that counter-trafficking on a policy-making level has started to focus more on labor trafficking, but when it comes to raising awareness, sex trafficking is still used more often. Consequently, people trafficked in other sectors, rather than sex exploitation, might not identify themselves as victims of human trafficking. With such misrepresentation, the anti-trafficking organizations run the risk not to identify the broader spectrum of victims of trafficking.

In addition to the misrepresentation of victims of human trafficking – by the image of a young woman sold in sex trafficking – these organizations have to reconsider the way they portray victims of trafficking in general. A simple search of a *victim of trafficking* results in a lot of graphic images of women with bruises and wounds, in hand-cuffs, passive and immobile, under the control of someone else. These are dehumanizing images that are not only inaccurate and misleading, but also have negative implications for anti-trafficking efforts. These

dehumanizing images explain why some people do not want to be identified as victims of human trafficking. Recognizing or acknowledging that one is a victim of human trafficking means taking all these images and applying them to oneself. As these images invoke shame, anguish, distress, and guilt, people are unwilling to identify with them. Objectifying the human bodies in anti-trafficking campaigns is clearly wrong and cannot lead to anything positive. All they accomplish is deterring people from identifying as victims. The counter-trafficking organizations have to work hard to change the image of victims of human trafficking if they want to address the problem of people refusing to seek help and identify as victims.

The counter-trafficking organizations should stop portraying victims of human trafficking as mainly women under violence³⁴. Such pictures should be replaced with pictures of male and female workers in bad working conditions.

Researchers noted that the use of sensitive labels such as victim, trafficked, rape, prostitution, illegal migrant negatively interferes with the victim identification and disclosure process. Labelling is especially problematic in some communities, where culture, gender, age, ethnicities, and other factors play a big role in people's reactions and attitudes towards these labels (Hala 2008, 21).

Brunovskis and Surtees found that the term "victim of trafficking" or the term "victim" are unpleasant labels to some actual victims who refuse to be identified and assisted because of this (Surtees et al. 2007). Weiner and Hala argue that the fact that some victims refuse to be identified as victims of human trafficking shows the importance of framing questions and issues very carefully, because these simple labels have deep individual and social dynamics, which influence human trafficking research. They also call for the need to rely on 'behaviorally specific

³⁴ 'Victims are mostly depicted as females in sex trafficking and traffickers as people in the mafia' (Anderson 2008, 137)

questions to minimize labelling and capture issues of and associated with victimization' (Hala 2008, 21).

Anti-trafficking entities in Moldova have to improve their communication skills. And the Moldovan authorities have to start talking *with the people*, and not just *to the people*. The anti-trafficking organizations should deliver and publicize their achievements and results in this field to the general public regularly. Should they communicate simple, but comprehensive reports, people would feel more aware of the government's capabilities to help them and punish the wrong-doers. This can also send a signal to the traffickers. These efforts will not only increase people's hope and trust in their state authorities' capabilities to deal with this problem, but will also convince people to seek help in trafficking situations. This strategy can also enhance anti-trafficking efforts by facilitating self-identification of victims, more people will try to seek help if they know that these institutions have actually helped people in similar situations before. And traffickers will be more afraid of being reported to the police by their victims.

15. INTERVIEWED EXPERTS

- Researcher's interview with Irina Arap, the IOM Moldova mission: data limitations and challenges, (Chisinau – Vienna skype interview), April 2017.
- Researcher's interview with Diana Donoaga, the IOM Moldova mission: data limitations and challenges, (Chisinau – Vienna email interview), April 2017.
- Researcher's interview with Irina Todorova, the IOM Moldova mission: data limitations and challenges, (Chisinau – Vienna email interview), April 2015.
- Researcher's interview with Tobias Metzner, the IOM Austria mission / the IOM Haiti mission: data limitations and challenges, (Vienna skype interview), December 2013.
- Researcher's interview with Nicolaie Mismail, LaStrada: perceptions of human trafficking, Chisinau, Moldova, August 2012.
- Researcher's interview with Tatiana Munteanu, Moldovan Embassy to US, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, Washington DC, April 2012.
- Researcher's interview with Viorelia Rusu, LaStrada: Raising-awareness campaigns, Chisinau, Moldova, August 2013.
- Researcher's interview with Brigitte Stevkovski, The ICMPD: Human trafficking, Vienna, Austria, December 2013.
- Researcher's interview with Mariyana Radeva, The ICMPD: Human trafficking, Vienna, Austria, December 2013.
- Researcher's interview with Jakob Schemel, The UN: Human Trafficking, Wisconsin, USA, (email conversation) December 2010.

16. APPENDIX

Annex 1: Abstract (English)

This dissertation seeks to contribute to the scholarship on human trafficking by presenting a more rounded picture of human trafficking in Moldova, a country with some of the highest trafficking rates globally (World Bank 2014, vii). One cannot get a fuller picture of human trafficking without looking at this problem from different angles. The angles, chosen for this dissertation, were to look at the present status of public perception of human trafficking in a country of origin and to evaluate past research methods and approaches used in this field. This dissertation fills a gap in human trafficking literature by using new methodologies to address the loopholes of data in this field, namely it is an empirical study (1), it is based on a representative sample of the Moldovan population (2), it applies a new approach to human trafficking (3), it addresses a ‘dark field’ of data (4), it counter-balances the ‘victim-centered’ data (5), and it selects an important object of research (6), which is a country of origin of a high number of trafficked victims. I used a mixed methods research approach because the combination of qualitative and quantitative data helped to understand the broader aspects of perception of human trafficking in Moldova. The primary research questions were: Do counter-trafficking organizations have a rounded picture of human trafficking? Why do we need a complex picture of human trafficking to improve the anti-trafficking efforts? How can research in the field of human trafficking be improved? While each part of this dissertation reports on distinct aspects of public perception of human trafficking, they are interrelated and interconnected and helped me develop an inductive theory explaining the overall findings. My theory states that the lack of communication between counter-trafficking organizations and the Moldovan public results in a dysfunctional relationship which undermines the anti-trafficking efforts of organizations to serve and provide help to people. On the one hand, organizations that do not know what people need and therefore fail to fully address those needs. On the other hand, people often do not trust counter-trafficking organizations and refuse to cooperate or seek help in trafficking situations. This lack of communication can lead to serious implications for anti-trafficking programs and policies. These empirical findings seek to serve as a useful reference for anti-trafficking policy makers, scholars, and legislators worldwide.

Annex 2: Abstract (German)

Diese Dissertation soll zur Wissenschaft rund um das Thema des Menschenhandels einen Beitrag leisten. Ziel ist es, ein vollständigeres Bild der Situation in Moldawien, dem Land mit der höchsten Menschenhandelsquote weltweit, zur Verfügung zu stellen (World Bank 2014, vii). Um dieses Ziel erreichen zu können ist es essentiell das Problem von unterschiedlichen Blickwinkeln zu betrachten. Die hierfür verwendeten Methoden waren sich die öffentliche Wahrnehmung über Menschenhandel in Moldawien anzusehen und die bisherigen Forschungsansätze und Methoden in diesem Bereich zu evaluieren. Diese Doktorarbeit soll die Lücken die es in der Literatur rund um das Thema Menschenhandel gibt – unter Anwendung von innovative Methoden um die vorhandenen Daten zu vervollständigen – füllen. Diese Arbeit ist eine empirische Studie (1), die auf einer repräsentativen Stichprobe der moldawischen Bevölkerung basiert (2), neue Ansätze verwendet (3), eine dunkle Seite des Problem beleuchtet (4), ein Gegengewicht zu den Opfer orientierten Daten (5) und ein zentrales Recherchethema (in dem Land mit der höchsten Zahl an Menschenhandelsopfern) darstellt (6). Um den umfassenden Aspekt der öffentlichen Wahrnehmung zum Thema Menschenhandel in Moldawien zu verstehen, war es notwendig qualitative und quantitative Forschungsmethoden zu kombinieren. Die grundlegenden Forschungsfragen waren: Haben Organisationen die sich für den Kampf gegen Menschenhandel einsetzen ein vollständiges Bild desselbigen? Warum brauchen wir, um die Anstrengungen im Kampf gegen Menschenhandel zu verbessern, ein vielschichtiges Bild von diesem? Wie kann man die Forschung in diesem Bereich verbessern? Obwohl jeder Teil dieser Dissertation verschiedene Aspekte der öffentlichen Wahrnehmung beleuchtet, sind diese doch zusammenhängend, haben dazu beigetragen eine induktive Theorie aufzustellen und die Gesamtergebnisse zu erklären. Die grundlegende Theorie ist, dass der Mangel an Kommunikation, zwischen Organisationen die sich dem Kampf gegen Menschenhandel verschrieben haben und der Bevölkerung von Moldawien, eine nicht funktionierende „Beziehung“ ist, welche die Bemühungen dieser Organisationen den Menschen zu helfen untergräbt. Einerseits scheinen die Organisationen nicht zu wissen was die betroffenen Personen brauchen, und können somit auch keine adäquate Hilfe anbieten, andererseits vertrauen betroffene Personen diesen Organisationen nicht und wollen nicht kooperieren oder Hilfe in Anspruch nehmen. Dieser Mangel an Kommunikation kann ernstzunehmende Auswirkungen auf Programme und Strategien dieser Organisationen haben. Die Ergebnisse dieser empirischen

Studie soll weltweit nützliche Referenzen für politische Entscheidungsträger, Wissenschaftler und Gesetzgeber zu Verfügung stellen.

Annex 3: Questionnaire

I would like to start the interview by asking you about a social problem. I am interested to find out what do you think about some aspects of this problem. There are no wrong or right answers, rather I am interested in your own opinion on the topic. So, let's start:

1) Do you know what is human trafficking?

0- no

1- yes

2) In your opinion, who can be trafficked?

Gender recorded

0- females

1- males

2- both

Age recorded

0- Young people (-18)

1- Mature people (18-45)

2- People of all ages

3) For what purpose/occupation are people trafficked?

0- do not know

1- prostitution

2- forced labor

3- begging

4- organs extraction

5- illegal adoption

(every type mentioned was recorded separately)

4) How would you behave with your neighbor if would find out that he/she is a victim of human trafficking?

0-I will not change my behavior

1- I will try to help; I will feel sorry for him/her

2- I will stop communication with him/her; shame him/her

5) Currently, how would you explain the problem of human trafficking in Moldova compared to previous years?

0- do not know

1- The number of victims is increasing; the problem is aggravating

2- No change; the problem is at the same level as it was in previous years

3- The number of victims is decreasing; it is less of a problem compared to previous years.

6) Who is to blame for this problem?

0-don't know

1- Victims

2- Traffickers

3- Moldovan government

4- Society

7) How well are you informed about this problem?

0-not at all

1-not enough informed

2-Well-informed

3-Very informed

8) How informed is population of Moldova about this problem?

0-not at all

1- Not enough informed

2-Well-informed

3-Very informed

9) What sources of information are more informative to you when it comes to social problems?

0-none

1-TV

2-Internet

3-Newspapers

4-Radio

5-Ads

6-Social events

10) When last time have you heard of human trafficking?

0-don't know

1- weeks ago

2- months ago

3- years ago

11) From what source did you hear last time?

Don't remember (0) , TV(1), Radio(2), Internet(3), Newspapers(4), People(5), Events(6)

12) How often do you watch news?

0-never

1-rare

2-often

3-daily

13) In your opinion, do you think that Moldovan government doesto solve this problem.

0-don't know

1-nothing at all

2-little, but not enough

3-does a good job

Now, let's move to another type of questions regarding your working experience

14) Have you ever been lied about a job or/and not paid (home or abroad)?

1-yes

2-no

15) Do you have « working documents»?

1-yes

2-no

16) What is your monthly salary: categories mentioned:

1- <3,000 lei

2- 3,000-6,000 lei

3- >6,000 lei

17) Can you cover your minimum expenses with this salary?

1-no

2-yes

18) What do you do when it is not enough?

1-find 2nd job here

2-go abroad for a job

3-borrow

4-limit themselves

19) Have you ever worked abroad?

1-yes

2-no

If yes, then..

20) How long have you worked abroad?

1-more than 1 yr

2-less than a 1 yr

3-seasonaly- 3 months

21) When have you worked abroad last time? 1-recently (months ago)

2-few years ago

3-more than 5 yr ago

22) How were you paid abroad?

1-only cash

2-bank account

23) Would you like to move and live abroad? 1-yes

2-no

3-maybe

24) Do you have any relatives working abroad?

1-yes

2-no

25) Do you get financial aid from relatives/friends abroad?

1-yes

2-no

Now, let's move to different type of questions about traveling:

26) Do you think that it is dangerous to travel abroad?

1-yes

2-no

27) What risks can occur abroad?

1-accidents

2-can get into the wrong circles of people

3-can be killed

4-can be lied about a job

5-can lose their documents

6-can be trafficked

28) If you travel abroad, uninformed and unprepared, do you think you can be trafficked?

-why yes or why not?

29) What sources of help are available for those who get in trouble abroad?

1-embassy

2-family/friends

3-police

4-gov. institutions

5-IOs, NGOs

6-other sources

30) Would you ask police for help in trafficking situations?

1-yes

2-no

3-maybe

31) Would you ask IOs/NGOs for help in trafficking situations?

1-yes

2-no

3-maybe

Demographic information

32) Age

33) Family members #

34) Family members working #

35) Years of education #

36) Residential area

37) Residential region of the country

-North

-South

-Center

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