

COORDINATION BY
SODIREITOS/GAATW REDLAC

**A TRINATIONAL STUDY ABOUT TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN FROM
BRAZIL AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO SURINAME**

A joint intervention



Sodireitos
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ACRONYMS

Ceapa	Aquelarre Support Center
CIPAF	Investigation Center for Women Action
CIPRON	Interinstitutional committee for the protection of migrant women
COIN	Center of orientation and integrated investigation
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
GAATW	Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women
GMB	Group of Brazilian women
GPAT	Global Program against Trafficking in Human Beings
IDOS	Instituut voor dienstverlening, onderzoek en studiebegeleiding
MODEMU	Movement of united women
OIM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-governmental organization
Pestraf	National study on the trafficking in women, children and adolescents for the purpose of sexual exploitation in the Amazon
PROVITA	Federal witness protection program
Redlac	Latin American and Caribbean network of the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women
RNCTP	National network against the trafficking in people
SDDH	Society for the defense of human rights of Pará
Sodireitos	Society for the defense of the sexual rights of Amazônia
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

TABLES

Table 1. Interviewed people.

Table 2: Information about Suriname.

Table 3: Sex workers by nightclub, registered between January and December 2004 at the dermatologic section of the health clinic.

Table 4: Information about Brazil.

Table 5: Profile of the Brazilian women interviewed.

Table 6: Information about the Dominican Republic.

INDEX

FOREWORD	9
1 INTRODUCTION	11
2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK	15
3 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY	19
4 A TRINATIONAL STUDY ON THE TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN	27
4.1 RESEARCH ON TRAFFICKING IN PEOPLE	28
4.2 BUILDING THE RESEARCH NETWORK	32
4.3 THE PROCEDURAL AND METHODOLOGICAL DECISIONS	33
5 SURINAMEE	37
5.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT	39
5.2 ETNIA	42
5.3 CURRENT MIGRANTS	43
5.4 A LOOK INTO THE TRAFFICKING IN PEOPLE: NIGHTCLUBS AND MINING TOWNS	44
5.5 DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM	47
6 BRAZIL	49
6.1 CONTEXT	51
6.2 MIGRATION	52
6.3 POLICIES TO DEAL WITH THE TRAFFIC IN PEOPLE AND SUPPORT TO VICTIMS	53
6.4 TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN FROM BRAZIL TO SURINAME	58
6.4.1 Who are the subjects of this study?	58
6.4.2 Prostitutes and call-girls	72
6.4.3 Who are the other actors in this story?	75
6.4.4 Approach and recruiting	76
6.4.5 The recruiters	79
6.4.6 Why go to Suriname?	82
6.4.7 Arriving in Suriname	85
6.4.8 The routine in confinement and the exhausting work in the clubs of Suriname	87
6.4.9 Who are the protectors?	92

6.5. THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY. FAMILY? WHAT FAMILY?	94
6.5.1 Original family	95
6.5.2 The men in the family stories	96
6.5.3 The mother figure	100
6.5.4 To be a mother	102
6.6 MIGRATION, IDENTITY AND RESISTANCE	105
6.6.1 Migrating to avoid death	106
6.6.2 Migrating to mining towns	110
6.6.3 Undocumented migrants	112
6.6.4 Resistance	113
6.7 HOW TO FULLY RESIST AND FIGHT THE PROBLEM	115
6.7.1 Understanding in order to fight	115
6.7.2 How to deal with trafficking in people	118
6.7.3 Experiences of the services	120
7 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	125
7.1 CONTEXT IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	127
7.2 MIGRATION	128
7.3 SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING IN DOMINICAN WOMEN	130
7.3.1 Gender, sexuality and trafficking in women in the Dominican Republic	132
7.4 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION	133
7.4.1 International legal framework	134
7.4.2 National legal framework	135
7.4.3 Related legislation	137
7.5 FIGHTING TRAFFICKING IN PEOPLE AND ASSISTANCE TO THE VICTIMS	138
7.5.1 Non-governmental initiatives	138
7.5.2 Governmental initiatives	139
7.6 TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO SURINAME	140
7.6.1 Profile of the interviewed women	140
7.6.2 Family relations in the context of trafficking in people	141
7.6.3 Gender and sexuality and the relations with trafficking in people	144

7.6.4 Migration as a movement for autonomy in the context of exploitation and loss of freedom in the trafficking in people	147
7.7 ORGANIZATION AND DYNAMICS OF THE TRAFFICKING IN PEOPLE.	150
7.7.1 The recruitment process	150
7.7.2 The arrival	155
7.7.3 Quality of life and work conditions in Suriname	155
7.7.4 Returning home	159
7.7.5 Changes occurred	160
7.7.6 Reason for the lack of charges: the enforcement of Law 137-03	160
7.7.7 Corruption	163
7.7.8 Role of the NGOs and the governmental organizations: perceptions, intervention, difficulties, challenges.	165
8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: WHAT THE TRAFFICKING IN BRAZILIAN AND DOMINICAN WOMEN TO SURINAME SHOWS US	167
REFERENCES	183

FOREWORD

The book you presently have in hands offers a firsthand account of the trafficking in women from Northern Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname.

This study describes a complex situation and, therefore, it deliberately attempts to avoid providing a simplistic description of a reality in which the multiple identities of the trafficked women (in relation to their gender, race and class) are interconnected within a migratory, post-colonial and globalized context.

Trafficked women are those seeking to improve their own quality of life or that of their families by migrating. In fact, they have deposited all of their hopes for a better future in their migration. However, their efforts are frustrated when they fall prey to trafficking. The following pages analyze the trafficking cycle, from the recruitment to the transportation, delivery and subsequent exploitation of women.

Nonetheless, the significance of this book resides in its methodology (apart from the valuable information and analysis it contains). It is very rare to find studies that go out of their way to ensure that the interviewees feel they can share their experiences without being judged for their decisions.

It is the women themselves who take our hands and lead us on a journey beyond Suriname and includes accounts of their childhood, their families, neighborhoods and people. It also includes descriptions of their hopes, expectations and strategies for resistance, self-affirmation and fortitude. By means of these experiences, we are able to grasp the impact that gender, race, class, the feminine face of poverty, the absence of public policies, lack of information, racism and the more brutal sides of globalization can affect those people that, for all these reasons, are the prime targets of the trafficking in people. As we mention in the next pages *'to speak of identity is to speak of social reality.'*

Another valuable aspect of the methodology of this study is the joint work that non-governmental organizations in Brazil, the Dominican Republic and Suriname have carried out. They are all a part of the Latin American and Caribbean network against the trafficking in people (Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women – GAATW, Latin American and Caribbean network of the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women – REDLAC). In this sense, the joint effort to develop knowledge, strategies and intervention has been the key element to enable a transnational and regional response. The GAATW-

REDLAC is a network comprised of civil society organizations from Latin America and the Caribbean that works against the trafficking in people, in particular, that of women and girls, from a human rights perspective and strive to promote changes to the economic, social, legal and political structures in order to implement prevention strategies and protect the victims of trafficking and seek the prosecution of the traffickers.

The collective effort to gather data on the trafficking in people at the regional level is important not only to fill the current information gap, but also so that the political pressure exerted on the government and on agencies responsible for responding to trafficking is based on firm evidence.

The claims that the human rights of the female victims of human trafficking have been violated are both an affirmation of these rights and a reminder of their existence. This book is a step forward in achieving this goal.

Nerea Bilbatua

International Secretariat of Gaatw

Bangkok, January 2008

1 INTRODUCTION

The trafficking in people (especially women) – between Brazil, the Dominican Republic on the one hand and Suriname on the other, with a connection to Holland (including the Dutch Antilles) – is a problem that requires a concerted response.

The Dutch statistics reflect an irrelevant number of Brazilian and Dominican women as victims of human trafficking despite there being evidence of a large number of Latin women working in the sex industry (non-documented) in that country, having arrived there, according to them, via Suriname. This information is corroborated by client testimonials on the Internet and data gathered by the organization that defends the rights of prostitutes in Holland, “De Rode Draad.” Suriname is not only a transit country, but also the destination country for many women according to the health service of Suriname, which gathers information on the sex workers who are active in the capital's clubs to keep tabs on sexually transmitted diseases. This agency found there to be 308 Brazilian women and 108 Dominican women working in the clubs (ORGANIZACIÓN INTERNACIONAL PARA LAS MIGRACIONES, 2005).

In order to set up a joint intervention it becomes necessary to bring together the experiences and visions to ensure a better understanding of how the trafficking between Brazil, the Dominican Republic and Suriname takes place. In addition, it is necessary to establish a network for direct intervention, mobilization and political pressure so that the voices of those involved can be heard.

“Once upon a time...” – The classic opening of fairy tales is used here with two intentions: first of all, to place the reader inside the universe of the stories and characters and, secondly and most importantly, to invite the reader to become engaged and involved with the issues and problems raised herein.

The characters of the stories told here are not, however, fictional, nor are they heroes and heroines, fairies, villains or witches. The profiles are not mutually exclusive because we are referring to actual men and women – albeit women for the most part – who are real, historical and, for this very reason, contradictory and limited. They share many of the same dreams and desires and that is what brings them all together into the same story.

Our wish is that everyone who takes part in these stories or who comes into contact with them as a reader becomes involved in building a happy ending to them. It is also our wish that they contribute to putting an end to the invisibility of women as subjects of



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

desires and rights, but also as victims of a crime that is perpetrated so often, but is blatantly denied or ignored.

By dealing with this topic, the goal is to foster the commitment of readers as individual agents and, especially, engage institutions in the fight against this problem.

This aspect is the main focus of the present tri-national study on the trafficking in women, whose goal is to achieve a broad understanding of the dynamics of the trafficking in women in order to build an intervention and information network between the non-governmental organizations. This network, in turn, would develop a common action agenda to effectively combat and prevent this problem.

In this study we intend to investigate the trafficking routes between Brazil and the Dominican Republic on the one hand and Suriname on the other, as identified in the research report “Trafficking in women, children and adolescents for the purpose of sexual and commercial exploitation in the Amazon” (HAZEU, 2003), which was the basis of the study on the trafficking in women, children and adolescents for the purpose of sexual exploitation in the Amazon – Pestraf (LEAL, 2002). This socio-geographic study found strong evidence of the presence of Brazilian and Dominican women in Suriname being exploited as prostitutes in private clubs and in the mining fields in the interior of the country.

Building upon the available information, the present study sought to put together a more thorough set of data on the situation. The research work was conducted by means of a trilateral network that would be able to bring together knowledge building actions, information and joint interventions to deal with a crime that, by its turn, involves communication, mobility, concerted action and also has a transnational character.

The study was proposed and coordinated by the *Sociedade de defesa dos direitos sexuais na Amazônia* (Society for the defense of the sexual rights in the Amazon - Sodireitos) in partnership with a network of organizations in three countries: Brazil, the Dominican Republic and Suriname and with the support of the Latin American and Caribbean network of the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (Redlac-Gaatw).

In Brazil, the research was conducted from November 2006 to November 2007 and was coordinated by the *Sociedade de defesa dos direitos sexuais na Amazônia* (Sodireitos), *Sociedade paraense de defesa dos direitos humanos* (Society for the defense of human rights of Pará - Sddh) and by the *Grupo de mulheres brasileiras* (Group of Brazilian women - Gmb).

In the Dominican Republic, during this same period, the research was coordinated by the following entities: Centro de orientación e investigación integral (Center of orientation and integrated investigation - Coin), Centro de apoyo Aquelarre (Aquelarre Support Center - Ceapa), Movimiento de mujeres unidas (Movement of united women - Modemu) and the Red nacional contra la trata de personas (National network against the trafficking in people - RNCTP).

In Suriname, the Maxi Linder Foundation took on the responsibility for carrying out the local research. Representatives from Maxi Linder participated during various stages of the development of the research methodology and of deliberation over the information gathered. Moreover, they provided updated information on the situation in Suriname for the final report by means of the bulletin entitled “Interviews with sex workers in the Dominican Republic and Brazil in Paramaribo and Nieuw Nickerie” (STICHTING MAXILINDER ASSOCIATION, 2008).

The research process focused on qualitative aspects, interviewing the members of the various groups involved in the issue: women who were victims of traffic or were approached by traffickers, the families of these women, professionals of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that deal directly or indirectly with this topic, governmental agencies and people in the community who are familiar with the particulars of the trafficking in women. Observation techniques were also employed in a few strategic locations where trafficking takes place.

This report puts forth the information gathered on the procedures, presenting a qualitative profile of the women involved in trafficking, as well as a profile of their families; the mode of action of the investigated route, including the action and organization strategies; quality of life and issues pertaining to migration and also brings up discussions and propositions on joint actions to deal with the issue and suggestions for specific public policies.

We have sought to give prominence to the accounts described by the women themselves, the real targets for exploitation, but who are also the subjects of resistance and based on their reports, attempted to achieve a better understanding of the modes of action of the traffickers, as well as alternatives to dealing with this problem and emancipating the victims.

2

Legal framework





A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

According to the protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in people, especially women and children, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, trafficking in people is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, such as abduction, fraud, deception, 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 prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or similar practices, servitude or the removal of organs.

International policies, as well as national policies, for dealing with the trafficking in people are based on this definition. This definition has also served as the basis for the present study, although a few comments are deemed necessary.

The protocol calls for special attention to be paid to the situation of women. In our understanding, this is necessary due to the specific conditions under which the trafficking in this group occurs. Many women are trafficked into highly marginalized markets, which are often illegal (sex industry), or into the private sphere, where their visibility is minimal and in which the presence of the State is not felt and services do not reach (domestic work, bonded marriage).

Since the definition of prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation are still not fully developed and may have an underlying prejudice as prostitution as a professional activity, we shall deal with the issue of trafficking in the sex industry based on the definition adopted by the International Labor Organization (ILO) on slave work:

All forms of slave work are degrading work, although the opposite does not always hold true. What distinguishes one concept from the other is freedom. When we make reference to slave work, we are referring to a crime that deprives the victims of their freedom. The deprivation of their freedom has four aspects: seizing of documents, presence of armed guards or “bouncers” who display threatening behavior, by illegally imposed debt or by the geographic characteristics of the location, which prevent escape. (SAKAMOTO, 2007).

As a matter of fact, the definitions of male and female slave work and bonded marriage seem to be better suited to discuss what is often referred to as trafficking in people. Overcoming the dichotomy that prevails in dealing with slave work, on the one hand, and trafficking in people on the other, the forced labor of men are considered 'work.' The forced labor of women (in the sex industry or in the domestic sphere) is considered within a realm in which the discussions are permeated with morality and therefore these women are not seen as workers. In this context the gender labels vie with each other and hinder the implementation of strategies to effectively combat this problem.

3

Context of the study





A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

We are in the city of Belém. The year is 2007. International airport. Passengers are waiting to board their flights. An ordinary day on any given month. We start talking to three young women who are waiting for the flight to Paramaribo. Marta, Lorena and Danielle. They are friends. We ask about their destination. Suriname, which was also where we were headed. They are sitting close together, as if seeking refuge in each other's presence. They say they are 26, 20 and 19 years old and that they are going to meet an aunt who found them work there. What kind of work, we ask. Marta, the eldest of the three, says that they will be working at the restaurant owned by this aunt; Danielle, the youngest, falteringly responds that: "I think I am going to be working as a nanny" and continues by saying: "I am going to stay three months, if I get what I am after, I'll come back. I will study and try to get into college."

This story describes the plight of a revolving door of characters that occurs every day in the same setting. The story does not begin there, at that moment. It begins long before, when life takes an unplanned turn, such as a first pregnancy or another pregnancy; with dire poverty; with lack of money, lack of options, lack of opportunities; divorce; children to be raised; the loss of a parent; a rape; a relationship with a foreigner; stories of a friend who did well for herself and made a lot of money.

Obviously, these factors are combined with subjective aspects; with a yearning for adventure; with the desire to pursue other ways of life, to break free from the constraints of one's own life, to seek freedom, to escape from degrading work opportunities, which are many times the only options available in Brazil and in the Dominican Republic.

The voices of each one of the women interviewed in this study take on many forms and facets. For the most part, however, the main characters are Dominican and Brazilian women who intend to find opportunities and conditions abroad to ensure their own survival and that of their children. Their expectations are thwarted and give way to violence and deprivation. These are the real or potential victims of a multi-causal and multi-dimensional crime that has been systematically concealed: trafficking in women.

This is a situation that is on the rise and of which very little is known. As all crimes, it is veiled, especially in this case because of the prejudice, denial and moralist view it is permeated by. The number of victims is unknown and the modes of action and the organization of the criminal networks are still not fully understood. On the other hand, it is

fairly easy to find victims or people who know a victim or who have a 'story' to tell. We end up arriving at the conclusion that it is not as veiled as once thought.

Globalization, technological advances and transnationality are, without a doubt, ideas that express how capitalism and its project for civilization have taken hold. However, if the last five to six decades are emblematic of this victory, they also reveal, in a compelling manner, the core features of this global society and its pitfalls.

Apart from the now common place divisions of the world between the have and have-nots, the dominant and dependent or central and peripheral, the consequences of capitalism are far-reaching and can also be felt in social, cultural and interpersonal relationships that are built in the modern world. The pressing problems of the so-called Third World and its old problems, transmuted into modern or post-modern versions, are brought into even sharper relief.

Trafficking in women falls into the category of one of the “new old problems,” as brought up by Nederstigt and Almeida (2007): “Could it be a form of modern slavery or even a slavery regime that was never abolished?” Given all the accounts, the circumstances and the witnessed situations, it is not far-fetched to state that the slave system, which branded life in the colonial settlements and the early steps of countries in Africa and America, is still alive and well in modern society.

At least three aspects of this presence can be mentioned.

The first of these aspects is the lack of resources the black population was left with during the post-abolition period. This is what, for example, Florestan Fernandes (1978 *apud* SOUZA, 2003) has denounced as the worst possible start to the process of shaping the Brazilian people (and in which the Dominican Republic is no different). This beginning has affected not only the black population, but also all of the people who were dependent on the upper classes for their livelihood, regardless of their color/race.

This “start” has left its mark on the psyche of these people, in what can be deemed “internal slavery” (SOUZA, 2003).

Last but not least, the perpetuation of long-standing forms of labor exploitation can be mentioned. These relationships, in the modern age, take on many configurations: slave work in rural or urban areas, forced marriages or compelling women to provide sexual services in mining towns, clubs or even in urban areas. All these share a common



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

and underlying feature which is how the exploitation objectifies the dominated part, transforming them into a thing whose purpose is to meet the needs and promote the goals of the “master.” It is a reenactment of a relationship between a superior part that gives orders and an underlying who has no option but to obey. Their worth lies in their utility, in their ability to attract more clients or make more money for the club owner. At times, it does not even seem to be a relationship between two people, but between non-human parties. It is perhaps the same idea behind the “soulless black people?”

On the topic of this slave heritage, Souza (2003, p. 154), in reference to Florestan Fernandes, says that a core aspect:

[...] was the forsaking of the freed man to their own devices (or lack of devices). The former slave-owners, the State, the church or other institutions never took an interest in the fate of the freed men and women. Immediately following the abolition, these freed men and women suddenly found themselves responsible for themselves and their families without, however, having any material or moral means to survive in a budding competitive capitalist and bourgeois economy. The only option left to the black man, outside of the traditional context, was their social displacement in the new order. He did not have the social and psychosocial requirements that are necessary to succeed in a competitive environment.

The forsaking of the freed men referred to by the author– which signified their lack of access to objective resources required to find a place in the new social order – ended up relegating this population group to a fate of poverty in the margins of society. In the rush to address their immediate need for survival, the newly freed black contingent indiscriminately sell their labor without heed to their substantive human rights and their dignity.

The legacy left by slavery is apparent still today. Modern day slave routes flow in the opposite direction (between former colonies or from former colonies to the colonizing powers) and now trafficking has a specific market: sex industry and domestic help.

As it also occurred in the post-abolition period, women are presented with a narrow range of choices: they can either go to work as domestic help in exchange for a small salary or they can become prostitutes. This is due to a combination of factors:

poverty, growth of the role of women as heads of their households and low or no skills that allow them to strive for more qualified work. The accounts presented reveal how they have shifted between these two options (domestic work and prostitution) or have undertaken both roles simultaneously in order to ensure a better quality of life for themselves. The female face of poverty is another of the consequences of the phenomenon called globalization.

The global society is an undeniable reality. Not only in economic terms, but also in social and cultural terms. We have witnessed how the supranational capitalist project has taken hold, with the prevalence of economic blocks or conglomerates that spread and move throughout countries or continents in search of the best markets or financial opportunities. They also impose the submission of the nation-states to their logic, in particular in the so-called Third World.

This mode of economic organization, according to Ianni (1996, p. 92), not only encroaches on the labor relations, but also on the cultural and subjective construct, “uprooting things, people and ideas,” diluting reference points and eliminating borders, at least at first sight. By “at least at first sight,” what is meant is that, in actuality, the borders between the have and the have-nots has never been as clearly marked as now and, at the same time, so impossible to overcome.

Ianni (1996) refers to the “absence of territory” as the main feature of the global society, which is marked by the establishment of economic, political and cultural power groups who are not based in any particular place, but who are prevalent in all countries and are able to exert their influence everywhere. This process is in action only in the aforementioned blocks, groups or businesses, but also at the individual level. This process has given rise to the global citizens.

As can be deduced, however, the process of “absence of territory” affects countries and people in different ways given their distinct circumstances and situations within this context. Business and financial transactions are carried out at global levels.

The large economic blocks and businesses are autonomous and can move freely in search of the most favorable markets and financial opportunities. However, this same process can result in great uncertainty and instability to those (countries or people) who do not enjoy the same level of economic power or the same level of inclusion and participation in this global society. To these, the promise of global citizenship is an illusion. We are making reference here to those large groups of people mentioned by



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

Boaventura Santos who have been banned or kept at the margins of any social contract and will probably never be included in them – they are the “under-classes” (SANTOS, 2006). Perhaps it is possible to speak of an “absence of territory” in regard to these people but not because they belong to all places but rather because they belong to no place in particular and do not have any of the basic resources to build their identity. Perhaps for this reason, owning a home is seen as being the ultimate goal of the victims of trafficking and is the wish most women mention during the interviews: .

“If there was something for me here, if I could buy my own home, I would not go there.” (AL)

“Q. Do you have a dream, something you want to achieve?”

A. (laughing) “Now you've got me.”

Q. “You haven't thought about it?”

A: (Laughing) “To have my own house, mine, that is my dream.”

Q. Is that why you went to Suriname?

A: “Yes”.

Q. And for you?

A: “To fix up my house for her and my grandson. I can't work any longer. I have worked a lot in other people's houses. Now I have a back problem.” (CE)

Owning a house seems to be the wish all of the Dominican and Brazilian workers share, especially those who do not have their right to housing ensured.

We are bearing witness to a global domination regime that is increasingly violent and unpredictable and that not only uncovers but also exacerbates the vulnerabilities of the excluded and subordinated (SANTOS, 2006). These vulnerabilities are, as Bauman has correctly stated (1999), shadowed in the opacity and contradiction in the concept or in the current catch phrase. It is a process that is both dividing and uniting, or as the author ascertains, *“what to some comes across as globalization, is seen by others as localization; what to some is a sign of freedom, is seen by others as an unwanted and cruel fate [...] and to be a local citizen in a globalized world is an indication of deprivation and degradation” (Ibid., p.8).*

The need to increase the understanding of trafficking in people, its roots and characteristics in this multi-dimensional context is evident. On the one hand, this effort uncovers, the macro-social relationships of market globalization and their role in undermining the labor relationships and quality of life, which, in turn, leads to various forms of exploitation tainted by class relationships and cultural, gender and intergenerational values.

The young and poor women are “localized” in a class and are devoid of the most basic conditions for survival; in a neighborhood – where they are in no position to demand that their rights be enforced. Because of this, they are the prime targets for trafficking in people.

Another layer in this multi-dimensional situation is the complexity involved in handling this issue. This is a crime which, apart from the extreme poverty factor, determines that the fight for survival will trump all other needs, and features an enormous distance between the State and the victims. This is a distance that initially makes the victims vulnerable because they are lacking any form of protection or investment from the State and are subsequently abandoned because as victims of this crime, they have no State-sponsored recourse or aid. On top of all of these aspects, we find the difficulty in dealing with the issue due to the contradictory moralistic view that at the same time accepts, tolerates and denies the existence of prostitution.

The women who are trafficked sometimes do not acknowledge that they are victims of a crime given that they have come to see themselves as second-class citizens. At most, they will feel exploited or perceive themselves as migrant workers that had bad luck after embarking on an ill-fated adventure.

The men or women who act as recruiters, on their part, also see nothing wrong in what they are doing as they have internalized the fact that inequality exists and also because they are struggling to survive themselves, even if at the expense of exploiting others. The recruiters are the link within the network that comes into closest contact with the women and are at the bottom of the hierarchy.

The trafficking in women in Brazil (taking into account the international trafficking, both in and out of the country, and the internal trafficking, within the country itself) is a problem discussed with very little information to go on. The only national study conducted on this topic was the Study on the trafficking in women, children and adolescents for the purpose of sexual exploitation – PESTRAF (LEAL, 2002), which was an exploratory study based on secondary data (articles and police investigations).



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

This study had great importance in bringing attention to this problem and in providing information on the routes and *modus operandi* of the traffickers. The 241 identified routes provide the groundwork for the discussion of policies that deal with the problem.

The reports put together by the United States and the organization “Human Rights” are based on projections and estimates rather than on research. Only the information on slave work is more objective and more substantial.

The Federal government neither has gathered reliable information on the situation of trafficking in people within Brazil (the Ministry of Justice's website presents some isolated studies).

In the Dominican Republic, trafficking in people has garnered more time and attention from the governments due to public outcry. In association with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), data about the trafficking in women was collected and seems to indicate that this crime has become more prevalent in the country and has also shown the diversity of routes and destinations departing from there.

At a first sight, the three countries – Suriname, the Dominican Republic and Brazil – in Latin America and the Caribbean have very little in common: they have modest economic relations, speak different languages and have different cultural heritages.

Nevertheless, history brings Brazil, the Dominican Republic and Suriname together. The three countries experienced violent colonial periods during which mostly the Dutch, the Portuguese and the Spanish eliminated almost all of the indigenous population and trafficked millions of African slaves into the colonies to work in the plantations. Slaves were forced to harvest sugar cane as the main crop, which is also responsible for many of the situations of slave work found in Brazil (SAKAMOTO, 2007) and the Dominican Republic today.

Holland, Portugal and Spain, which reaped the riches from their Latin American colonies, are today some of the main destination countries for the trafficking in people from Brazil, the Dominican Republic and Suriname. This is not coincidental. The exploitation and colonization never ended, but merely changed the form.

The three countries are currently linked by a network for trafficking in women and by a history tainted by pain and revolt at slavery. Some of the NGOs working in these countries are aimed at building new channels for exchange in which the human rights of the marginalized and exploited populations are the factors which bring them together.

4

A trinational study on the trafficking in women





4.1 RESEARCH ON TRAFFICKING IN PEOPLE

The research conducted on the trafficking in people in Brazil has had an important role in bringing the topic to the forefront and in generating greater social and political interest for it. In particular there was a study on the trafficking in women, children and adolescents for the purpose of sexual exploitation – PESTRAF. This study can be considered to be pioneering and strategic because there were research teams all over Brazil, it included the participation of universities and NGOs and it also brought attention to a problem that was not given the necessary prominence.

By means of secondary data sources, the study was able to identify the 241 routes taken by the traffickers to traffic in women, children and adolescents within Brazil. Later studies, most of which were funded by the Ministry of Justice of Brazil, were able to add to this picture by focusing their research on lawsuits filed in the justice system of four states, on the profile of the people deported or banned from entering the country through the Guarulhos airport as well as a study on the routes in Rio Grande do Sul (PISCITELLI, 2007; GIANNICO; PISCITELLI, 2005; SILVA, 2005; COLARES, 2004).

Other academic studies are beginning to expose the reality of the trafficking in women from Brazil to Portugal and from Brazil to Spain (MACHADO, 2006; PEIXOT, 2005; TERESI, 2007) with the participation of the governments of Spain and Portugal. The universities are also beginning to show an interest for the topic of migration and the situation at the borders (RODRIGUES, 2006; PEREIRA, 2006; SOARES, 2006; HÖFFS, 2007).

The implementation of programs and projects based on these studies have taken into account the routes and locations identified and seek ways of getting in touch with the people directly involved in trafficking. However, the involvement of the NGOs, at the core of Pestraf, in the development and implementation of the policies and in the new studies slowly dwindled.

In the Dominican Republic, COIN was one of the first organizations to discuss the issue of trafficking in women given the many studies about migration and because of the increasing attention given to the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS among sex workers.

The studies about the trafficking in women conducted by IOM underscored the existence of the problem and were the catalyst for mobilization and creation of a policy to deal with the trafficking in people in the country.

Ceapa contributed to further understanding the problem by means of the application of questionnaires and interviews. Various routes within Latin America, to the Caribbean and Europe, were described. However, very little was mentioned about the route to Suriname (RIVAS, 2001; ORGANIZACIÓN INTERNACIONAL PARA LAS MIGRACIONES, 2003; ORGANIZACIÓN INTERNACIONAL PARA LAS MIGRACIONES, 2006; CEAPA, 2008; LUCIANO, 2005).

What can the data on migration, missing people, deportations and slave work tell us about the trafficking in people? Presenting this data would suggest a direct and linear connection that would somehow help in achieving a better idea of the scope of the problem.

Preliminary studies indicate that a large flow of migrants might be linked to the trafficking in people (such as Brazilians to Suriname). However, trafficking in people can occur without a corresponding significant migration flow (such as that of Dominicans to Suriname). And there can also be low (recorded) levels of trafficking with a high migratory flow (such as that of Brazilians to the United States), with, however, high levels of migrant smuggling.

Is it a coincidence that the state of Pará has the highest levels of slave work in Brazil and, concurrently, has one of the main routes for the trafficking in women?

What is, if any, the relation between people barred at a country's ports of entry or deported from a country and the victims of trafficking in people?

It is known that many of the trafficked people are traveling with proper travel documents and by legal means. Those that return usually do so as regular passengers. It is unlikely that the immigration officers are able to spot the potential trafficking victims. Despite all of these unknown factors, this study attempts to discuss concrete situations, experienced by real people, in order to demonstrate the complexities of trafficking based on the particulars of a specific route, the one that has Suriname as its final destination.

The trafficking in women in Suriname is a controversial topic that is gaining visibility and attention. The attention paid to the situation in Suriname can be divided into three periods:

- a) at first, it was a problem that was not acknowledged until the Maxi Linder Association in the 90s brought attention to it by means of a study in clubs and other



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

prostitution hotspots in Paramaribo and Nickerie and until a research conducted in mining towns in the interior of the country (STICHTING MAXI LINDER ASSOCIATION, 2001; ANTONIUS-SMITS, 1999) and, most of all, by holding a workshop about sex for money in relevant areas;

b) in 2003, Suriname was included in the Tier 3 list by the United States as a country with significant problems with trafficking in people based on the findings of Maxi Linder (STICHTING MAXI LINDER ASSOCIATION, 2008). As a result, the government of Suriname created a working group to respond to this problem and Maxi Linder was invited to participate.

c) active role of the Public Prosecutor's Office to monitor and repress the trafficking, creation of new laws and of the foundation against the trafficking in people, a new NGO to provide support to the victims of trafficking. Currently, the working group is constituted solely by government parties and works in conjunction with the NGOs, Maxi Linder and the foundation against the trafficking in people.

There is limited research on trafficking in people. After the study conducted by Maxi Linder, only Pro Health has published a report on the sex workers in Nickerie (PLAYFAIR; TERBORG; SAHIENSHA, 2004), with a focus on health related issues. Independent researchers, usually from Holland or Brazil, have recently dealt with the topic either directly or indirectly, among which can be mentioned Marjo de Theije (2007), Laura Van der Wal (2007) and Carolina Höffs (2007).

As part of this tri-national study, Maxi Linder published, in January of 2008, a preliminary report based on information collected during the interviews with eleven sex workers in the Dominican Republic and thirty-five Brazilian women (MAXI LINDER ASSOCIATION, 2008). Apart from these studies, there were also newspaper articles about lawsuits involving trafficking in people or about legislation under discussion or reports about the situation of trafficking in people in Suriname.

In an attempt to bring the victims of trafficking in people to the center of the debate and to reinstate the NGOs as active stakeholders in combating this problem, Sodireitos, from Brazil, proposed that a social study of the trafficking routes to Suriname from Brazil and the Dominican Republic should be carried out by the NGOs connected to Gaatw and others with an interest in becoming involved in combating the trafficking in people.

Since the meeting about trafficking in people occurred in the VI World Social Forum held in Caracas in January/2006, eight NGOs (three from Brazil, four from the Dominican Republic and one from Suriname) came together to develop and organize the research, which was included amongst the plans of Gaatw in the regional meeting in the Dominican Republic in April of 2006. By means of the Internet, visits and coordination meetings in the three countries, an outline of the research project was developed and efforts were made to ensure a participatory process, in which the methodology and the basis for analysis are discussed by all stakeholders with communication in three languages.

The study aimed at meeting different objectives, such as:

a) setting up a network for intervention and knowledge of non-governmental organizations against the trafficking in people in the Eastern part of the Brazilian Amazon, the Dominican Republic and Suriname;

b) building a knowledge base about the trafficking in women in the specific route based on the accounts of the people involved (victims, their families, people in the community, NGOs and government organizations), with an aim to (re)direct the fight against trafficking in people;

c) forging closer ties and commitment of the NGOs involved in the research with the victims of trafficking and their families.

The study sought to offer results while it was being carried out and after it was finalized, with the understanding that the gathering of information and knowledge production was also a political act.

In regard to the NGOs, it was expected that they all possess information on the trafficking in people and of the ways in which the countries dealt with the problem and about each of the partner organizations in the network. In addition, there were frequent planned communication sessions via the Internet and the phone between the members of the network about the trafficking in people (actions, policies, legislation, concrete situations).

In regard to the people approached during the research, the focus was on their access to services, on their empowerment and their involvement in the resistance against trafficking in people.

Lastly, this study intends to influence policy-making geared towards trafficking in people and to promote the relations among the countries.



A trinationnal study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

The study was divided into three sections, each one under a question heading to which a response was formulated on the basis of theories, research and documents already developed and also by speaking to those involved in the trafficking in women:

1. What are the structural, objective and subjective factors that promote, sustain and bring legitimacy to the trafficking in women? (economics/labor, migration, sexuality, gender, prostitution, racial discrimination and xenophobia)
2. How does the trafficking in women operate in each one of the three countries? (based on the definition of trafficking in people put forth in the Palermo protocol)
3. How is the trafficking in women dealt with (prevention, support to victims and enforcement)?

4.2 BUILDING THE RESEARCH NETWORK

As previously mentioned, the rationale behind this study arises from the need to understand and delve into the information and knowledge about a trafficking route identified in an earlier study.

Due to the fact that this study has shown a connection between the three countries in terms of the origin and destination of the women, in an expression of the transnational character of this crime, it was thought that gathering information about this situation in an articulated and collective manner would be a sensible and effective way of also developing an joint course of action to deal with this problem.

The challenge of ensuring the collective nature of the research was taken into consideration in the development of its methodological guidelines. The work began with an effort to tackle this challenge.

First of all, contact was made with entities in the three countries connected to the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW) which share the same principles in dealing with the trafficking in people: bolstering human rights, support to migrants and sex workers, empowerment of civil society and to give a voice to the victims of trafficking in people. The criteria to become part of the working groups were established and included experience with social research, work in non-governmental organizations, communication and writing skills and a view of the trafficking in people from a human rights perspective.

After this, and based on the preliminary research project, meetings were held to discuss and develop the methodological guidelines of the study. These meetings were also an opportunity to cement common reference points, concepts and experiences between the three countries and the teams. The meeting became, therefore, part of the methodological development of the study because they offered the ideal setting to discuss, compare points of view and opinions, identify gaps and charter a way forward. Ultimately, the first significant outcome of the study was the establishment of a network to ponder, consider and establish collective strategies for a concerted action. In total, four international workshops were held:

1st workshop - Belém: the purpose was to establish the common knowledge base for the trafficking in people and to finalize the study methodology.

2nd workshop - Paramaribo: the purpose was to share information on the progress made.

3rd workshop - Belém: the purpose was to further the collective process of analyzing the results.

4th workshop - Santo Domingo: the purpose was to build collective conclusions and arrive at a consensus about the final draft of the study.

Various meetings and workshops took place within Brazil and in the Dominican Republic with the participation of local organizations and research teams in preparation for the international workshops and to implement the research methodology developed.

4.3 THE PROCEDURAL AND METHODOLOGICAL DECISIONS.

The goal of the study was to provide a response to the three research questions from the point of view of the subjects that, in some way, were involved in the situation. In order to achieve this goal, the views and perceptions of these people were emphasized. They were the main stakeholders this study intended to give voice to and, based on this, the goal was to point out strategies and contradictions in dealing with the problem.

The main purpose was to describe what actually takes place in regard to this problem by posing questions about related events: Why do they take place? How are these events experienced? What is their meaning to those who experience them? More than figures or statistics, it is the people, as well as the situations they experience, that this study intends to portray.



A trinationnal study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

In order to meet the goal of depicting the situation, in-depth interviews were chosen as the most suitable method for obtaining the empirical data required, with on site observation and a field diary as complementary methods.

The social world is not a natural phenomenon, but is actively built by people every day. Based on this principle, one can conclude that the way in which people describe or speak about their daily lives sheds light on the concrete experiences as they are felt, even though it is not under conditions that have been set by them.

Therefore, the accounts given during the frank interviews conducted during the survey are this study's source of data and are complemented by the notes and impressions of the researchers.

The decision to use qualitative interviews was based on the belief that they can offer a contribution to map and understand the world of the subjects, offering the basic information necessary for a better grasp of the relationship between these subjects and the situations they undergo with all of their beliefs, attitudes, values, representations, behaviors and meanings that these situations entail. This allows for the use of interpretation guidelines to understand the accounts given.

One of the goals of this study is to collect the tools to enable the development of work proposals and to provide support to women. For this reason, the interviews were also viewed as an opportunity for the women themselves to think about their situations. In talking about their experiences, they are given the opportunity to view them under a new light and to begin a process of reconstruction, which is in agreement with the maxim that “all woes become bearable when we narrate them or when we tell a story about it” (Isak Dinesen *apud* Arendt, 1958/2007).

Based on common guidelines, five interview outlines were developed according to the category the interview subjects fell into. 36 interviews were conducted in Brazil and 21 were conducted in the Dominican Republic.

In order to identify potential interview subjects (women), the following steps were taken:

- a) identification and approach in prostitution hotspots (bars, nightclubs, streets and tourist sites);
- b) conversations with women who sought out the entities participating in the study;

- c) referrals from partner entities;
- d) information provided by interviewed women and families;
- e) approach to women in the airports and health clinics of Suriname.

Once the subjects were identified, initial contacts were made, visits to the entity were promoted and informal presentations were held about the scope of the study and the mission of the institution. After this initial contact, the interviews were scheduled.

Interviewees in the other categories were selected according to their ability to shed light on the situation or according to their area of action within the issue or level of contact with the relevant public.

These categories included: the families of the women, non-governmental organizations, governmental organizations and the community.

Besides the interviews, as mentioned before, complementary procedures for data gathering were employed by means of the systematic observation in strategic locations: the airports in Belém and Suriname, health clinics in Suriname, where the women who work in clubs have to report for mandatory health examinations every 15 days, and in Surinamese nightclubs. In all, seven nightclubs were visited in Paramaribo.

Given the volume and the breadth of the empirical material gathered, it was deemed necessary to proceed with their organization and sorting. This process was done with the purpose of posing questions to the texts (data), immersion into the texts, seeking meaning and understanding, topics and contents.

This exercise followed a few specific steps:

a) transcription of all of the interviews, which were then classified and bound according to the categories of interviewees;

b) organization of the data according to what was accomplished by setting up descriptive charts with the profiles of the interviewees and based on analysis matrixes. The matrix we refer to were tables divided into columns containing the category, excerpts from the interviews selected according to their relevance to the referenced category and one last column with the interpretation or input the research staff had to offer. Analytical and interpretation efforts were also the object of collective discussion and analysis during the “workshops for organization and analysis.”



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

c) collective development of a general analysis plan based on the interview outline which gave way to the outline of the final report.

The process of analysis and discussion takes into account the intersubjective regulation of the discourses. Therefore, no discourse is neutral, but is influenced by the social environment and by the elements present during the interview and by the perceptions of the interviewed party in regard to the situation, as well as in regard to the interviewer and to what he or she believes is being asked or answered.

One of the first guiding questions was indented to find out more about the subjects. The answer to the “who” question is an attempt to find out more about the people and their life experiences rather than merely their civil identity (their name or age).

Another reference point for the analysis was the possibility of understanding the various layers of the experiences in such a way that the multiple meanings and elements of the situations were able to, to a certain extent, explain or help in the understanding of the choices made by the subjects.

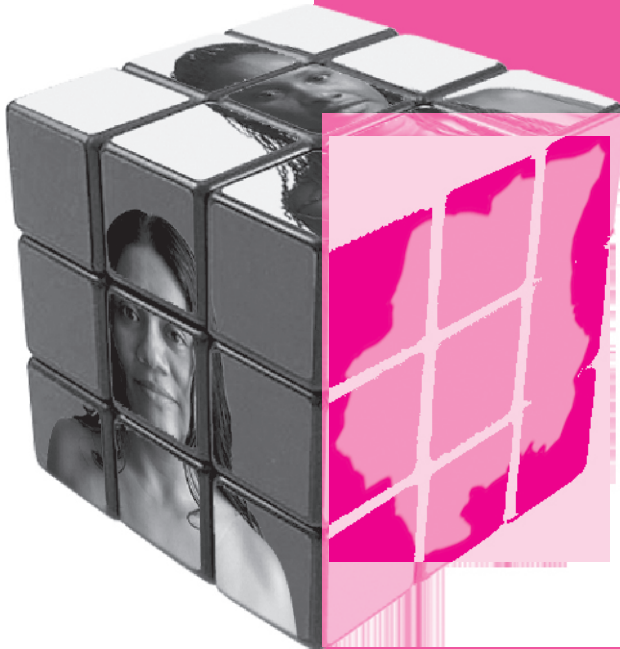
The analysis process taken on under these conditions actually implies an interaction with the depoiment given, transforming these accounts into “data”, by discussing them and further developing them. This process is not, understandably, a neutral one but, on the contrary, it is a process in which the experiences and background of the researchers, who are multidimensional subjects, also play a part. The subjectivity of the researchers is an integral element of this process. All this therefore assumes the existence of very close contact with the material collected.

BRAZIL	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
15 women in the 17 to 34 age bracket that worked or were approached to work in Suriname.	Eight women in the 17 to 34 age bracket that worked or were approached to work in Suriname.
Six families of women who work or have worked in Suriname.	Two families of women who work or have worked in Suriname.
Six non-governmental organizations that work with the women.	Six non-governmental organizations that work with the women.
Five governmental organizations that are focused on giving support to women.	Five governmental organizations that are focused on giving support to women.
Four people in the community – with some kind of contact with the trafficking in women.	

Table 1. Interviewed people.

5

Suriname





A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

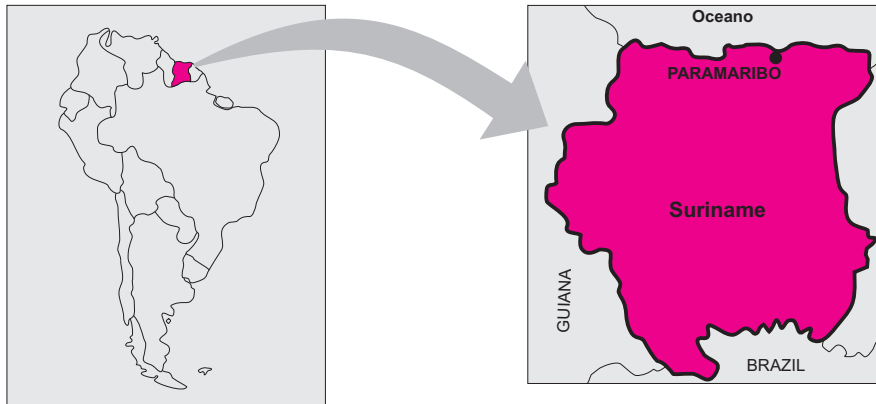


Figure 1: Suriname.

Area	163.820 km ²	
GDP	US\$ 2,898 billion	
Population	441.356 people	2.7 people/km ²
Inflation rate	16,81 %	
HDI	0,774	
Main sectors in the composition of the GDP	Commerce and services (65%), manufacturing (22%), agriculture (13%).	The country is rich in natural resources, especially timber and minerals. There are gold, nickel, silver, bauxite and other mineral reserves.
Exports	Alumina, aluminum, shrimp, rice, bananas, crude oil.	
Main trade partners	USA, the Netherlands, Japan, United Kingdom, Brazil	
Money transfers from Surinamese in Holland to Suriname	125 million euros.	
Allocation of Dutch funds to Surinam	100 million euros.	
Foreign debt	\$504.3 million (2005)	
Languages	Sranan Tongo, Dutch, Javanese, Hindi, Chinese, English and Portuguese	
Religion	Hindu (27.4%), Protestant (25.2%), Catholic (22.8%), Islamic (19.6%)	

Table 2: Information about Suriname.

Suriname is a small country in comparison to its Southern neighbor, Brazil, but relatively large when compared to other countries in the Caribbean. It is located between the French and British Guyanas and its population is less than 500 thousand people according to the latest census, held in 2004 (another 300 thousand Surinamese live in Holland). Even though it is part of South America, the country shares greater cultural ties with the Caribbean and, in particular, with Holland.

5.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, the territory which Suriname occupies today was inhabited by the Arawak, Carib and Warrau tribes. Dutch, French and British explorers set up trading posts along the coastal regions of Suriname at the end of the XVI century. The British merchants began settling the region during the first half of the XVII century. In the Treaty of Breda, in 1667, the British exchanged their part of the country for the Dutch trading post of New Amsterdam (now New York City) and Suriname officially became a Dutch colony. Holland governed Suriname as a colony, with the exception of the periods between 1795 to 1802 and 1804 to 1816, when the British regained control of it.

Agriculture was initially the basis of the colonial economy. The Dutch set up many plantations and brought in a large number of African slaves to cultivate them. The plantation-based economy expanded and by 1785 there were a total of 591 plantations, out of which 452 cultivated sugar cane and 139, legumes. During the final years of the XVIII century, however, production decreased. By 1860, there were only 87 sugar cane plantations and, in 1949, there were only four.

Just as in other colonies that had slaves and cultivated sugar cane, the society of Suriname was divided into three classes:

A small European elite, comprised of government workers, merchants, farmers and administrators that managed the plantations on behalf of the absent owners. The larger part of the elite was Dutch, but there were also German, French and British.

Below the elite, was the middle-class, comprised of freed citizens, a racially diverse group that included European descendants born in Suriname, children of slave women with European men and slaves who had been freed or had bought their freedom.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

At the base of the social pyramid, were the slaves, who constituted the largest part of the population.

Slavery in Suriname was notorious for its cruelty. There was a very high mortality rate among the slaves, which in turn created the need for a constant flow of new slaves. In total, 550 thousand slaves were brought into the country and only 22 thousand were still alive in 1863. The slaves were seen as a form of property and, therefore, had no rights. Under the terms of the colonial legislation, the masters had the greatest possible degree of authority.

Nevertheless, the slaves often escaped to distant and isolated areas in the middle of the forest where they founded independent villages. These people were able to hold on to their freedom despite the many attempts of the colonial militias to capture them. Their descendants still live in the same areas.

After the British and the French passed laws that abolished slavery in their colonies during the mid-XVIII century, the Dutch began to prepare for the abolition of slavery as well. The plantation owners in Suriname feared that the slaves would refuse to work in the plantations once they had been freed and for this reason, it was determined that the slaves should work during a 10 year period in exchange for a minimal salary, after which they would be fully free.

After their complete emancipation took place in 1863, however, the slaves abandoned the plantations in favor of Paramaribo, where there were the better-paying jobs were located and where they could find more opportunities for education.

To make up for shortfall of labor in the plantations, contract workers from Asia were brought in. Between the years of 1853 and 1873, 2,502 Chinese workers came into Suriname. Between 1873 and 1922, 34,024 workers arrived from India and between 1891 and 1939, 32,965 Indonesian workers were recruited. These migrants arrived as indentured servants who signed contracts that forced them into very long work contracts.

The recruitment of workers in India and in Java was done by recruiters who approached mostly men with false promises and took them to work in the plantations of Suriname under strict contracts. The recruiters were treated with great hostility by the local population in India because their practice of taking people without informing their families was seen as criminal.

Today, the descendants of these people make up most of the population of Suriname.

During almost all of the colonial period, a governor appointed in Holland was responsible for the administration of Suriname aided by two chambers. This figure was later replaced by a Parliament dominated by plantation owners and, after 1900, by members of the upper and middle classes.

However, the number of voters never surpassed 2% of the populations until 1949, when the right to vote was expanded to include all adults.

In 1954, the new Dutch constitution raised Suriname to the status of member of the commonwealth, alongside Holland and the Dutch Antilles. According to the new constitution, the Dutch government retained control of defense and foreign affairs and also appointed a governor for Suriname. The Surinamese would elect the members of the Parliament, which would deal with domestic issues.

The coalition of political parties that called for full independence from Holland won the elections in 1973 and began negotiations to this end with the Dutch government. On November 25th, 1975, Suriname was granted its independence. However, nearly 40,000 people chose to keep their Dutch citizenship and emigrated from Suriname to Holland.

A military coup overthrew the elected president (Arron) in February' 1980. A group of military officers, under the leadership of Colonel Desiré (“Desi”) Bouterse, formed the *Nationale Militaire Raad* (NMR). In 1982, this body dissolved the National Assembly and suspended the Constitution. Bouterse emerged as the national leader and governed by decree as the Commander of the Army. This government resisted attempts at a coup in 1980 and again in 1981 and brutally repressed an effort to create a Democratic opposition movement in 1982. The Army tortured and killed fifteen citizens in 1982, which lead the Dutch government to suspend all foreign aid to the country. In response to national and international pressure, the NMR allowed a new Parliament to be formed in 1985.

A civil war began in the country-side in 1986, leading to instability in the national economy. The rebels, known as the Surinamese Liberation Army, aimed to reinstate a constitutional state. In the space of a few months, they were able to close some of the major bauxite mines and many of the refineries. The war between the federal government and the



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

“bush negroes” destroyed a significant part of the infra-structure in the interior and caused the displacement of over 21 thousand people to the French Guyana and to Paramaribo.

Since 1992, with the mining crisis in Brazil (closing of mines, the depletion of accessible gold, rumors of gold in the French Guyana and Suriname), thousands of Brazilian miners migrated to the interior of Suriname. There they began to share the mines, but also compete with the “maroons” (bush negroes), who had been exploiting gold in a low-tech and small scale fashion.

In September 1987, a new constitution was drafted and approved by 93% of the voters in Suriname. The 1987 Constitution reestablished a civil government. The Dutch government resumed financial support of Suriname in 1988, pledging 721 million dollars over the course of seven to eight years. The mining of bauxite was recommenced.

5.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

The African, Hindustani, Chinese, Dutch and Javanese descendants form today the main pillars of the Surinamese social, political, work and religious organization. The only fact that united them is the continent and/or country of origin.

Smith (*apud* HÖFFS, 1991) states that the ethnic-cultural identities come from the transmutation of the national ascendancy of these groups into an ethnic affiliation.

This phenomenon creates divisions and practical, existential and attachment demands in regard to the cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, social and linguistic differences among the groups.

In this sense, the Hindustani, Javanese, Chinese, Creole and Maroons invented narratives based on facts from the Surinamese history and shrouded them in mysticism. This mystical expression serves as a model for the construction of the ethnic identities of these groups, who were not ethnical when they arrived to Suriname, but rather built up their origins and ethnicities upon their arrival.

Suriname is considered to be a plural society. Its multiethnic character was named *Apanjaht*, which describes a state of equilibrium that a plural society strives to achieve by granting all groups equal representation in all spheres of society.

5.3 CURRENT MIGRANTS

The more recent migration flows from Brazil, China and Turkey are not (yet) part of the perception of the national identity and constitute, by volume and cultural and economic relevance, a threat to it. This is reflected in the ambivalent attitude the new migrants are greeted with.

In 2007, an opinion poll conducted by IDOS – the institute for services, research and education monitoring in Suriname – showed that 67% of the voters in Suriname have a negative view of Brazilians.

Höff (2007) and Theije (2007) believe that integration will require time and open channels of communication between the identity forming processes, which are the basis of the construction of Suriname. However, the negative attitude, which is still very prevalent, allows for the exploitation and the absence of protection. The fact that the Brazilians are an eminently itinerant population (they come from and go to Brazil) makes their relationship with the local population problematic. The Brazilian women find themselves in an even more difficult situation.

The Surinamese newspaper *De ware tijd* published the following article in 2003:

Alexandra, age 27, from São Luis, has been living in Suriname for five years. She says she was deceived because she was invited to work as a dancer, but ended up in a prostitution club. "The Surinamese treat us like dogs. My worst experience was when I had to have sex with many men at the same time. You'll do anything when you need money. I work from 10 pm to 4 am everyday, even when I'm on my period. I am barely able to provide for my three children. The fact that we are not welcomed here makes our lives more difficult."

"There is very little integration among the Brazilian community in Suriname. They are not accepted and nobody wants their company," say the Surinamese Astrando Kranenburg, who worked in the nightclub Diamond for a few months six years ago and was used to listening to the women's stories about their lives and their clients. His respect for them grew: "The Brazilian people are hard-working and are good company." His job duties included monitoring the girls, which meant that they had to check in with him at 9 pm every night and needed his authorization to leave the nightclub. They live under precarious conditions: "Simply put, they are prisoners or actually, slaves. When they want to save money, they need to work hard, pay back the club owner 2 ½ to 3 times the cost of their ticket, plus rent. They cannot ride the bus, they are forced to take the cab and that is how their expenses snowball. And they still have to send money to their children back home." (De Ware Tijd, 2003)



5.4 A LOOK INTO THE TRAFFICKING IN PEOPLE: NIGHTCLUBS AND MINING TOWNS

According to Wal (2007), the trafficking in women in Suriname can be detected in the city's nightclubs and in the mining towns in the country-side. She describes the logic of the trafficking in people as told by the informants within Suriname:

During the sixties, all the way into the eighties, the economic situation in Suriname was relatively prosperous. It was during this period that the first brothels were open. Only foreign workers were employed by these brothels. In the eighties and nineties, Suriname underwent another economic crisis; however, the sex industry experienced unprecedented growth. The government adopted a *laissez faire* attitude towards this kind of activity (CAPRINO, 2000 *apud* STICHTING MAXILINDER ASSOCIATION, 2001).

Even more than 'allowing' brothels to open, which are officially banned by law, to remain open, the government tolerates them as hotels, as became clear from the statements given during the seminar promoted by Maxi Linder about the sex industry in 2000 (STICHTING MAXILINDER ASSOCIATION, 2001).

The government of Suriname kept (and still keeps) files with the Military Police and the Ministry of Justice on the nightclubs and on the women who work there, as explained by the director of the migration department, Wasimin:

The clubs are registered as hotels and the women are listed as hostesses. It is the owner of the nightclub that requests the visa, is granted two registration cards for each woman and later retrieves the passport and buys the tickets. He takes the women to the health clinics for a check-up (physical examination, including HIV/Aids) and when she is given a clean bill of health, the club owner is given the work visa. The woman is forced, according to Wasimin, to pay the club owner for her travel expenses.

The women who work at the brothels pay for the health examinations they must submit to at the dermatologic sector of the health clinics upon arrival and every fifteen days thereafter, for which they are given a control card. A fee for this service is charged from the foreign sex workers only, as explains the director of this service:

A “the sex worker does pay for it; she earns money, so she can pay for the costs.”

When questioned about this statement, he confesses that it is a touchy subject. If the HIV/Aids test comes back positive, the women are not treated, but rather are deported to their country of origin.

This service is the source of the numbers that help illustrate the situation in the clubs, albeit the table below only provides data relative to 8 of the 35 clubs registered during that year (2004).

Clubs	Dominican Republic	Brazil	Guyana	Suriname	Total
Aventura	0	29	1	0	30
Bulldog	1	27	0	0	28
Condor	0	48	0	0	48
Diamond	11	125	0	0	136
Manilla	0	29	0	0	29
Mundial	0	9	0	0	9
Relax	166	30	1	1	198
Stonebar	13	11	0	0	24
Total	180	308	2	1	491

Table 3: Sex workers by nightclub, registered between January and December 2004 at the dermatologic section of the health clinic.

Official figures reflect a decrease in the number of registered clubs, but visits to the locations where prostitution takes place indicate that many clubs have changed their address, but the owners have remained the same (STICHTING MAXI LINDER ASSOCIATION, 2008). The owners have also limited the number of women allowed to live in the clubs themselves, setting them up instead in separate residence houses in order to indicate that they are independent workers (Ibid.). Furthermore, they stopped sending the women to the dermatologic sector of the public health clinics (referred to today as the National STI Clinic) and began sending them to private clinics which do not refuse to hand the results of the tests to the owners themselves. Therefore, the official registration of women controlled by the National STI Clinic progressively decreased: from 491 in 2004, to 369 in 2005, to 198 in 2006 and finally to 185 in 2007 (STICHTING MAXI LINDER ASSOCIATION, 2008).

The Maxi Linder Association found that the Brazilian, Dominican, Guyanese and Colombian women who work in the city nightclubs or in the mining towns were often in a situation that seemed to suggest the existence of trafficking in people.



A trinalational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

In 2004, a survey was conducted among the owners of 22 establishments in Paramaribo and Nickerie and their managers, which, as pointed out by Maxi Linder, restricts the analysis of information. Nevertheless, some of the data is of particular interest:

“Only three clubs (14%) provided a contract in the sex worker's native language. Most of the nightclubs (82%) did not have any kind of written contract available.”

“The women had to pay for their board every week, regardless of whether or not they had been able to work (illness, menstrual cycle).”

“The nightclub owners indicated that “boyfriends” were not tolerated. The reasoning was that once a sex worker found a boyfriend, she would start to neglect the business.”

Wal (2007) describes the logic of the trafficking as perceived within Suriname.

As soon as the trafficked women arrive in Paramaribo, they are put up in a hotel, from which they are not allowed to leave. In order to repay their debt, they need to engage in sexual activities. During the hours they are working and even when they are off the clock, the women are under constant supervision. Whenever they go out, either for a check up or to buy clothes, they are always escorted. Their passports are retained, which seriously limits their ability to come and go.

With the rising interest the situation of the women has gained, the nightclub owners changed their strategy and instead of retaining the passports, they confiscated the vaccination cards and the return ticket, which limits their ability to come and go just the same. Even when the women are able to escape, their situation remains difficult. Without their documents, they are considered illegal immigrants and the legal and social system of the country still shows very little sensitivity (interest) for their plight. With no money, they are left with nowhere to go. The possibility of overcoming the exploitation and confinement is slim.

An international client, who left a statement in a site for prostitution customers, became uncomfortable when he noticed that the Brazilian prostitute that he had engaged in Paramaribo was not allowed to leave the club.

“The girl I took upstairs did not seem very happy with her situation. She said that she did not mind working as a prostitute, but that she did not like to be held a prisoner within the Club – the owner apparently took her passport from her and would only give it back after her 'contract' was up.”

The situation in the interior of Suriname, specifically in the mining towns, presents different forms of exploitation. A study conducted by Antonius-Smits (1999) identified five forms of sexual work, two of which involved mostly Surinamese women in relative independence (prostitute camps or women who live in neighboring villages). In a different area, cooks and saleswomen worked as prostitutes on occasion. But it is in the clubs close to the mines, under the circumstances described above, and especially in the system of 'sex for credit', that the trafficking in women is most evident. The ticket from Brazil to the mining towns, the local transportation and board are paid for by the mine owner. The women remain at the disposal of the miners for three months. The owner withholds 10% of their miner's salaries and pays the women a previously agreed upon salary at the end of the three months. They are not allowed to leave the mining town, they cannot turn clients down and they need to engage in as many sexual encounters as possible.

The women interviewed state that the quality of life and the work conditions are far worse than in the city (robberies during the trip, lack of basic hygiene, malaria, isolation, fighting among the women, clients who do not pay and physical and sexual violence). But the possibility of earning their pay in gold is a draw, besides the fact that many women want to escape the city (Antonius-Smits, 1999).

5.5 DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM

In order to successfully deal with the trafficking in people in Suriname, certain issues need to be addressed:

- 1 It is forbidden to promote (female!) prostitution, but the exploitation of prostitution is not an issue that is dealt with. The prohibition therefore translates itself into a lack of protection towards the prostitutes, regardless of their gender;



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

- 2 The values of the public opinion seem to be inverted and the trafficked women are the ones who are treated with contempt for the situation in which they find themselves and are blamed for leading the married men of Suriname astray;
- 3 There seems to be an understanding that women are trafficked to meet the demands generated by the mining towns located in the interior of the country, far from the reach of the state, while in reality the trafficking in women began in the country's cities.

The main actors in dealing with the trafficking in people in Suriname are the American Embassy, the National alliance against traffic in people, the working group against traffic in people, IOM, Maxi Linder and the Foundation against traffic in people, created in 2007. These organizations have promoted training sessions for employees of several government services and have also sponsored educational campaigns.

The country has progressed from being a Tier 3 to being a Tier 2 country, indicating that in the eyes of the government of the United States, Suriname has made progress in dealing with the traffic in people (OFFICE TO MONITOR AND COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PEOPLE, 2007).

In March of 2007, the National Assembly of Suriname passed a law that increased the prison sentence for the crime of trafficking in people from two to four years, in addition to the applicable fines. In the last three years, many people have been convicted for this crime (BUREAU OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS; LABOR, 2007) and the trafficking victims are now allowed to remain in the country, if they so desire.

6

Brazil





A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

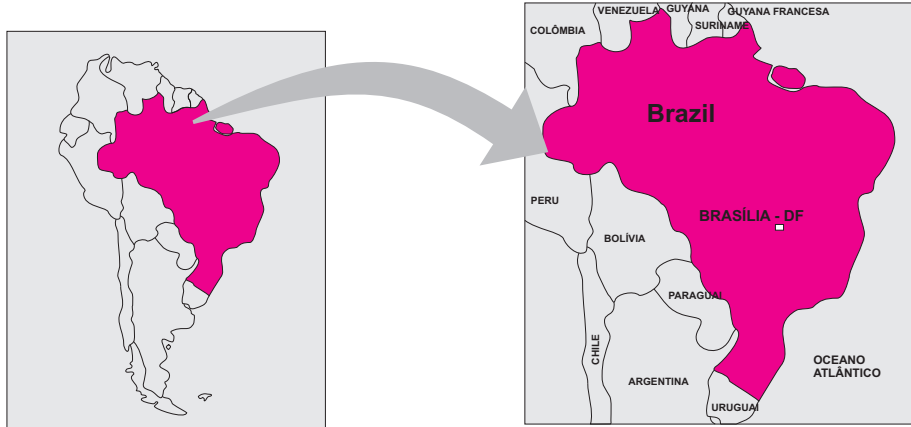


Figura 2: Brazil.

Area	8.514.876,599 km ²
Population density	22 people/km ²
GDP	USD 2.013.893 million (IMF, 2007)
Minimum Salary	R\$ 380,00 = US\$ 230,00 (2007)
Remittances from abroad	3.6 billion dollars (IDB, 2005)
Population	184 million (IBGE, 2007)
Slave work	34.5 thousand reports between 1996 and 2005 (CPT in OIT,
Child labor	5.1 million children and adolescents working in Brazil (this accounts for 5.7% of the total working population of Brazil), of which 8% are domestic workers. (Pnad, 2006) (pnad, 2006)
Early pregnancies	1.1 million adolescents become pregnant every year 25% of deliveries in Brazil are of mothers between 10 and 20 years of age (WHO)
Number of women head of households	Women are the heads of 12.7 million Brazilian families, which represents 26.3% of the total number of families in the country (Ipea, 2004)
HDI	0,792
Foreign debt	US\$ 191 billion (22.4% of the federal government budget is spent on paying down the foreign debt) (Dieese, 2006)
Domestic debt	The domestic debt is more than R\$ 608 billion (30% of the national GDP)
Language	Portuguese
Religions	74% Catholic, 14% Protestant, 7% Atheists, 5% others

Table 4: Information about Brazil.

6.1 CONTEXT

Brazil (officially known as the Federative Republic of Brazil) is a Federative Republic located in South America which is formed by the coalition of 26 federated states and the Federal District, and municipalities. It is the fifth most populous country in the world and, with an area of 8,514,876,599 km², it is the fifth largest country by area. Brazil occupies nearly half (47%) of South America and is home to 20% of the world's biodiversity, of which the Amazon forest is an example - with 3.6 million km². Brazil borders Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname and the overseas department of French Guyana to the North; Uruguay to the South; Argentina and Paraguay to the Southwest; Bolivia and Peru to the West and Colombia to the Northwest. The only countries in South America that Brazil does not share a border with are Chile and Ecuador. The full extent of the country's coastline is formed by the Atlantic Ocean.

Brazil was settled as part of the movement to occupy the New World (America) resulting from the commercial development of Europe and the maritime expansion during the XV and XVI centuries. As a colony, it served the function of ensuring the possession of the new land for the Portuguese crown by means of extrativism activities and sugar cane agriculture, while the Catholic Church (through the Jesuits) took on the role of converting the indigenous populations of Brazil.

The racial issue deserves particular emphasis in this context because of the need to better understand the ways in which these three races form the ethnic background of Brazil. In particular, the slavery heritage marks the life of the black population to this day.

Brazilian society has undergone many changes during the past 500 years and it can be defined as a society in transition.

From its independence (1822), which consolidated the imperial authority and maintained slavery, to the proclamation of the Republic, which despite paving the way for a new political regime, was based on the concentration of power and privilege in the hands of a tiny economic group. The people were not allowed a voice or the right to participate and were kept at bay and in a position of spectators of the events occurring around them.

In the early part of the 1960s, the country found itself in the middle of a serious political crisis which was characterized by the mobilization of civil society and by the clash between the civilian population and the military. This crisis culminated with a military coup in 1964, which inaugurated a military regime that lasted 20 years, during which political, social and individual rights were suspended.



A trinationnal study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

Only during the 1980s did the country begin its shift back towards democracy, with the institution of new political parties, the discussion and passing of the 1988 Constitution and direct elections. The 1988 Constitution, named the “Citizen Constitution”, with no doubt strengthened the Brazilian citizenship rights, with its goal of instituting a democratic state focused on ensuring the ability to exercise social and individual rights and that elected citizenship and human dignity as its core values.

Currently, despite the many advances regarding participation and mechanisms for social control, qualitative advances are not felt by the population at large. There is a lack of job openings for skilled workers, an apparent lack of effort towards the eradication of poverty and regional discrepancies and towards ensuring basic social rights. The public health system has little to boast of and the public educational system is still lacking.

There is significant data that seems to show that Brazil has found its place in the global economy as a supplier of raw materials, which has a high associated ecologic cost and offers little value to the population and to the exploited states, such as is the case of the state of Pará. Soybeans, meat, forest products, sugar, ethanol and iron ore have ensured Brazil a comfortable position in the global economy. These aspects, however, have not contributed to change the subordinate role the country has had or to promote a development project based on the investment in the Brazilian population or in the implementation of social policies that benefit the impoverished segments of the population. The increase in the levels of poverty, unemployment, corruption and lack of security continue to surface as the greatest and most significant problems.

6.2 MIGRATION

Over 100 thousand Brazilians emigrate every year in search of better work opportunities. The total number of Brazilian immigrants in other countries is estimated at 2 million plus, out of which 33% are considered illegal aliens.

Brazilian emigration is a relatively recent phenomenon and has been occurring only since the 1970s. Until then, Brazil was known as a country that took in large groups of various different ethnicities (Africans, Europeans – especially Portuguese, Italian and German – Japanese etc.). Beginning in the 1980s, the Brazilian population had become nomadic.

The legal immigrants in Europe who came from countries in Latin America are comprised mostly of women 54.6% (292,778 women of a total of 535,788 migrants).

When looking only at the Brazilian migrants, women account for an even larger percentage of the migrant population: 69.5% in 2001 (Pellegrino, 2004).

In 1991, only 5.3% of the migrants lacked any form of qualification, while in 1999, 25% of the migrants worked in hotels and restaurants and 27.1% worked in positions that required no specific set of skills.

Some important changes in the profile of the migrants can be noted: they tend to be poorer, have fewer years of formal education, be less qualified and therefore have fewer job opportunities which would allow for upwards social mobility.

In the Amazon, the women were always seen as second class citizens. The development programs, the investments and the social and economic policies always focused on the agribusiness and on the mining sectors, which knowingly employ male workers. The presence of women and the issues related to their well-being were considered an offshoot of the work of the men. According to this logic, women migrated to the Amazon in pursuit of the pioneering men, the rubber tappers, miners, construction workers, seamen and truck drivers in order to provide the services they required: domestic workers, prostitutes and/or for marriages, often arranged by recruiters or traffickers. This state of affairs put the women in a vulnerable position and gave way to a culture which permitted the exploitation of the sex industry.

6.3 POLICIES TO DEAL WITH THE TRAFFIC IN PEOPLE AND SUPPORT TO VICTIMS

According to Nederstigt and Almeida (2007), “the Brazilian Criminal Code, which previously made reference only to the international traffic in women for the purpose of prostitution, has made the internal traffic in people, including men and children a crime since March of 2005.”

These changes were welcome, however the new provisions (articles 231 and 231-A of the Criminal Code) still limit their scope to cases involving prostitution and are not applied to other forms of human trafficking. Indeed, the Brazilian legislation already established a penalty for the exploitation of prostitution by means of articles 228 and 230 of the Criminal Code and, therefore, the crime of internal trafficking provided few new elements.

Even though they are not under the label of traffic in people, many of the other



forms mentioned in the Palermo Protocol are, in part, considered offenses according to other articles of the Criminal Code or are contained in other specific laws. For example, the Statute for Children and Adolescents, passed in 1990, makes indirect reference in certain articles to traffic in children. Article 149 of the Criminal Code (to force someone into a condition analogous to slavery) deserves special attention considering the changes made to it by Law no. 10,803 (of December 11th, 2003). Previously, article 149 encompassed different kinds of exploitation, but its reach was limited from “to force someone into a condition analogous to slavery” (which could include forced marriage) to a condition analogous to slave work. Article 206 of the Criminal Code deals with the recruiting of workers for emigration under false pretenses and article 207 also deals with this crime within a domestic context.

The changes contained in Law no. 11,106 (enacted on March 29th, 2005) came into effect one year after Brazil ratified the Palermo Protocol (January 29th, 2004). This ratification gave the Palermo Protocol (enacted on February 28th, 2004) the same legal standing as a regular infra-constitutional law such as the more recent, albeit more restrictive, Law no. 11,106. As a result, Brazil has two legal instruments dealing with the same subject matter which are not consistent with each other.

The recently adopted *National policy to deal with the traffic in people* defines 'traffic in people' in its article 2 under the exact same terms as it appears in the Palermo Protocol. However, paragraph 7 of this article introduces a significant distinction. The national policy does not consider, at any point, the 'consent' of the victim as a relevant factor (BRAZIL, 2007).

According to Nederstigt and Almeida (2007), the recent history of dealing with the traffic in people in Brazil is intertwined with the strategies adopted by UNODC in the country. “In December of 2001, the government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso – by means of the National Justice Office, under the Ministry of Justice – signed an agreement with the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime (UNODC) to implement the Global Program against Trafficking in people (GPAT), funded by the governments of Brazil and Portugal, to deal with the international trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation. In 2002, the federal government, while still not fully under the influence of PESTRAF precepts, established state committees to prevent and deal with human trafficking in five Brazilian states (Bahia, Ceará, Pará, Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro) under the federal witness protection program, PROVITA.”

After this unsuccessful government program, the government of President Luiz

Inácio Lula da Silva went back to GPAT, choosing four states considered as priorities – Ceará, Goiás, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Ceará and Goiás were chosen because they are locations where victims of human trafficking are approached, while São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro have two of the largest international airports of the country from which many of the people who are being trafficked depart.

One well known human trafficking route – from Belém to Suriname and from there on to Europe, as well as other routes within Brazil, such as the intersection between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay (IOM *apud* SANCHIS, 2005) – were not, unfortunately, included in the first years of GPAT.

GPAT proposed specific actions geared towards research and prevention of trafficking in people in the four states involved. The other forms of trafficking were not covered in this first program. In particular, the slave work in Brazil was dealt with by a separate program in Brazil, and had high visibility within the ILO. The focus of GPAT was on training of policemen (especially of the Federal Police), campaigns, research and diagnosis and in setting up a database on cases, which was not completed.

In addition, alongside the governments of the four states involved, the Ministry of Justice and the UNODC set up offices to offer support to the victims of the trafficking in people. These offices would provide the victims with legal advice, as well as with social and psychological assistance in order to prepare them to live in society once again. Health, education and social services were to be offered by the network of local services. Despite being innovative and counting on government backing, these four states have not achieved significant results (NEDERSTIGT; ALMEIDA, 2007).

Opening an office to provide various services to the victims of the traffic in people is not enough if there is no clear strategy or campaign on how to identify trafficked people without passing judgment on them, but instead with the purpose of empowering them. Despite all their good intentions, it is only when the services take into consideration the direct needs of the trafficked people that they are able to be fully effective.

The first phase of GPAT ended in 2005. During 2006, the Brazilian government ensured the necessary funding for the second phase of the project with UNODC. This new phase began in 2007 and is prepared to extend its actions to other interested Brazilian states.

The National policy to deal with the traffic in people acknowledges that traffic in



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

people is a problem with many different facets that requires concerted action and, for the first time, brings together different actors and government agencies. In a more wide-ranging analysis, it can be said that the anti-trafficking policy in Brazil is based on human rights principles (articles 1 and 3) when it, for example, states that no right of the victim is conditional upon their cooperation in court (article 3, III) (NEDERSTIGT; ALMEIDA, 2007).

There remains much to be done in order to effectively implement the policy. The *National plan to deal with the traffic in people*, as specified in the national policy, establishes specific long, medium and short-term goals for the government. It necessarily requires a detailed budget.

Civil society also has a very important role in monitoring the implementation of the national policy and plan made public by the government in Decree 6,347 as of January 9th, 2008.

The number of investigations involving the international traffic in people grows every year in Brazil. However, the statistics reflect a relatively low number. The human rights department of the Federal Police has reported 480 police investigations on international traffic for the purpose of sexual exploitation in the past 17 years.

This number does not reflect the exact scale of the problem of trafficking in people in Brazil simply because most of the cases are not investigated by the police. Apart from this, the cases of trafficking in people for purposes other than exploitation are not mentioned.

The investigation of the instances of trafficking in people within the country itself does not fall under the responsibility of the federal authorities, but is rather the responsibility of the state police and of the public prosecutors' offices of each state. This makes it more difficult to investigate the cases of internal trafficking in people (NEDERSTIGT; ALMEIDA, 2007).

Within civil society, there are several pilot experiences to deal with the trafficking in people, of which the ASBRAD¹ office at Cumbica airport, in Guarulhos (São Paulo), is an example of innovative work that provides assistance to migrant women and “trans”

¹ Associação Brasileira de Defesa da Mulher, da Infância e da Juventude

(which includes transvestites, transsexuals and transgender) who are victims of trafficking and that arrive at the Cumbica airport.

This is an attempt to reach out to people who are trafficked via the largest entry point of the country. Aside from this project at the airport, the organization also provides assistance to victims of trafficking (internal and international) at their main office, in particular, children, adolescents and women and relatives referred by the health system and by the network for the protection of children and adolescents. Within the scope of prevention, the organization promotes, with the help of other stakeholders, awareness speeches and training workshops.

Project Trama, in Rio de Janeiro, is a consortium comprised of four organizations and is the first experience for legal intervention against the trafficking in people in the country, apart from serving as one of the main links between Brazilian and international NGOs.

The Service for the Marginalized Women (SMM), in São Paulo, was set up specifically to deal with the issue of trafficking in people. This service has prevention as its prime objective. Currently, the SMM has three lines of work: the education sector which has been developing an experience for two years in public high schools in the cities of Uruaçu (Goiás), São Sebastião (São Paulo) and Maceió (capital of the state of Alagoas). This is a mode of prevention that the SMM intends to transform into a public policy. The articulation sector performs lobbying and advocacy activities in partnership with other NGOs that deal with the topic and related topics. The communication sector is responsible for the online publications, as well as printed material such as folders, bulletins, cards, text books and magazines.

The Humanitarian center for support to women (Chame) is an organization that can be considered pioneering in this fight and that has specialized itself in the prevention of the traffic in people. Chame brings together partner organizations from all around the world and promotes prevention activities with replication agents. It has published many materials and works with youth in schools.

The Brazilian institute for a healthy society innovation of the Mid-West of Brazil (IBISS-Co), based in Mato Grosso do Sul, promotes activities to increase awareness, foster research, training and networking among the organizations that deal with this topic.



A trination study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

Sodireitos is an NGO located in the Amazon region that deals with the topic of trafficking in people in the area and also serves as a safe haven for people who have undergone violent migration experiences.

All of these organizations are members of the Global alliance against the traffic in women (GAATW), which brings together NGOs from around the globe in the fight against the trafficking in people based on the assurance of human rights. These are the organizations that contain specific information on the reality of the trafficking in people, even though the information is not usually organized.

Based on these experiences and principles, we are able to begin to better understand the world of trafficking in women to Suriname.

6.4 TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN FROM BRAZIL TO SURINAME

6.4.1 Who are the subjects of this study?

My name is Severino,
I have no other,
Like there are many Severinos
That is a Saint of peregrination,
they began calling me
Maria's Severino (...).
We are many Severinos
The same in everything in life.
(João Cabral de Melo Neto)

Let us first look at the 14 women that were interviewed and the four we met through the accounts by their family members. They are young women, between 17 and 34 years old. Some are single. Others live in a matrimonial type relationship with men that live abroad and, from time to time, send them some “help,” what provides a certain link between them. Others are yet in an unstable relationship – that comes and goes – with Brazilian men. None of them consider themselves married.

Of these women, only one is not a mother. The others have at least one child. They live in different family arrangements: there are some that live with their children; others with their mother, grandmother, and aunt, a sister or brothers and sisters-in-law. Some of them live alone. The kids are usually raised by other people: fathers, grandparents, uncles or acquaintances.

Otherwise, these women share the same characteristics of the poor population: low education, experience in informal jobs or underemployment (predominantly day-jobs or domestic work), and very low income. It is very common for them to survive of the little and irregular assistance given by their children's fathers, an aid that cannot be obtained without certain effort or sacrifice (they have to ask many times, go after them etc.)

They live in peripheral areas, very distant from downtown, or in small municipalities in the interior of the State. Their houses are in precarious conditions with very few rooms, which are shared by many people and with very diverse family bonds. The desire to change their lives, and to have a better life, is a common trait.

The purpose of this study is also to get to know the subjects, particularly, the women that are victims, or that are involved in situations of traffic, by perceiving and acknowledging them, not only as cold figures, estimates, and probable witnesses in a lawsuit. From the beginning, our intent was to show the subjects, their real lives, and the human drama that the figures many times conceal. Another concern is to stand back from the trend to consider poverty, or the experience lived by these women, as something spectacular; and to try and understand the perspectives, and different ways these experiences find meanings.

NAME (lives with whom and how) Is there a history of domestic work Age HOW THE PERSON WAS REACHED	Number of children (ages) – information on the parents of the children, who they live with	Race (defined by themselves)	HOW MANY TIMES HAS GONE TO SURINAME/ other abroad
AL (lives with an aunt or a friend, is currently in Suriname) Domestic work 26 years old THROUGH A LOCAL NGO	Three (three, five, 10) – different parents - Live in houses belonging to uncles and aunts – parents do not contribute.	Black	Two times
AU (lives in the house of the former mother-in-law) Domestic work 24 years old APPROACH ON THE PROSTITUTION ZONE	Three (eight, five, two) – the first two parents contribute, the youngest does not receive any assistance, foreign father (morocco), whom she met during her stay in Switzerland . They live with her, under the rules of the former mother-in-law.	Mulatto	One time (Switzerland)



**A trinational study about trafficking in women
from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname**

<p>CE (lives with his mother and one of his kids) Domestic work 34 THROUGH A FEDERAL POLICE PROCEEDING</p>	<p>Two (15, 13), one lives with the father, the other one lives with her and her mother. (Different parents – they are foreigners).</p>	<p>White</p>	<p>One time</p>
<p>BE (lives with mother and son) 33 years old THROUGH A FEDERAL POLICE PROCEEDING</p>	<p>One (13 years old) Father contributes Lives with her</p>	<p>White</p>	<p>One time</p>
<p>DI (lives alone, sometimes. Brothers and sisters, everybody lives with the parents, including 4 grandsons, 3 sons belonging to DI, a total of 12 people) No history of domestic work 33 years old THROUGH FIELD WORK FOR PREVENTION AGAINST TRAFFIC IN PEOPLE</p>	<p>Four (two, seven, 10 15) different parents, one was given away, the others live with the sister and DI mother.</p>	<p>Indigenous</p>	
<p>GL (lives at a friend's house, along with other friends and children. The owner of the house is in Holland) Domestic work 24 years old THROUGH APPROACH IN A PROSTITUTION ZONE</p>	<p>Zero</p>	<p>Black</p>	<p>Invited to go to Suriname</p>
<p>LA (lives with mother, the new husband, and son, in a small house in the interior of Barcarena) (17 YEARS OLD) THROUGH LOCAL ONG</p>	<p>One (Brazilian father, from mine exploitation in Suriname) - lives with her – pregnant from her first partner.</p>	<p>Brunette</p>	<p>Once</p>

<p>LU (lives alone with 2 children in a studio) Domestic work during adolescence 30 years old THROUGH APPROACH IN THE PROSTITUTION ZONE</p>	<p>Five children, from 4 different fathers. Two live with her, and the others live with their maternal grandmothers.</p>	Mulatto	One time (Switzerland)
<p>LI, no fixed residence. Lives with mother and father on one day, the other, lives with sister in Belem. Domestic work 26 years old THROUGH CONTACT MADE IN SURINAME</p>	<p>Two children (10, 12) – same father; they live with LI's parents in Peixe-boi.</p>	Mulatto	Three times
<p>MA (at her mother's house with the four children) 27 years old THROUGH CONTACT MADE AT THE AIRPORT</p>	<p>4 (12, seven,?,?) from at least two different parents, the last one was murdered.</p>	No answer	Four times
<p>MY Lives with her mother, has lived with her mother for 03 years, along with four families, of each of her three sisters, and hers with her kids. 26 years old THROUGH FEDERAL POLICE PROCEEDING</p>	<p>Three (six, eight, 10), same father. Does not contribute.</p>	Mulatto	One time
<p>RO (lives with her son, sister, and brother in a room, rented, in Belem) Domestic work. 29 years old THROUGH PREVENTION ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE TRAFFIC IN PEOPLE</p>	<p>One (Surinamese father) Does not contribute.</p>	Black	One time



**A trinationnal study about trafficking in women
from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname**

GA (when in Belem, in a room, in a village, with her ex-husband and one of the children) Domestic work for 13 years 26 years old THROUGH CONTACT MADE AT THE AIRPORT	Three (four, seven and eight	Mulatto	Three times
NA (is in Suriname, when she comes to Brazil, she lives with her parents in a municipality in the interior of Pará). Through parents 20 years old VIA CONTACT MADE IN AIRPORT	One (one year old), lives with NA's parents – the child's father is from Belem, helps financially.	Black	Tho times
DU (Suriname – did not come back) Through the mother 22 years old THROUGH LOCAL NGO	Two (seven and six), Unknown father. Lives with maternal grandparents. Father does not contribute.	No answer	One time
MI (Suriname – did not come back) Through the parents 29 years old THROUGH ANOTHER WOMAN INTERVIEWED	One (12 years old). Father does not contribute. Lives with maternal grandparents.	White	One time
CR (Suriname) 29 years old THROUGH A LOCAL NGO	One (14 years old) – Raised by the aunt, who raises another niece, which is the daughter of one of her sisters.	No answer	Several times to Suriname and Holland

Table 5 – Profile of the Brazilian women interviewed.

To speak of identity is to speak of social reality, because it is in this, and based on its marks, that subjectivities are built, following the examples of life milestones in “Severina”. These are essentially the marks that appear here. We can start with one of them:

“DI. 34 years old. Single. She had a foster dad, and was given to another family after her father passed away. She worked as a nanny from ages 5 to 14. She had her first sexual intercourse when she was 15 years old – ‘I didn’t know I had lost my virginity, he gave me wine, when I woke up, he was already on top of me,’ she says. She has 4 children, each one from a different father. Some of these fathers were DI’s clients. One of the children was born from a rape. She spent most of her life living away from her kids and stopped studying very early in life. She was invited to go Suriname to work in a restaurant, but, in reality, she and another seven girls were taken to a closed club, when she was 23 years old. ‘When I got there I was scared. There was even a small bus to take the girls. When we arrived, I looked and saw a bunch of women in a private area. It opens during the day, those who want to, work there to pay it off faster (the debt). There is one in which it is mandatory to work. When the night came, he (the owner of the club) called the women in his office, welcomed us and said that if we were obedient, we could become his very good friends. It was hell. Even when I was sick, I would work to be able to pay for housing, food and cleaning,’ she says.

“DI was then taken to other clubs in Germany and Holland. She was sent back to Brazil after two years, because she didn’t have a resident visa. When coming back to Brazil, she experienced crises of depression and health problems from drug abuse. She was admitted to a recovery center in Belem. Today, she tries to make a living by making snacks and pastry, went back to live with her mother and children, and plans to resume her studies.”

The plots are real, as are the subjects that are part of them. We cannot say they are heroines, nor victims or villains; neither do we intend to make them totally representative of a group of women, in order to be able to make all of the situations reported similar and general. They are concrete subjects, they build themselves upon the plots that are woven in the networks of relationships they experience. Therefore, they are subjects involved in multiple issues, with all limitations and contradictions human life is capable of revealing.

We are talking about women in relationships with other women and men. Therefore, it is impossible not to refer to the first classifying feature of mankind: gender, which, in turn, entails behaviors and behavioral expectations. This doesn’t mean, however, ignoring that the gender variable may be cross-cutting by other equally definers of power, such as class, race, nationality and age.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

In order to understand these intertwining variables, Michelle Rosaldo (1995) suggests to study the concrete relationships between men and women; their ways of organizing in groups; in which way gender makes itself present; and the manners in which individuals give meaning to their relationships and define them in specific environments.

Here, we refer to the relational dimension of gender. To state that gender is relational means also to say that it rebuilds and recreates itself upon the relationships between the persons, between the genders. The differences are created prior, on and through the relationships.

In that manner,

The meanings given by men and women to the activities of their lives are things that we only may understand by analyzing the relationships that women forge, the social contexts they create along with the men, and within which they are defined. (ROSALDO, 1995, p.22).

The emphasis given to this relational construction seems mandatory to dislocate the symmetries of a mere biological derivation, and to place the discussion on femininity and masculinity in historical and cultural processes. These processes are, at the same time, determined and determinants of the way that society treats and legitimates the differences, also legitimating the female inferiority.

If the current discussions and scientific debate point to multiple, socially determined nature with ideas of identity, difference, and alternatives, then some interrogations appear to be timely.

What is it to be a woman?

What is it to be a woman in each social environment?

Is one born a woman or do you learn how to be a woman?

And how do you learn how to be a woman?

And how do the extremely hostile characteristics of life – such as in DI's case, a foster child, given to another family, nanny, raped, trafficked, prostituted – combine themselves in building this identity?

Material and symbolic markers intertwine in creating this story. They are the ones that allow us to classify the people and determine who is worth more, and who is capable of less.

It is impossible not to think of modern society as being marked by the Christian sexual moral, with male domination over a submissive woman. In regard to the traffic in people, this situation is taken to extreme consequences.

The feminist literature or that on the condition of the woman is fertile in showing society's effort to produce a submissive and obedient (to the man, essentially) femininity. Therefore, the first characteristics that define a female identity arise in relationships or in contraposition to the male identity. It is as if the woman learned how to think of herself based on the man or by him. That is what seems obvious in GA's story.

“GA, 26 years old. 3 children. She went to Suriname for the first time “because she herself wanted to.” ‘Maybe it would be better there than it is here,’ she thought. She went after a woman that always took girls and offered to go. ‘I knew I was going to a club to work as a sex worker, but, I didn’t know what I was going to have to pay for in there, and that I would have to hand over my passport, and stay locked up. I closed a 450 dollars contract without knowing. I worked to pay for transportation fee, I payed double. She (the manager) didn’t like me because I’m the type of person that, when I have something to say, I say it. The employer wanted to touch me, and I said: you are the employer, I am the maid. Keep yourself in your place, and I’ll keep myself in mine. He didn’t like me,” she states.

“She worked at a club for a while, then she found a protector, a Dutch that was friends with the owner of the club, and that started to help her, and with whom she started to live a marital relationship. This man is actually married to a Surinamese woman and, in addition to that, he also keeps a marital relationship with one of GA's sisters. She, therefore, became his third wife. ‘It was on the day I got there. This Dutch was a friend of my friend’s husband (owner of a club) and, when I saw him, it was love at first sight. He was really my guardian angel. I had the Dutch’s help and sometimes he’d pay for my stay at the club, meals... He’d get upset because he knew that at night the girls had to hook up with every kind of man. In Suriname, I stay by myself, in a rented house. I think it’s nice. He gives me money every day. When I want to go out, his employee will take me. To him, I am his wife. I am no longer a whore. He is careful about my clothes so that no one will compare me to a prostitute. I am afraid of hurting him.”



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

“Due to the situation, GA doesn't stay the whole time in Suriname, from time to time she is sent to Belem and then, because of her insistence, he calls her back to Suriname”.

“GA says her life is better today because she was able to buy the things for her children, bed, and other furniture for the house. 'Financially, my life is much better', she states”.

What GA's “choice” reveals is an appropriation and acceptance of an expected submissive behavior, which is expressed in a voluntary, consensual manner. A strategy? A way of life that is a little less adverse than the routine of the club (an exhaustive journey, the obligation of working, even if sick or menstruated, an increasing indebt)?

Living on the edges of a “lord” that already has two wives, still seems to be more attractive and gainful, and that is what she chooses. Her choice, as well as that of the other women, seems to be between two types of violence, and she resorts to the one that is more subtle and not expressed through physical violence. Especially because she has gotten emotionally involved, she likes him and wants to be with him. She reveals her desire to have this man's child. Her “husband's” wishes become her own.

This position of acceptance has consequences to building emancipatory behaviors, considering that

[...] it is precisely this assimilation of an extreme desire as if it were her own – assimilation that is socially conditioned and that kills, at the source, its own self-representation of the person dominated as being independent and autonomous – what the concept of masochist intends to mean. (SOUZA, 2003, p. 121).

Does the woman define herself based on the man? Can we therefore state that the female identity is, from the beginning, built upon the male/female or man/woman dichotomy? As stated by Scott (1990), this binary character will mark the perceptions of the relationships between men and women, within the logics of domination/submission. Going against that logic represents a useful overflow to recreate the rationale on gender. (LOURO, 1997).

Souza (2003) resorts to Bordieu's Idea of *habitus* to discuss this internalization of shared evaluative schemes (sometimes in an unconscious manner) that start to guide the individual's choices and behaviors.

Souza (2003, p. 167) creates the Idea of a “precarious *habitus*” which, according to him:

Would be the limit from the 'primary habitus' downward, in other words, that type of personality and behavior dispositions that don't satisfy the objective demands, to be it an individual or a social group, be considered productive and useful in a society.

According to the author this pattern is gaining the status of a phenomenon of masses in peripheral countries such as Brazil, with a major segment of workers and poor people that live off of social insurances/securities, or marginalized from any right.

Specifically, referring to the women here revealed, this phenomenon is measured not only by financial and social aspects, but also by internalized gender values.

Is it that expectation of subservience that encourages the recruitment and trafficking in women to deliver sexual services?

And what is there to say about the men, “the masters”, no longer masters of the mills, but of clubs and households, being that the second homes are rented in order to maintain “buitenvrouwen” (women outside of the marriage)?

Such as the masters of the mills, the “new” masters embodied the position of central power; they give themselves the right to dispose of the lives of these women and furthermore they demand obedience.

Could it be that the Idea of the major patriarch still inspires models of organization and behaviors?

Even assuming the risk of seeming way too simplistic, we can say that the lives of these women are made up of a sequence of subordinations to men's interests, demands, and pleasures. Domination and control over the female sexuality taken to its most extreme and pungent meaning. These women, in turn, naturally admit the crime, with no need to resort to any justice.

Opposition between classes takes on a shape similar to that of gender inequalities (SOUZA, 2003) and that is particularly explicit in GA's story, and of her relationship with the father/protector figure – husband, European, which, in the context of the intercultural battle, starts to be idealized and viewed as being superior and worthy of status and success. Even if, in practice, he is as much of an exploiter as all of the others.

Furthermore, it is important to note that we are speaking not only of women, but women coming from a specific social class, and age group; in other words, with identities



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

surrounded by a complex network of power. This becomes very clear based on LU's life story.

“LU. Five children, from 4 different men. Neither of which help out to support the kids. She reports having problems with her mother, which used to systematically spank her, and to have been sexually abused by her stepfather through ages six to 14. 'My mother never loved her children. I was given to other people and they hit me a lot. My stepfather took advantage of me since I was 6 years old,' she says. At 14, she ran away from home. Later, she moved in with her first husband (at 14 years old). 'He used to drink a lot, he was very violent and he hit me a lot,' she adds. Three of her five children live with her mother. The other two (eight and 10 years old) live with her and are left alone while she goes out for sexual programs. LU got involved with a French man with whom she lived in Switzerland. She says he kept her locked up at home and she was forced to work as a maid at his house and at his son's house. She asked to go back to Brazil and was charged for theft by the Swiss Police, and deported.”

“LA says she wished to be able to work with something else: 'I feel anger, disgust. I feel humiliated for selling my body to make 20, 30 Reais. We are prostitutes and we are sluts. There is also discrimination against women. The woman has to be in front of the stove to serve the man. I feel anger because I can't do what they (men) can. Just because they are men? They are chauvinists, racists, and that is discrimination,' she pours out.”

How can we think about or understand the subject amidst this set of factors? We think of the woman as a mother, as a prostitute, but that may be or say too little about the meaning of the identity in its fullness. If we were to agree with Simone de Beauvoir, who says that nobody is born a woman, but becomes one, we can then question how LU learned to be a woman? Her story carries, possibly, the most cruel scars of that meaning: rape and sexual abuse since she was six years old, violence on behalf of satisfying one's pleasure, attempt of getting obedience through coerce and by beating her up, first by her mother and then by the husbands she had.

However, we have learned with Foucault how to look at power as a productive and positive force, capable of instigating, of producing effects and reactions. Which is the same idea that we find in Arendt (2007): that repression can produce resistance, and that the crisis may act as a propeller of actions. LU seems to be an example of this capacity of generating resistance. All the pressure and violence she suffered do not generate a shaped subjectivity.

She, on the contrary, resists to and denies such submission. The fact that she ran away expresses that, although she was not able to reach any objective condition towards becoming autonomous. We may regretfully refer to a combination of resistance and impotency, helplessness. That leads to successive situations of being submissive to men: the first husband, the “matrimony” in Switzerland, and back to street programs, in Belem.

LU expresses anger and rebellion because, even having different and strong reasons to create a very negative image of men, based on her real live experience, contradictorily, it is towards them that she needs to be submitted, as a prostitute, in order to assure her financial survival – which more than explains her expressed actions of indignation and resentment.

Referring to the different ways of being a woman and confronting them with what is concretely revealed in the interviewed women's accounts, we realize and are able to see the concrete and contradictory subjects that we are. There are many links that come together and build up a situation of precarization, against which they, by themselves, try to resist, and try to carry on in order to take life forth. Just like LA's case.

“LA, 17 years old, has a two-year old daughter and is pregnant for the 2nd time. She attended school until the 5th grade. She lived with her mother. Her father left when LA was small. She was trafficked when she was 14 years old, to a night club in Oiapoque, and then later to the French Guiana, and then to mining activities in Suriname. She was invited by an 'acquaintance' to live in Macapá and be a nanny. LA's mother did not let her, but, she ran away from home. 'I didn't know what was going to happen, I just wanted to work and help my family,' she states. At the night club in Oiapoque, she only stayed for four days because she arrived there, and the purpose was to become a sex worker. We were under age and he didn't want to accept us. We had to stay there for four days only to pay for the ticket fare and then he sent us away.”

“LA lived on the streets and then with a “friend” at his house. Then she went to Caiena and then to the mines in Suriname. At the night clubs she used to go to, she was called different names. 'They called me Darla, Darling and Darlene”.

“On the mines, she lived with a Surinamese, of whom she got pregnant and had her oldest daughter. 'He drank and beat me a lot; I ran away from him and asked for help at the French police.”



A trinalational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

“LA was deported to Brazil after one year and eight months. She came back pregnant. For three months, she stayed at a hostel for women who are victims of domestic violence, and was then taken to live with her mother. She pressed charges, but, she doesn't know how the judicial proceeding is going. She knows that the owner of the night club in Oiapoque is in jail, and that the woman that took her away is an outlaw. Today, LA lives with a man of whom she is expecting her second child. She does not study and works at home.”

“She welcomes us for a visit at her house, with her daughter in her lap; while we talk, she combs her daughter's doll's hair.” “When we ask her why she thinks this situation happened to her, she responds with calm and resigned voice: 'If I had another situation, this wouldn't have happened. Her plans? 'There isn't much I can do, he (the husband), doesn't want me to go back to work, and I can't study, he won't let me leave the house.’”

How many factors mark the construction of the identity? A young adolescent that dreamed about “being able to buy things, to help her family.” She had never worked with sex services in Brazil, thus denying the assumption that the women that live in situations of traffic have all already been prostitutes. Even more than being included in the “prostitution zone,” it is the situation of poverty that makes them vulnerable, although in some moments, class embarrassments and intimidations are combined with gender ones.

Through a criminal action, LA's life is transformed and she is forced to experience a real adventure in other places, in other countries. Individually, she starts to seek strategies in order to continue surviving. She looks for a place to stay, she tries to work in Caiena and then in Suriname. A real odyssey, in search of better conditions of survival that always end up resulting in situations of deprivation and submission. The matrimony that takes place on the mines represents yet another of her frustrated attempts. Finally, it seems that LA “gives up” and, resigned, hands over the control of her life to another person, her current partner. She does not make plans for the future; there is no way of working, or of studying. How is it that someone at 17 can have already been convinced that she has no right to dream, that having wishes is not a prerogative of poor people like her? Perhaps the atrocity of the situation experienced may explain the fact that she “gave up” or it could be the option for a calm life, even if it will be a heteronomic one.

However, if we are to believe in the possibility of simultaneous occurrences of contradictory processes, it is imperative to ask: Is it possible that these women may not

realize how unfair these situations really are? Is it possible to state that it is not only passiveness that we note in these women's attitudes? On the contrary, they react, resist and create strategies for survival within this perverse logic. Be it by "taking advantage of the situation," or at least by obtaining some kind of benefit, either by seeking to make the submission something temporary, while gathering conditions and efforts to "get out of the situation." This is what we infer from MA's words: "

MA, 27 years old, four children. Traveled four times to Suriname, the first time to a night club and the others to gold mines. She reports that she was experiencing financial difficulties after her husband left her. She was invited by a friend and she knew she was going to be a sex worker. I wasn't fooled, but nobody knows exactly what it's all about: ticket fare, doctor, clothes, food, lodging... The problem is the debt!

"She tells us of her routine, of being confined in the club, and how she was forced to work, even when she was sick. I stood up for myself a lot in the club, I claimed my rights and led the girls to the police, we were exploited. After I learned about the life in the club, I no longer wanted to go there. In the gold mines you are independent, it is much better."

"She says that if she had another way of surviving, she wouldn't go. 'Today I see sex as work, I have to make money. I want to free myself from this life, therefore, I try to get by other ways, I take things, clothes to sell, I take other jobs, as a cook, housekeeper. I don't live only off of this'."

"She reports living a relationship experience with a French man, however, she emphasizes: 'I'm in love, but both at work, as well as in this relationship, there is one thing in common – I want to win. He has to give, has to help me, otherwise, there will be nothing. I'm going to arrange my kids' lives. I hope this is the last time, I wanted to go back to school.'"

It is not only in the conflict established with the environment, or in each situation experienced, that the subject forms its identity, but also through the negotiations that he or she is capable of undertaking with him or herself. And it is with his or her own ways of giving meaning to the experiences, and of describing his or herself as a person. In addition to that, it is about articulating and playing the different positions occupied in each situation. Prostitution, at first, was the only choice possible, she "accepted" to go to a club in Suriname, but, she didn't forget the impositions of deceit and debt to which she was submitted. It is curious to note that,



even though she is aware of the deceit, the exploitation and the confinement, which in themselves already fall into the category of crime of traffic, she seems not to notice this criminal situation, only to state that she has been deceived. However, she denounces the situation, also by taking other women to the police. Which demonstrates a certain perception of her condition as a victim of a crime. She was able to run away and, even if she continues delivering sex services, she does so now “on her own account,” amidst conditions that she negotiates herself. That is what she refers to when she mentions the “independence” that she enjoys on the mines. To her, sex is work, but a temporary one, which she tries to get out of by doing other things, by dreaming other dreams. The emotional relationship she has in itself seems to be yet another alternative of obtaining resources.

6.4.2 Prostitutes and call-girls

The life stories show that we are talking about different subjects and different types of violence to which they have been submitted. There are many girls that have never worked with sex in Brazil, and that were invited to work with other activities (work in a restaurant or as nannies) and then forced to becoming prostitutes by the traffic network.

Others have already worked with sex services and were deceived regarding the labor conditions that they would be submitted to. These, in general, after returning to Belém, continue carrying out sex services. To them, however, to accept this label is not easy or smooth:

“I’d rather be called a sex worker... In my view, a prostitute is the woman that drinks, is played around, and tattooed. Not the sex worker, she is after gaining some money, she is after work.” (LA)

“We don’t use these terms, we say sex worker. We feel vulgar using the name prostitute. We are treated as girls that went to Suriname out of need, because we need a means to support our children [...]; they are clients who take the girls to the rooms to have sex”. (GA).

“I am ashamed of saying it (that she is a sex worker). I don’t say it because, if I have the chance to free myself from this life, to get to know an educated man, I am not going to say it [...] If I am, yes, I am (a prostitute), but I don’t want to admit it.” (RO).

The women, be them sex workers or not, as social subjects, create/build a certain way of being a woman, of being a prostitute, based on their daily lives and experiences.

The idea of social subject, in general, is understood with a meaning in itself, without any concern in defining it, as if the understanding of its meaning were consensual. However, it is important to think of subject as a historical being – with dreams and wishes that move him/her – creating him/herself based on the relationship with those equally historical and wishful. Having a place, occupying a position and playing roles.

On the other hand, each subject is singular, unique, because it builds/creates significance and meaning, according to that history and the different positions it occupies. Producing the world while producing him/herself in it. It is, therefore, a constant creation, incompleteness. What he/she is or may become depends on the quality of the relations, exchanges, and experiences that are able to be built in the course of life. Thus, there are different ways to constitute a subject because there are different ways of giving meaning to their life experiences.

For these women, to assume they are prostitutes is like assuming an identity, legitimating, giving endless life to a temporary characteristic or identity, which they wish to be only temporary. It means not believing there is a way out of “this life.” To them, it is essential to keep believing in the possibility of overcoming the life conditions they have had until now. To accept the label means to deprive them of the dream. That is why it is not easy to accept, as we may clearly observe from RO statement: “If I am, yes, I am, but I don't want to admit it.”

Contradictorily, in Brazil, where they live and plan their future, they do not assume the condition of a prostitute, but, they are even able to accept themselves as sex workers in Suriname, since it represents/symbolizes what is temporary and distant, not linked to the future.

“In what moment did you admit to yourself that you would be a prostitute?”

– *“When I got on the plane”. (GA).*

None of the women interviewed says they intended to assume the identity of a prostitute, and some of them say that, amidst other names, they prefer to be called sex workers, because it is a lighter label.



A trinationnal study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

“I told my aunt: one day, when I go back there and have my own place, one day when they are on the streets and when somebody says to them: ah, because your mother is a sun of a b... I am sure that they will hit their chests and proudly say that she is. And if it weren't for that, they would not have a house or food to eat.”
(AL).

Can you think of subject against such humiliating conditions of life? Yes, but subjects that made themselves up from the specificities of life and the conditions they've had. These are the ones that show and reveal themselves. These are the ones that must be looked at.

Therefore, the situation of extreme poverty, race and its history of social inclusion; the absence of parents or the fact that they too were workers with no qualification; the rejection; being given away to other families; the frequent history of sexual abuse; domestic underemployment, all dimensions that determine the production of each one of these subjects, that say what they are or are not.

This produces a set of references of their own, and it is based on that that they act upon. It guides their actions and their choices, which cannot be the same for another group of subjects, other women that formed themselves and learned how to be a woman in other contexts and ways.

From the beginning, our intention is not either to present a way too romantic image, neither to “villainize” and degrade women's image. Neither is it to adduce to a hedonistic view of the prostitute or sex worker, but only to attempt towards the perception of unpredictable changes that build/create these subjectivities.

The hostile life context, be it before or after living a traffic situation, produces strong scars. We may speak of oscillating, dual characteristics. To survive comes in first (which is not uncommon, considering it is every human being's goal), it is what screams louder, and they avail of every strategy they have.

A subjectivity that is insistently directed to satisfy the “basic needs” (food, things for the children). But such determination seems to oscillate. To dream and to give up appear constantly. Therefore, they are convinced that it is not possible. They also have few aspirations, they wish for little: *a man that likes me, ” to buy things for my children, clothes, and a bed.”*

The fact that they don't expect too much of life ends up encrypted in their imaginary. At the same time, and contradictorily, they end up revealing to be extremely seduced by a model of consumption, the brand clothes, the brand cellular phone, a symbol of success.

The statements and our contacts amidst the research make it clear: They are subjects that love, cry, laugh, and suffer. They are extremely concerned with their life conditions and those of their children, they assume positions in life that seem to be advantageous, they wish for, they dream. They want a different life.

“I would like for your understanding, I wanted you to comprehend me, that's it', cries AL.”

Nevertheless, one aspect is important. They need to realize and assume such contradiction. This must be one of the tasks to make up whatever work is designed for these women. To work with the awareness of concrete life conditions. The idea of identity is important because the awareness towards inequality, towards the conditions of exclusion themselves, is the first step to social non-conformism and, consequently, to the construction of emancipatory life positions. Paraphrasing Hanna Arendt, when you are attacked as a woman, poor or prostitute, it is from the assumption of these roles and positions that one must defend itself, and not as an abstract subject.

6.4.3 Who are the other actors in this story?

The women that have lived the situation of traffic are not, however, the only characters of this plot. Actually, they are made characters because of the attitude of others that make up a real organized crime network.

This network involves, from close people that upon identifying a fragile situation, make the invitation and prepare and make up the seduction plot, the convincement, the deceit (According to the definition given in the Palermo Protocol); to those that act, organize or help in transporting these women, helping them obtain their documents, accompanying them, receiving them; and finally to those who participate in the incarceration scenario, by taking away their documents, pressuring them to pay off their debt, and upon ostensive or symbolic surveillance inside the clubs in Suriname.

We are talking about a well set up and organized network, as you may note from the reports of the women and by looking around and observing in the different environments here mentioned.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

The Protocol's definition shows different elements to characterize the crime of traffic in people, all of which are unequivocally visible in the women's statements.

6.4.4 Approach and recruiting

“At the time, it began with a friend of mine, who had a good reputation and said I was going to work at her restaurant and would stay at her house.”

“And she was very, very sophisticated, had a good reputation, and asked if I didn't want to get rid of this misery life, since my salary was low. They knew I had just gotten a divorce, I had my son.” (BE).

“The woman came and said: I came here because I like LA very much, and I know that she likes children. I have three children and wanted LA to go, to take care of the kids, and J to work with me at the store. They will come to live in Macapa. I didn't allow so and she said: the person lives in misery, we want to help them and they don't accept.” (D. 38 years old. Mother of a trafficked adolescent).

“My sister gave me the indication of the house belonging to a lady that lives in...”

“She went with an acquaintance from the streets. Her mother also lives on our street. She is also a young woman (27 or 28 years old). She always goes there and every time anyone wants to go, she'll take them. Do you know other people that went there? No. No, I don't.” (A. 29 years old. Has a sister in Suriname).

“GE was friends with my friend. She Said: do you not want to travel? I'm after new women here from ... I've already sent two and I'm going to send one more to complete it. And don't you worry because I will give you clothes, everything. I will get you ready. I am going to take your passport and you will board with me. When we arrive in Suriname, you can pay me back. And then she loaded me with clothes.” (CE).

These statements illustrate the component of the deceit, in the shape of attractive proposals and strategies, which the recruiters resort to prevail in situations of the women's vulnerability, which, as already mentioned, are many.

These statements illustrate the component of the deceit, in the shape of attractive proposals and strategies, which the recruiters resort to prevail in situations of the women's vulnerability, which, as already mentioned, are many.

There are many different ways of being recruiters to these women; however, they all have one characteristic in common. The invitations/approach, the arrangements for the trip, the contacts do not come from a distance person, a stranger, an unknown person. On the contrary, they come from someone that is close, an acquaintance, a relative, neighbor, and friend. The common strategy foresees, from the beginning, the recruiter awareness about the vulnerable situation. One must be aware of the signs that define and reveal a potential victim.

Who is it that can be approached and when should it be done. It is this arm, inside the community, that assures this acknowledgment and also the apparent reliability aura of the proposal. The women must trust the person that is making the invitation; she has to believe that, in fact, there is the possibility of obtaining what they hope for or desire. There are also women that offer to travel, and seek the recruiter. But, in this case, it is also easy to identify the recruiter, by indicating that in the community, you know who the person is or how to reach him/her.

Hanna Arendt (2007) postulates that closeness and coexistence are key factors in generating and exercising power. In this philosopher's view, men only withhold power when they live close to one another, because that is where action potentialities are expressed.

It is that assumption that the network of traffic seems to lean on, on an efficient organization, even if it is not legitimate. It is this relative closeness that guarantees one will be able to identify the correct moment to approach the other person: a divorce, birth of another child, argument with the parents/fathers, problems related to debts or to the partners. In order to know how to use the most appropriate and effective arguments: you have your kids, you earn too little here etc.

Another important aspect is that the "offering" seems to be very well "disguised:" 'And she was very, very sophisticated, really doing well.' It is important to show concrete evidence that the chances of being successful are indeed real. As we would popularly say, to make one's eyes grow with desire.

In reality, we are facing a context of extreme poverty in terms of material and symbolic goods and, therefore, of choices that are also conditioned by this situation of



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

poverty. It is from this perspective that these “choices” must be seen and understood. Such as inequality, her naturalization in daily life represents a problem to be faced.

Our society has been competent in producing inequalities and in hiding them under the creation of an ideological speech on making access and development become universal, rights entitled and accessible by everybody.

This process recreates or rebuilds the forms of exploitation that we may have thought were obsolete, considering that they allude to savagery. They are “modern” ways of slavery, which are revealed in the women's accounts of the routines in the clubs and the representations they create about their recruiters and exploiters.

The women, in turn, consent and agree to these offerings driven by the desire of changing their lives or, at least, running away from conditions and situations that can, by no means possible, be considered pleasant or comfortable. Serious financial problems combined with disturbed family and emotional situations.

“For three months now we haven't been living together (referring to the partner), but, he comes after me every now and then. And yet you stay with him? Sometimes, Yes, I go back to him. Look at the life I lead. I am tired of this and, yet, I don't have much education. Nowadays, any job requires a high school degree and I don't have it. There are jobs as maids, but, I can't be a full time maid (and sleep over) because I have two kids.” (LU).

“My father didn't want to let me go, but, I was unemployed and even so, had the situation of my ex-husband. We fought all the time, sometimes he'd hit me in public and I wanted to get away from that.” (MY).

“I got there and it wasn't a different situation. Actually, she (the friend that invited us) did have a restaurant, was married, and lived well. But, she had been through some hard times. She told me about her life and I became surprised. Trafficked,, worked in a cabaret. Then, she met someone whom she married. She was lucky, because many aren't. There are Brazilians who don't want to give in, and they remain in jail, in hand-cuffs, and in a terrible condition. There are Brazilians that don't want to turn themselves in, and stay locked up, handcuffed and in a terrible situation. I was frightened and I met a Dutch who helped me to run away.” (BE).

Why do they accept or consent to it? Because they are responding to a basic need of survival. Besides others of consumption, of fitting in, via money, into a matrimony; to satisfy their expectations, plus, giving them perspectives of freeing themselves from the violence they face in their relationships with partners or family members.

It is precisely the real conditions, in which consent is given, that allow us to question it, and characterize it as intentionally criminal.

Is it really free, considering that it is given against so much hardship?

And why may these women that make the invitations, and coax, be considered criminals? Because they take advantage from a situation of vulnerability to deceive. They clearly know they are fooling the other ones, including because they have lived and experienced the same situation before.

The concrete life and misery conditions give these women no other choice than to submit themselves to exploitation; unaware that they are giving up their substantive rights to human dignity, such as freedom, respect, freedom to come and go, physical and mental health, such rights that, in fact, nobody can simply give them up.

Furthermore, it is important to question and refute the validity of such consent, if we take into account the situations and conditions themselves of material and subjective pressure in which the consent is given. What is the real personal situation they are allowing to be violated?

6.4.5 The recruiters

“I was invited by R that dated the owner of a club there. She told me what the work was all about and what club I would go to, I was not deceived, (she knew what she was going to do in Paramaribo). She also told me I'd have to pay for my ticket fare when I arrived there.”

“That I think is practically like stealing, but not the other things, they were nice to me, she (who invited) was great with me, when she arrived in Paramaribo, I talked to her and she said she didn't know it was like that.” (RO).

As we have mentioned before, the figure of the recruiter, an important character in this plot, needs to inspire the initial confidence needed to obtain the woman's consent. That



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

is why she dresses up as this friendly, close, and well-intentioned person. In general, they are other women who experienced being trafficked and “climbed up” in the hierarchy of the criminal organization.

Usually, they are able to ascend thanks to a relationship, matrimony or emotional involvement with the owner of the club or an employee. These are men that in general also have more than one woman. To them, this situation may even mean the possibility of obtaining benefits or privileges, such as not having to work with sex anymore, to have permission for certain things, having a ticket to come to Belem with a certain frequency.

Besides, obviously, a certain superiority over the other women. To work for the “husband,” recruiting other women is part of this suspicious matrimonial contract, which, to them, however, represents a meaning of success, shows that “she got lucky.” There are also reports of men carrying out the same duties.

Here, again, it is impossible to not give in to the temptation of establishing a relationship with the slavery system, reiterating the reference to this modern way of slavery. These women, “friends” that invite and recruit the others, do so in service to the owner of the club, with whom they have a close relationship. We are referring to the figure of the “tenant”- employee, or the “dependant that is formally free” (SOUZA, 2003). These women's positions are clearly that of an intermediate between the master (owner of the club) and the slave (the women being trafficked). Although this woman is not submitted to the same strictness in terms of sexual services and activities, in fact she occupies the same position as some men in the slavery system.

Foremen, for instance, who were “un-owned and formally free, however, whose only chance of survival was by taking on duties, on the fringes of the system as whole.” (SOUZA, 2003, p. 122).

“Well, then there was this friend of mine S., that came with this Bere guy, and then he told me he was going to open up a bar and wanted pretty girls to work as waitresses. He said I wouldn't be going alone, I was going with another seven girls, that I would have a place to live on his account, that I could call my family and send them money every week. When we arrived there, it was nothing like that. From the time I arrived there I was already in debt and I didn't even know I had that debt.” (DI).

These girls that submit themselves to the employer are, in the same manner, being exploited, although they think they have a different status because they climbed up to the

position of “spouses,” and with all the symbolism that can go along with such a position in the lives of these women.

A similar situation seems to have happened to MI (26 years old) – she was contacted at the health post in Suriname. MI comes closer to us when she finds out we are Brazilians and that we wanted to talk to Brazilian girls. MI says she is there along with other girls for their exams. She herself will not undergo tests because she no longer works at the club.

“I’ve worked, now I’m married and it is my husband that works at the club. And what does he do? We ask. He is a security guard. Is he here? Yes, he is right over there.”

We realized that actually she and her husband were at the health post, not only along with and assisting them, but keeping an eye on the women during the exam, which is a common procedure, as we suppose, considering that the girls always arrive in groups accompanied by a man, a taxi driver, but that gets out of the car and goes into the health post with them, and stands at a strategic position, at a certain and enough distance to follow and observe their movements. The news about us being there seems to have scared the “security guards” and MI ends up being sent over to us to find out what is going on. The relative delay in our conversation with MI seems to trigger more concern, which we can infer from the attitudes of the drivers that begin to closely walk past the bench on which we sat. Also by the behavior of one driver, he comes up to us and begins asking MI many questions about why we are there and the kind of job we are carrying out.

In regard to the relationship pattern, Souza (2003) is emphatic: “it is about people, which in general, we could do without, due to the fact that they don’t play any important role (...) and that can survive inside the gaps” in the system, in the organization. The author also describes how this pattern has spread throughout the national territory and, we could state that, it still persists in the 21st century.

In the plot of trafficking in women, we clearly note, however, another aggravating factor: these women perform an activity inside the organization which is that they recruit other women, without getting paid for doing so, since they play the parts of “spouses,” therefore, at the service of the husband, besides, obviously, having to obey to conjugal obligations.

The perception that women have of their recruiter(s) is ambiguous and differs depending on the situations they have been through or that are imposed on them in the country of destination.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

Some women don't feel deceived and, to these, the recruiters are seen as friends, as having good intentions, who tried or intended to. Some even admit, in a certain way, to "failure," considering they were not that lucky.

"Then came the invitation. A young man I knew, we became friends. I even met his mother. She said: gee, if we could find something for you to do around here then you wouldn't have to go."

This young man said: "you'll go, but if anything happens, you can call me and I will send for you."

"They don't want us to be friends with the girls so that they don't keep coming after us, asking for help. But, I did become your friend. You can call me if anything happens. He and his mother were very good to me." (MA).

This is how they exempt the recruiters from any degree of guilt or responsibility for the situation. This way of thinking partly results from the fact that they knew what they were going to do and even so accepted it. Well, if they were told that it was for them to become sex workers at a club, then there is no mistake. Some of them still can't get over the fact that they allowed themselves to be fooled: *"it was my fault, because I let her lead me on."* (CE)

However, those women who suffered the clearest and hardest effects of the traffic refer to the figure of the recruiters as deceivers or criminals, and express anger against them.

"Who invited you?. A friend that I cared for. And you no longer care for her?" 'No. Because she was not nice to me. She did bad things to me. She made me into a slave.'" (AL).

This understanding is also related to the conditions of perception or awareness of having been deceived, violated, in addition to the ingredient of the intention (mal-intention) they are able to notice.

6.4.6 Why go to Suriname?

Expectation: from the Latin *expectatus*: hopes based on rights, probabilities or promises that are assumed (FERREIRA, 2004). The dictionary's assistance drives us to the question: what are the hopes of trying to survive in Suriname based on?

"I went out of need. Not because of a dream". (MA).

“My desire was to work in order to help out my family. I didn't know what was going to happen”. (LA).

“I thought I had to go over there because it is better than here.” (GA).

“It's because of the illusion of a better life, of having a good job offering, that pays better, to allow you to give a better life to your family, to your kids. But, it is all an illusion because they say it is one thing and it is actually something different.” (DI).

“Everybody leaves wishing to have a chance in life, to make a living. That's what I thought: I will succeed, buy a house, help my family.” (AL).

“Before, she used to work in a family's house, but she had been unemployed for two months around the time that she traveled. She was looking for a job, she sent her resumé to Brasil Service (a cleaning company). I think she went because she had no other chance. She went because of her daughter. She wants to buy her own house and provide a better life for her daughter. Here, she couldn't do that, and her daughter needed things”. (A. has a 26-year old sister that is in Suriname).

“They all go out of need, to be able to buy a house, to support their children, that is why they go. If I had another opportunity, I wouldn't go, if there was a way for me to be able to live here, to support my kids. I want to get away from this life, so much that I try to get by doing other things, I try to sell my things, I do other tasks, as a cook, a housekeeper, and I go about, making my money. I don't live only off of that.” (MA).

Although it is not exactly a novelty, what we observe from the first voices is the exposure of damages in a social-economic model that, under the façade of development, imposes extreme poverty and suffering to millions of citizens, conditioning them to activities, practices, finally, to degrading and primitive choices. It exhibits a world that is split up, between those that have rights, access, resources, and those who don't.

It is possible to find arguments such as: *“Ah, that's just their story, she could seek other ways of surviving, other jobs.”* To those, it is worthy reminding, first of all, about these women's histories of attempts, almost all of them are former maids, which is the main or only alternative for people, such as them, who represent the traditional profile: low



A trinalational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

degree of education, families with very poor roots, no means of obtaining professional skills. It is also worthwhile noting that the conditions referred to above cross over with other gender impositions and inequalities, which make the women potential victims.

In addition to the concrete needs for survival (food, house, clothes etc), we mustn't forget that the urban cultures (bearing in mind that in times of globalization, it is hard to define the limits of such 'urban') today represent a major mix, let's say they are hybrid – just to use a term that is in vogue. They, therefore, do not live in isolated areas, neighborhoods, communities; but, on the contrary, they suffer and are submitted to the whole process of influences, largely, but not only, through the media. They are the very efficient mechanisms in creating needs, showing what should be worn, used, eaten, consumed. Artifacts and needs as created, which begin to equally populate the desires, the imagination of rich and poor peoples. Through the eyes of the media, we are unrealistically a society of peers. However, whereas the rich ones are able to consume, and they effectively do so, the poor peoples are compelled to wishes that will probably never come true. The lack of money is the major barrier to being able to dilute the difference.

It is still worthwhile to point out that we are in a terrain of interfaces. Each of the subjects of which and with whom we talked, are not only men and women, but cross-cutting subjects due to an array of dimensions. They are women that belong to a class, a race, and an age segment: young women (14 to 34 years old), with children, whose expenses to raise them fall exclusively upon them because the fathers, in these cases, simply come and go. They are also the ones to care for and bear their mothers' financial responsibilities.

“It was around the time that my sister began calling, saying that my mother and my niece were sick. I spent 15 days on the street offering sex services and sent all the money to Belem.” (RO).

A keen and close look at each of these situations and stories reveal the feminine face of poverty. Bearing in mind, as Sarti stated (2005, p.12) “that poverty is a problem to those who experience it, not only because of the difficult material conditions in its existence, but because of the subjective experience of permanent, structural oppression that marks it, in every action that is lived, in every word that is heard.” All of these represent the conditions that the women try to overcome and these are the ingredients that are combined and make up the special situation of susceptibility. The possibility of working abroad represents the dream, the promise of realization, of really integrating the group of consumers. *“to buy things for my kids, to buy my house.”* A way of overcoming a situation

of poverty that, by judging based on the lack of opportunities they had in Brazil, doesn't even represent the most remote possibility.

Once the recruiting strategy is successful, in other words, when one obtains the consent, the recruiter(s) arranges everything needed for these girls to travel, documents, passports, clothes, strategies both to deceive possible oversight, as well as to receive the women at their destination. Some of them travel in groups, others alone. The recruiter, in general, does not travel along with them.

“I didn't go alone. We went SU, myself, and RA, the one that took me and other seven girls.” (DI).

“I went alone. She (recruiter) said it was for me to wait at the airport. She showed me a picture of him (the person that would be waiting for her) and told me to stay calm.” (BE).

“She scheduled the date, I went to her house, she dressed me up and took me to the airport.” (CE).

As the reports show, in general, the transportation of these women is carried out under all normal conditions related to the embarking of passengers. They usually leave from the Belem airport, in commercial planes, at regular hours etc. This confirms the statements of INFRAERO² employees, which assure that all passengers are regular. Although we know that they are not that normal. A keener and closer look, and intelligent strategies would be needed in order to be able to identify indications of the crime that is hidden behind some facts that apparently are not suspicious: groups of women embarking according to the organization of a man or another woman, who usually doesn't travel along with them; a group of women waiting while a man purchases and hands out personal items: tooth paste, soap. A man that, from a distance, observes and watches the group of women at the check-in counter. The women 'are embarked', carrying in their small luggage the hope of achieving their dreams: to buy a house, to finish their mothers' house, to earn money to pay for education. In pursuit of the “happy city dream,” as Caetano Veloso would say.

6.4.7 Arriving in Suriname

That same keener and closer look allows us to perceive the same suspicious indications of the organization and criminal scheme at the airport in Suriname. The

² INFRAERO: Empresa Brasileira de Infra-estrutura Aeroportuária – Brazilian Company for Airport Infrastructure.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

situation observed by the research team makes these indications very clear: a line to present documents to the Federal Police, an airport employee speaking Portuguese comes up to the line saying that the officer will ask for the destination address of those newly arrived, and shows where to fill it in on the form. Some girls don't know the address and with no further ado he answers *“That's ok, I'll put mine. Don't you worry, I always do this. It's just a formality”* (field diary of the researchers). The employee goes about filling in the forms. Who is this employee and what is her duty? What address is this that she says she will fill in? What is her role in the scheme? These are questions that remain unanswered.

For these women, the airport of Suriname is the place where dreams and expectations begin to fall apart. Where they begin to live their first experiences of defeat. The arrival at the airport or at the club is where, in general, they begin to face the most explicit situations of violence.

Para las mujeres, el aeropuerto de Surinam, es el lugar donde sus sueños y expectativas empiezan a desvanecerse. Es donde empiezan a vivir las primeras experiencias malas. A la llegada al aeropuerto o en el club es donde, por lo general, empiezan a enfrentar situaciones de violencia más explícitas.

“I was received by a taxi driver; I think he was the owner's brother. He took me straight to the club. The next day, I received a bill with my debt: ticket, taxi from the airport and an HIV exam– 1420 dollars. I felt like I had been robbed.” (RO).

An important detail is that they pay for a round trip ticket, which they will never use because it has an expiration data and they will not be able to pay for the ticket in time to use it, so they will never use it.

The women state to have lost the ticket, which represents a distorted view of reality. They were actually robbed in that amount considering that the network already knew, beforehand, that the way back ticket would not be used because they are not coming back in such a short term. Who else gains with such a great amount of tickets that won't be used? Another missing end of the story.

“I went by myself. They knew what I looked like, the clothes I would be wearing, so they could pick me up at the airport. They took my passport right away.”

*“I arrived there and got scared. There was a mini-bus to take the girls.”
(DI).*

The club drivers and security guards began to act. They don't know or won't say their names, they are simply drivers. But they have all the information needed to identify the women, they know where they are going and, worse, they are well taught to take their passports. That is when they start to realize they've been deceived.

“Except when I arrived at the airport, it was nothing like that. She had sold me. The owner of the club looked at me in a way like every Brazilian is a prostitute anyway. I said: wait a minute, I came here to work as a waitress. He said: no, you came to work in a cabaret. She sold you.” (BE)

“Who received you?”

“The owner. He threw me around and said: here you go, you are delivered, and forget that you have a family. You are out of the country.” (CE).

The transportation from the airport, keeping the passports, the beginning of the confinement all represents continuity of the criminal process. It doesn't start there, but it anticipates what is about to come. At that moment, however, the women can't do much because they are completely entangled in the organization. They are in an unknown country, with no idea of where or who to ask for help, and the language barrier, which, although there are many Brazilians in the country, it is not easy to find a person that speaks Portuguese, especially in the closed environment of the clubs which they stay in. All they have left now is “acceptance” and to submit themselves to the job and the conditions that are imposed on them.

6.4.8 The routine in confinement and the exhausting work in the clubs of Suriname

“We are exploited. We know we'll have to pay for the ticket, but, not that it's going to be three times what it's worth. You are thrown in the club, have obligations, and have to fend for yourself. I fought with the manager. I wasn't feeling well and I asked to go to my room. He said no, and that I'd have to work anyway. I said I couldn't and he charged me a 200 dollar fine.” (MY).

“I felt bad. We feel bad in there. We leave without clothes, without shoes and we need clothes to work at night. I humiliated myself. Everybody that goes there know what they are going to do.”. (GA).



A trinalational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

The expectation of turning their lives around is the basis which the desire of migrating falls upon. This expectation, which is very soon frustrated, lasts maybe two hours at most, the time of the flight duration from Brazil to Suriname. All the universe of lies about life conditions in Suriname fall apart with no ado. And they “quickly learn to call it reality, trying to adapt themselves, or, as they call it, “to get used to it,” after all, resignation is part of what they learn on how to be a woman.

The first time, I was grossed out. You don't feel like ever doing it again. There are girls that are ashamed of not going back, keep waiting for the time to ascend, but, end up getting used to it. My shame and embarrassment were lost with time.” (AL).

The work is placed as an essential analytical category. One moment, the job is an important reference to project these people (SARTI, 2005). It is based on the promise of work that they are invited. It is because of its importance in defining roles and positions, and also because of the lack of perspectives and opportunities in Brazil, that these women adventure themselves into the unknown, in the pursuit of that which, to them, could be the meaning of migration, but it is actually trafficking in women.

We may also state that, once they arrive in Suriname, they are also deceived and abused in the relationships and work conditions, even if they are, no doubt, surrounded by other dimensions (sexual violence, nationality, class, and gender embarrassments, intimidation, for example).

The entry point is based on the topic of employment. Some are deceived, the invitation is for them to be nannies or waitresses, they don't know they will be going to a club to be sex workers, but they seek a job, a way of earning money, an opportunity that they don't have in Brazil. For these women, the work is revealed as something else. For the others, the driver is the same, except that they know what job they are going to have, but have expectations of finding better conditions and better pay. However, they are illusionary expectations regarding the conditions.

“It was about 800 dollars (the debt). To pay for the round trip, plus the fine I got, of about 150 dollars. I'd pay the fine because I didn't want to go down there because I had my period, or I was feeling nauseous, or when it was too late. Sometimes I didn't want to go down there because I was watching soap operas, and I ended up having to pay another fine.” (AL).

“How were the work conditions? It began at eight, nine p.m. and would go on until six o'clock in the morning on Fridays and Saturdays. Monday through Thursday, from eight to four. On Sundays, we didn't work”. (MY).

“They give the girls a lot of whisky to drink. I wanted to find a way to run away. But right from the start you can tell you are being watched 24 hours per day. If you place one foot outside of the room, they ask you where you are going. They intimidate you right away. They go after, the girls are punished and some have even been killed.” (DI).

“Were you ever hurt? Yes, by the club's security guard. I was sick, sometimes I didn't even eat, and cried a lot. And he'd say I had to work even if I was sick. I said I wasn't going to work like this. The owner came into the room with two security guards and I challenged them. I said I wasn't a good apple anyway, and that they could hit me, but I still wouldn't go. They forced me to go.” (CE).

“We had to drink, sometimes we even had to use drugs, all of that in five minutes in order to work. It was way too many men”. (BE).

For the women interviewed, work appears as the major resource for material survival, since the situation of misery doesn't even allow us to refer to it as an identity support or of personal realization, this is a dimension they make no reference to. At one moment, it has to do with the imperative of survival, the possibility of success, of having or purchasing things for themselves and their children. All the sacrifice they make ends up not being worthwhile, since it doesn't lead to gains, and they end up returning humiliated, having failed, with nothing: *“My life is much worse now”*.

On the other hand, to achieve something may void the sense of failure: *“At least I was able to buy my things”* or *“it's better than just laying around with doing anything.”*

It is mandatory to find out or show some sign of success, something that shows them and the others (family, friends), that the effort and sacrifice were not in vain. Here, the economic and moral meaning of work/job seem to be entangled (SARTI, 2005). In addition, we note that behind the discourse of improving life, there are no other major pretensions or aspirations towards ascending, but only to achieve basic aspects of survival. This aspiration is found to be related to the possibility of a matrimony or of finding a man to take them away from this life. They know that the under-qualified work will not assure that.



A trinal study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

If, however, there is violation regarding work relations, this is only one of the ends in the crime's plot. The women are aware that this is not just any job, but in fact it is submission and degrading situation. None of them choose prostitution as their job, but refer to it as the only option available, so, they talk about a job that they don't like, especially when forced or deceived in doing it. They are under-citizens that do not own their own destinies, choices. Prostitution, such as experienced by the women interviewed, is yet another by-product of this under-citizenship. Some women express more resigned attitudes, others are more aggressive and emphatic in their aversion, they feel disgust, "*it is repugnant*". We note that it has not to do only with the labor force, but with having to give away their bodies, their intimacy, even when they try to defend or protect themselves from that, by not feeling pleasure or reducing the program to a mechanical task, with no affective delivery.

The woman's body is a work instrument, but not only in the sense of its severity, physical capacity, disposal (SARTI, 2005), but also as an erotic symbol. As an instrument to satisfy one's desire, who gives himself the right to touch it, penetrate it, something that should only be done with her voluntary delivery. It is a violent ownership in itself, which dismisses any type of physical violence (although it does involve it in some moments). This is what is experienced or defined with aversion and even disgust for some women. They are forced to a task that is intimate, extremely personal, requires intimacy and involvement, even if it is not affective, but is still too close. Simultaneously to the violence against the body, they are also abused in one of the most intimate and important dimensions of their subjective constitution, of the feminine dignity, to enjoy sexuality and the use of their bodies, aspects which the style and conditions of their experiences only they have the right to decide.

Class embarrassments, such as poverty, hunger, alienated work clearly merge here with gender embarrassments and intimidation. The women carry on their shoulders the weight of historical conditioning, of the gender differentiated socialization process that strongly marks and defines the limits and places of the women in a society that has been historically built to and for men.

The relations and situations, both of poverty as well as gender, end up being naturalized in a certain way. Thus, they don't see themselves as workers, they don't demand and fight for respect and dignified work relations, guided by this idea of citizenship. They don't see themselves as citizens entitled to rights – as we are tempted to state.

The reports are clear and convincing. Now, and then in foreign territory, new elements add themselves to the first criminal elements concretized while still in Brazil

(recruitment, deceit and transportation). These new elements are: forced labor, exhaustive work load, ostensive surveillance, humiliating and degrading conditions, restriction of the right to come and go, or clear incarceration due to debt, withholding the passports as a way to keep them there, physical aggressions.

With no doubt, all the elements clearly observed fall into the category of at least two crimes: trafficking in women for slaved labor and, surprisingly, the lack of an enforcement strategy designed by both countries' local authorities.

What's the difficulty in identifying all of the situations reported to define them as crimes? Based on Lhering's analytical concept (*apud* ELEUTÉRIO), crime is “the fact resulting from a human behavior that infringes, or puts at risk a legal good that is protected by law.” If we are to understand life and freedom as examples of these goods legally protected, we could say that we are at least facing a crime of omission practiced by both States. A succession of crimes therefore.

The women realize that are alone and individually seek resistance strategies. They are aggressive, they enter into discussions, they challenge and face the security guards and the owners. “*I'm not a good apple*”. Therefore their statements reveal not only passiveness or indifference. On the contrary, they rehearse accusations, critiques and resistance, not only resignation. Do they see themselves as withholders of rights? What is certain is that, once they feel excluded, they individually take on the search for solutions or attempts to overcome the life conditions.

They quickly realize that fighting or confronting the security guards doesn't really do help them, and they change tactics. Who can question their methods, considering that they face the situation by themselves? As weird as they may seem, what can we expect when survival is screaming so loud? The alternative of resisting the situation is the one that immediately appears and possibly which looks to be the most advantageous.

In that manner, they hold on to the few positive references that are made about them: the image of the sexy hot woman, good in bed. They see themselves in these images; they feel like that and like to be seen that way. That is the product that they use in exchange, it is with that merchandise (hot and nice body), the only one they have, that they are going to face inequality and attempt a way out from poverty.

If so many others got lucky, I may too. One way is by dating the owner of the club or some of “his friends,” that tirelessly attend the clubs. This is how another figure comes



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

into this plot: “good men,” that help them by paying their debts and making them exclusive, only for them. We refer to these as the protectors. With them, the women begin experiencing an apparently new situation, freer, but that ends up entangling them and submitting them to new means of servitude.

6.4.9 Who are the protectors?

“I thought it was wrong, what the girls did, to press charges against M. Like I said, we don't need them only once, we need them many times”. (GA).

“ Z. took me to his house. He gave me 2000 dollars for clothes, shoes. He put me in a bedroom to sleep, he didn't touch me, didn't mess with me. He said: I will give you money to go back to Brazil. You are not going to stay here, otherwise you will try killing yourself, and I don't want that because you are a very nice girl. He treated me like his wife, except there was no involvement in bed [...]. A few days later, I found out he was a drugs trafficker.” (DI).

“I met him on the same night that I arrived, then he traveled to Holland and, when he got back, he took me out of the club and put me in a rented house, where I am until today. Every day he gives me money. I stay home, there is nothing to do. To him, I am no longer a hooker: I am a normal person. To him, I am his wife.” (G. 26 years old).

In the relationships that are formed in the clubs, there are at least two defined positions or roles: 1) Some women that ascend to the position of lovers, girlfriends or “wives,” in search of the “master's” protection; 2) The position occupied by the supposed protectors, friends of the owners of the club, that are “enchanted” by some of the girls, pay their debts and put them in privileged situations. However, they remain under the custody of the “master” (owner of the club).

Souza (2003) refers to the establishment of a new model of institutionalization resulting from Brazil's modernization process, not initiated, but effectively re-driven as of 1930. This new model, states the author, is the setting up of a specifically peripheral model of citizenship and under-citizenship, or which he calls “the formation of a structural rabble” (Ibid., p. 153). In this formation, economic, cultural, and political variables are mixed up, and its origins allude to the patriarchal and slavery heritage.

Souza (2003) sees *personalism*, a characteristic of relationships between the

master and his slaves or others “of any color that depend on him,” as being disseminated to all other social relationships. Not considering the differences because we are dealing with another empirical environment, this seem to be especially reproduced in the relationships that we observe here, portrayed by the women that have lived the situation of traffic. Here, the owners of the clubs, and there “friends, partners,” end up being transformed into super-subjects.

What is common among them is the situation of objective dependence, in the shape of a voluntary, tacit agreement, a link of favor and protection. Its appearance is that of a relationship between peers, the women feel they benefit from this situation, since they end up assimilating the other's desire as if it were her own. What may explain such dependence is not only material poverty and shortage, but reasons that are associated with need, to be understood here not only absence, but as insecurity towards life. A symbolic poverty – as we could call it.

“Did the owner of the club threaten you?”

“Yes, of death. I was lucky. I had the Dutch's help to pay for my expenses, he was a miner, he would travel and give me the keys to his house, I would go over there to cook.” (BE).

“This Dutch was friends with my friend's husband. When I saw him, it was love at first sight. Then he traveled, but he really was my guardian angel.” (BE).

The situation of the women, however, is that of a double dependence, the protection assured by the protector is limited, does not lead the woman to autonomy, does not guarantee her freedom from the condition of a “slave,” and ends up “serving two masters.” Here we find proof that the “legitimization of hierarchical and unequal relationships was obtained at the expenses of open physical violence, in the worst cases, or of psychic violence, and covered up by co-optation implicit in the relationship of personal dependence, in the other cases” (SOUSA, 2003, p. 97).

Our informants are, without knowing so, figures that are totally disposable, submitting themselves, sometimes, to the condition of the second, or even third, “spouse”. How is this under-alternating subjectivity, which submits itself to such archaic and sacrificing ways of exploitation? From the slavery heritage? The female education for submissiveness?



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

Is it possible to think that the same terms of the oppositions between classes are also the basis for gender inequalities? Or can these contribute to explaining those?

Where (or up to when) can we think of the man's perception as being rational and higher in status, while the women starts to be seen as the place for affection, sensuality, of body appeal in the analysis and understanding of the subjects and the ways in which they give meaning to the experiences lived?

To the women, the figure of the protector is the hope of ascending, of matrimony, maybe. But that doesn't help actually in terms of their freedom, in achieving autonomy and independence. They are only submitting themselves to changing owners, while they are negotiating the lives of these women, as if they were real merchandises.

“They said they were going to help me. They saw me and went mad. V. said: I want her immediately on a plane with me tomorrow, to Germany, then V. said no, first to Holland. That was the deal. I was already there anyway, either I went or I'd die.” (DI).

They have also learned a way to be a man, they think they have the right to determine about the body, the life women as they do with objects. Do these women, such as the slaves, not have rights, not have souls, are they less than human?

6.5. THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY. FAMILY? WHAT FAMILY?

The family, obviously as a social institution, does not come out untouched from the process of change experienced in the society. It has a new structure, another dynamics and new roles. It is possible to think of new arrangements, changes in the relationships that make them up.

This is particularly true for the families of poor people, which, in order to survive, need to negotiate strategies, seek rearrangements, explicit or tacit agreements. The poor family, such as the families of the women interviewed, is keen in showing that there is not a correct or unique way of living in a family or of living the family.

The stories of the women interviewed reveal three family references: one that raised (or did not raise) them, one that they made (didn't make) up and the family in which they live in today. They have references of their families of origin, of the male figures in their family histories (father, former partner, the relationship in Suriname) and, mainly, of being a mother.

6.5.1 Original family

There are many arrangements, with frequent and ambivalent references to violence and protection, to abandonment and affection. Some were really abandoned, others were symbolically abandoned, which also doesn't escape from being a real feeling.

“Since I was 13 years old, my father and mother haven't worried about me” (RO).

“When I turned 14 years old, she (mother) kicked me out of the house.” (LU)

“Our dad left us when we were small, he left to live with another woman. Sometimes, when he'd see us here at our grandmother's house, he would proudly say that we were his children, but he never gave us anything. He would go to a bar, get drunk with his friends, then he'd come back and beat my mother and us.” (AL).

“Ever since my dad died, when I was nine years old, my mother hasn't wanted to see her kids by her side... The only thing I wanted her to give me was care and attention, things she never gave me.” (GA).

The stories of stress and individual searches towards solving the problems seem to be the common rules. The women, with the intention of not repeating their experiences with their children, abandon them, in pursuit of a better life for them. They repeat the cycle of family abandonment, leaving their kids with those they no longer wanted or could no longer live with. The reports end up showing that, to these women, the family has not been the place to guarantee survival or full protection. This – it is important to note – does not mean to blame the family, but to perceive it also as a result of a process of exclusion and poverty, as already exhaustively referred to in this paper.

Others have good family memories:

“(the relationship) Has always been very good, with my mother, my father, my brothers, my former mother-in-law”. (AL).

“To DI, the stepfather was very good to her, even though she was not his biological daughter, she was the dearest of the children and step-children, because her step-father satisfied all her wishes. She always had the best things, he put her in the best schools in Belém” (DI).



“Ok, it was good. Only when I was a child it was so-so, because my parents spent the whole day at work, so we'd stay alone, but they paid a person to baby-sit us. It was good then because my father didn't drink, they didn't fight in front of us and that was good, because I heard stories of so many girls from there (Suriname) which were much worse, my story in insignificant close to theirs.”

Although there is frequent stress and wearing out in the relations, the family's role, as a place for support and reference, to create marks, either good or not that good; it is undeniable. This also points to the need of understanding the family as it really is, and is made up of; and not thinking of it from the perspective of what is lacking, of how/what it should be.

This allows us to realize that this institution and, especially the poor family which we talk about, is built and created based on values of its own, essentially because of the need to survive, following the examples of the subjects that make them up. The models, the attitudes exist largely due to the strategies to face poverty and its conditionings. It is from this perspective that we must conceive the choices made by each family. This is why we have women alone taking care of their children – children that, most of the time, do not belong to the same father; grandparents raising their grandchildren; many families sharing the same house; the establishment of support network with relationships that, sometimes, are not that clear to someone observing them from the outside (the researcher), who almost always guides his analysis by a dominant family model.

Still, in the absence of the provider, of the devoted and caring mother, of the queen of the household; the family shall not be stigmatized because of that. The conflicts are inevitable, given the conditions in which they live in, with a driver towards immanent competition and a forced imposition toward collectivization. And it is amidst these adversities that the family resists. It is therefore undeniable that the reference does exist, that the family's symbolic strength, in the life of the subject, remains, even if intermediated by the sense of absence, of non-family or of the desired family.

6.5.2 The men in the family stories

In the families that have raised these women, the men are usually unknown and absent. In solid-based families, women talk about jealous, violent and also absent former partners. Almost none of the women interviewed here include their children's parents in their concept of family. They have been absent since pregnancy, taking no responsibility

over their children, or they leave after a divorce. Woortman (apud HIT) talks about this absence:

Working class men lose their inner authority and their role as a provider, at the same time in which a strengthening of the marital ties occur. This focus privileges the main role of women and their relations with their family members instead of the tradition family model, where the man is the center and the one with the maximum authority. Man loses all its strength, he is nobody inside the house (“the terrain where the rooster does not sound”) and is nobody in the outside world, (exploited in the system and labor environment), stays set aside from the main role as a provider, which gives him authority. What is left for him is to stay out in the streets and in bars – he is thrown out from the society.

The kind of man they seek and sometimes find at the clubs in Surinam is one who plays the role of a savior. Those who understand that they are there on behalf of the survival of their children, since the Brazilian men they know don't take on the responsibility for the education of their children. They, on the other hand, feel they deserve love and protection, role which they evidently believe to belong to the man.

The quarrelsome relationships with Brazilian former partners are yet another reason for them to leave Brazil. They don't want or can't stay any longer and, because of this, they run away from their violent, jealous, repressive and “cheating” men.

“He never hit me, we spent three years together; but he was very jealous.”
(BE)

“He is an extremely violent man, if my son was born with so many complications, he was born prematurely due to the fact that he hit me so much, he hit me, and the next day my son was born.” (LA)

“Because I was having problems with my ex-husband. He would come after me. He wasn't exactly and legally my husband. I lived with him for 13 years. I was arguing with him. He was going to hit me. My oldest daughter started to cry, telling him not to hit me. Then she charged right at him and he hit her. The next day, since he wasn't home, I took my daughters and a few things and left to my sister's, but I didn't stay long at her place because he would follow me and my



girls, and I'd be scared. Then I came here [...] a county in the middle of Pará – to my parents' house because it is safer. Here he won't come because of my father, but he came once. My father didn't let him in. I used to study, stopped for a while, then went back to it, but he was too jealous, he would come to my school and watch me, didn't want me to speak to anybody, to any boy". (LI).

“And even so there was the situation with me ex-husband. All we did was fight. Sometimes he would hit me in public, and I just wanted to get away from it all. I spent 8 years living with him. He hit me a lot. He drank a lot. He is very ignorant. He lives by here. I am ashamed/embarrassed to talk to him.” (MY)

With the desire to assure a better future for their children and escape from these situations of violence, leaving the country also means the search for a new life. Prostitution at the clubs is not looked upon as a definite situation, initially it is, sometimes, a trampoline for a new relationship in a foreign country, away from family and children, but in a condition that allows them to help them even being far away.

Paradoxically, it is this protective and providing man which, in fact, many times turns out to be more violent, more jealous and more repressive than those men left behind in Brazil. Initially they show themselves as a family parent, worried about their own Surinam children, with their Brazilian partner's children and especially by protecting their Brazilian partner.

In a culture in which the role of a family provider is essential for a man to be considered a good father, the fact that he has other women outside his marriage (“buitenvrouwen”) doesn't change these identities. On the contrary, also with the women these men have outside their marriage, one of their concerns (even if only apparently) is to care for these women's children.

The patriarchal culture and chauvinism stands side-by-side with the idea that a good husband/father is he who can provide.

Relationships between the husbands and as many other women they can provide for (TERBORG, 2002), is a situation that is accepted by the Brazilian women when they have a relationship with these men.

“He took me over to his house. He gave me 2000 dollars to buy clothes, shoes. He put me in a room to sleep. He didn't touch me. He didn't mess with me. He

said I was to upbeat, that I would end up sick. Then he told me why he was doing that. Because he saw a girl poke her throat in desperation for being there. Then he said he didn't want that to happen to me. I was so desperate I only woke up in the morning. I woke up with a woman named Ms. D who made me breakfast, took it to me, brought me a gown. Then she said: Mr. Z left this money for you to buy clothes. Leave those at the club. After a week he treated me like his wife. We only didn't sleep together. He was like a father to me.” (DI)

“That was when he proposed and said: Do you want to be my wife? I shall send money to the C, and you can stay here as my wife. But he was already married to a Thai woman, to a Brazilian, which was from here, Belém, to whom he even gave her sister a house, both were his wives. And he wanted to do the same to me, make me his wife.” (DI).

“He works in the city, sells jewelry from gold mining. He was married. Now he lives with his family. He wasn't rich, millionaire, but said he could help me, but to the club he said he wouldn't go anymore, but he would pick me up on my days off so that we could walk around town, have fun, on weekends. He said he wished he hadn't met me in that situation, sometimes, when he didn't want me to work, he'd give me money to pay-off my day's work. He stayed with me. He had two jobs. He supported his mother and his daughter. When we went out, he'd pay for everything.” (AL).

“It was on the day I arrived, this Dutch was a friend of my friend's husband and lived in Surinam. She gave me a few things to give him at the club. Then, when I saw him it was love at first sight. On the next day he traveled, but he was my guardian angel indeed. I was very lucky. I had the help of the Dutch man who paid my bills. He was a gold miner, traveled, gave me the keys to his house so I could go there, cook.” (BE)

“I stayed at the club only while A traveled to Holland. Then when he got back he got me out of the club and put me in a rented house, were I still am today. But he never treated me like a prostitute, since the beginning. To him, in Surinam, I am his wife.

“A is married and has a similar relation with GA's sister in Surinam. GA says he doesn't show that he likes her, but that she will make him her husband and she tattooed his name on her body.” (GA)



6.5.3 The mother figure

The women interviewed are daughters, mothers and wives or lovers, identities that put and insert them differently in the family reality. The mother figure appears both as that who mistreats or abandons as well as that who seeks to help her daughters taking on the caring for her grandchildren, approving recruiters and, sometimes, running after their daughters, when they suspect they are in danger.

“I said: I accept it without discussing it with my mother; then she went over to my mother's and told her a different story, not as we had agreed on at my friend's house.” (CE).

“Then she arrived at my house and asked: Are you Ms. TA, CA's mother?”

I said: I am.

Then she said: The reason I have come here is because I'd like to take your daughter, because she is very much in need, wanting to leave this place. So I have a job for her, in fact it is not one where she will prostitute herself, it's work. Don't worry ma'am.. Is this child hers?

I said: Yes.

Then don't worry because I shall come and go from Surinam and will bring you the money she will send, to help her child and yourself. When I arrive, don't worry.

But I was a bit suspicious: But what kind of job is this?

Don't worry, she will earn plenty”. (CE's mother).

“I have a good relationship with my mother. She knows I work with this. Even being and evangelical, we can discuss things. When I told her why I was going, she said: You go, but if it is God's will, it won't be for long, because God has other plans for you”.

“I turned to her and said: Mom, I need to tell you something. I'm going to Surinam, to work at a club, in a club where there are other women who also work with sex. My mother doesn't mind staying with the kids.” (MA).

“So I told my mother: Mom, I’ll arrive there on New Year’s and I’ll send you money, I will find something to help us build the house, my daughters, and also get out of this mess, it will be better for everyone.” (MY).

“she was even a bit scared of telling her father. Then when she finally found the courage, she told him. Then he said: Yes, if I have a say so, you are not going, but then I wouldn’t... you’re already 18, you know what you want.” (NA’s mother).

“Then when she came, she said: Look, NA, if you wish to go, we can go. The baby was only seven months old. I said: No, she’s too young, she still breastfeeds, all she does is breastfeed, no, there is no way you are going.

Ok, then, she left.

She kept saying to me: Mom, let me go, mom, let me go, I want to help you, and whatever, we have tried taking the public examinations, we don’t pass, it’s hard to find a job here and stuff... I said: No, there is no way that my daughter is going.

I was just thinking of my baby, right?! One day she called her mother’s house, K. The phone rang, she asked to speak to her: NA, you have to come, I’ll sent your plane ticket.

She said: send it and I’ll go” (NA’s mother)

Mothers are the ones who you turn to when you are in danger, the ones you ask for help. They, on their turn, don’t ever deny it. It, therefore, corresponds to the daughter’s representation. That is hope, the last one who gives up or stops believing.

(BE: “I asked my mother for help”.

BE’s mother: I went over to her house (the recruiter’s). She said that I was not to worry, that my daughter was working at a restaurant. I went to the police station, filed a complaint, and the police officer said he could do nothing, for she was old enough. I then went to her house, again, and said that if she didn’t bring my daughter back, I would set her house on fire, for my daughter had been fooled.”



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

“At that time I also believed her. My daughter was unemployed, with a newly born child, and I took care of it. They also sent a family member who came back. Since my daughter wasn't their family member, I told her: If something happens to my daughter, I'll kill you all.”

“I put them under such pressure that they moved away. They still had the guts to say: She went because she wanted to go”.

I said: “If anything has happened to my daughter, I'll kill you one by one. It's very sad!”, (she gets emotional).

“I've been there, just say her it's there with her, and she says nothing. They are from his mafia, S's family (recruiter). He gave me a telephone number which never answered and doesn't exist. I think the federal police hasn't done a good job. We've already given them S's phone number and address and still nothing has been done.” (DU's mother).

“M's mother heard that her daughter had crossed over to Oiapoque and, since she hadn't called or written in a month, she decided to go after her, took her photo, driving to Porto de Miguel, where gold is sold, during 23 days during which she searched for her daughter, she had no success.” (conversation with MI's mother).

6.5.4 To be a mother

To think of these women is to also think of them as mothers. Maternity can come as a way to earn a more respectful identity than the previous one. The neglected and denied daughter, the working child, exploited and abused; she changes roles when she becomes a mother. The reality brought by this new identity creates, many times, changes not understood, expected or accepted: the responsibility for a child. Pressured to take on this new life project, without preparing for it, with few conditions and yet so many things to live and solve, the answer not always seems to be being around the children.

With the exception of one woman that was interviewed, they are all women with kids and, therefore, gifted with the biological and social identity of a mother. Though, two of them weren't mothers when they traveled, but got pregnant in Surinam, both of them from miners and both suffered aggression and abuse in these relationships.

Two women, who traveled before they had children, don't live with their parents anymore and worked to survive independently in Belém, lived with friends or sisters, were

familiar with the local prostitution and with the stories of friends traveling back and forth out of the country.

Another woman ran away from home when she was a teenager, at the age of 14, in search of an adventure, far away from extreme poverty, and accompanied by a friend who invited her. To them, the excuse of leaving for the sake of their children is not valid and, when they speak, they mix up reasons related to the need for independence and survival.

The meaning of what it is to be a mother is addressed and practiced differently, in face of the reality and social expectation towards women with children. While little is questioned about the absence of the father, mothers need to build up their speeches always starting from the needs (which include the financial needs) of their children, for it is expected that they leave their other identities to a second priority.

The role of a mother has come too soon, ten of the women interviewed had their first child or pregnancy still as a teenager, at the ages of 14, 15, 16 or 17, during an age period that is known for the construction or formation of the identity.

Silva (1998) questioned, within a research on prostitution and adolescence, if leaving the country can be understood as a way to run away from maternity, a search to yet live their own lives, an independent adolescence, away from the responsibilities of being a mother. Is this way out also a way of denying this role by transferring it to their mothers?

No matter what her decision is, she has to explain herself to her family and society as the mother of her children. Either she decides not to go, “so that she won't leave her children alone” or she decides to travel, “to financially support her children”. Assuming, at times, the role of a mother who cares for and educates her children, and at other times the role of the family provider, that goes out in to the world (the labor market), to earn money and send the necessary resources.

“It was all there, I just thought of my children”. (AL).

“I saw myself alone, divorced and with four children to raise”. (MA).

“So I told my mother: Mom I'll arrive there on New Year's e I'll send you money, I will find something to help build the house, my children”. (MY).

“I reached the point of having to go to Surinam, working with something I never thought I would work with, so that my children could have something I had never had, and to not let them with any unattended needs.” (GA).



A trinalational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

“Nobody likes me. They hide what has happened. This was how my life went and I became a prostitute for my children.” (LU)

Reality is concrete and brings consequences:

The greatest instability of married couples belonging to the working class, along with the women's increased need to work to provide for her family, brings consequences upon the manner in which domestic authority is organized. Many studies have been pointing out that these are the units that most suffer financial problems: the so-called feminizing of poverty (Barroso, 1978; Neupert, 1988; Castro, 1990; Oliveira, 1992; Jelin, 1994; Goldani, 1994). On one hand, there is an increase in the number of homes that rely only upon the feminine “authority” (even if it is weak, due to the absence of parents or partners). On the other hand, the fact that women are spending more time outside of the household, which results in a physical absence, can have moral implications, for her absence in the domestic unit can cause, in some cases, a process of debilitation of the authoritarian image or of the children's behavioral benchmarking. (ZALUAR, 1985 *apud* HITA, 2007).

The return, after the experience in Surinam, is difficult and frustrating, it reveals the fragility of the dream related to building a better family by leaving the country. Women return with stories of exploitation, violence and discrimination and, worse yet, without money to follow through with what has been promised: changing the family's life.

The time they have spent abroad and away from their children makes rapprochement difficult. They have become references, while they were away, working for their family's well-being. Sometimes by sending small amounts of money or even when that isn't possible.

When returning, the woman has a hard time dealing with the “experience of failure” and also with the family's reaction, which starts seeing her in a different way. She loses, thus, this identity and can even become one more “burden,” because she is returning without money. Some return pregnant, increasing expenses and becoming “unnecessary”, for they do not “contribute.” Soon, they become person with no place/position in the family.

“Only the oldest poses some difficulty, because we are further apart, because I am never home. She is really attached to my parents, but respects me,

when I speak to her. The youngest one is really attached to me. I give them everything, their wardrobe only has brand-name clothes. The youngest gives us a hard time eating, she only wants to eat good stuff, always has been that way, I don't know who she gets it from". (LI).

"When I am here, I'm never home. I go see my children, but I don't stay long, because they cry when I leave, but I have no responsibility to keep them with me. I don't have conditions to. They stay with my uncles, they are evangelical, they don't accept it, but they stay with my kids." (AL)

They can't help in supporting the family and themselves, so the option is to travel again. This option then makes it difficult to think of having the children with them again immediately. The women who decided to no longer travel went to live with one or all their children and thus had to go and live with their mother or some other family member.

They all seem stuck between two roles that they are not able to fulfill (caring mother – providing mother), and blame themselves for not being successful. They don't blame the absent fathers, the excluding Brazilian society, and even less the traffickers that exploit them. They assume personal responsibility and consequently the pain, the solitude, and suffering become individual problems.

6.6 MIGRATION, IDENTITY AND RESISTANCE

Human mobility is, in general, a symptom of great transitions. When it becomes intensified, something has happened or is about to happen, or yet, something is happening behind the scenes of history. (GONZALVES, 2001)

"You are surrendered to your boss. You can stay there and forget that you have a family, because you are outside the country". (CE).

What do young women look for in Suriname? Vulnerabilities are somehow one cause or even the main cause of migration, either in view of economic or psychosocial situations, current or remote, urgent or in contexts that are prolonged in time. These vulnerabilities do not end and very rarely are mitigated with immigration, because those who stay – in case anyone stays, and those who go continue connected for a very long time to the motives and realities of leaving, not without the moral, physical, psychological and social weights of these memories and contacts (LUSSI, 2007).



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

They earn money to solve problems in Brazil, raise children, without a home to live in, without a job, and fleeing former partners who are violent or families who never accepted them. Surinam would not be the first choice, if that depended on Brazilian dreams, promoted by the soap operas and TV shows like *Fantástico* and *Globo Reporter*, and magazines such as *Caras*, *Contigo* etc.

Europe, the United States and Japan are in the imaginary, when they think of changing lives. Suriname, as an unknown and poor country, without historical or cultural links with Brazil, becomes the destination of women from Pará by fitting in the migrating logic of the Amazon.

“Do you know anything about Surinam?”

R: “I only know that many girls went and did not return. One who I knew returned and another was always out in the street”. (GL).

6.6.1 Migrating to avoid death

The migratory movement inherent to the occupation of the Amazon causes displacement of workers to temporary work that is of interest to the state (such as hydroelectric plants, roads, railroads, occupation of borders) and to the great capital (projects of large companies that explore resources, such as Vale do Rio Doce, Jarí Celulose, Alunorte, Cargil). This seems to be a strategic cooperation of interests in which local and migrant workers become mere objects of economic and geopolitical plans. One activity that does not fit in this macroeconomic and political rule is the gold prospecting, despite containing the same mechanisms of exploration of workers, and can count on the absence of state protection.

Migrants are encouraged (in the best of options) or forced (through dispatching procedures, trafficking of people or slave labor) to migrate and to become labor, until they are unnecessary or become obstacles. This is because other enterprises need space, land, and preferably without people, thus they push out the traditional and recently arrived residents.

There are three options left for these marginalized populations: to continue and be more excluded; to resist and fight for the land, permanence and survival; or migrate to other places seeking their denied citizenship.

For those who “choose” migration, the main destinations are the peripheries of urban centers in the region and in neighboring Amazon countries (French Guyana, British Guyana, Venezuela, and Surinam), where the logic of labor division and forms of exploration are repeated.

For men, the options are construction and prospecting. For women, house work, cooking or prostitution (and possibly friendly relations that ensure more protection and support). For both (men and women), there is clandestine commerce.

Exploration is guaranteed, especially through discrimination and criminalization of migrants as “illegal.”

Women do not dream about migration, but about survival:

“No, I never wanted to travel out of the country. I wanted to work to help my family. I didn't know what was going to happen”. (LA).

This migration, as occurs in the Amazon, makes decisions easier for women and their families, by accepting invitations that repeat the history of the region: prostitution, house work and cooking. P: *“So she told you that you would work as a maid?”*

R: *“Yes, then she Schedule the trip. I went to her house, she dressed me up, and took me to the airport”. (CE).*

“She only told me that it would be with S who lives in..., it was S who took her, my daughter would be S' daughter's nanny.” (mother of DU).

“A invited me to Oiapoque. She called me to work as a nanny in her house”. (LA).

“I was invited by F, who dated the owner of a club there. She told me what the work was and what club I would be working for”. (RO).

“A friend of mine, H, will open a restaurant, and he needs a pretty waitress to work there”. (DI).

“She asked if I wanted to work in her restaurant in Surinam”. (DE).

“They said that I would work in Surinam, but prospecting for gold. I am here unemployed, not earning anything, and if I don't get used to it, I can leave.”. (MY)

The recruiter(s) visit the mothers many times and convince them. Migrating is, at the same time, a getaway and a possibility of creating/building a new identity. In search of



A trinationnal study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

a denied citizenship, they dress themselves up with the identity of a “migrant.” They believe foreigners like Brazilians because in Brazil the “gringos” treat them well.

This image of the Brazilian, however, does not sustain itself, in practice, in Surinam. To be a Brazilian migrant in Surinam is, according to Höffs (2006), finding yourself in a “plural society,” in which organization ethnical groups stand out, with stories of migration and of creating their own identities. They are Hindus, Creoles, Javanese, Maroons, Chinese, and American Indians that create and recreate their group identities, occupying certain parts and social spaces in Surinam.

There is a cultural tolerance among the groups that both make the inhabitants proud, plus naturalizes deep social inequalities. In order to integrate into this society, it is necessary to be part of one of these already formed groups, through matrimony, for example, or by stating an identity in a new group, within this conjuncture, at the example of what some Brazilian tradesmen do.

However, the Brazilians, as more recent migrants and connected to transitional activities, such as mining, are seen as a threat, both because of their number (estimated at 40 thousand, almost 10% of Surinam's total population), as well as because of their culture and religion (Latino), and their economic activity (mining).

The reflex of the presence of the Brazilians (the others, the foreigners) is discrimination, an explicit marginalization: “The Brazilians steal our gold” (THEIJE, 2007), translated, by 69% of the population, into a negative image about the Brazilians, according to an opinion survey carried out in 2007 (IDOS, 2007), with explicit testimonies posted on the “De Waterkant” discussion web sites, in which the Brazilians are associated to thieves or whores. It is also expressed by the “stories of Suriname wives that go public to defend their marriages that have been 'destroyed' by the Brazilian women.” (HÖFF, 2006, p. 49). The Brazilian women start to perceive their new identity as a “whore,” at an even greater distance from that of a citizen, as they had expected.

“Surinamese women, if they realize they are Brazilians, they will discriminate. In their view, every Brazilian women belongs to the clubs, they are all sex workers. They stare, they discriminate, they bad-talk. They think we don't understand the language...”

“They think we are going to take their men away from them. If they are with someone. 'When they (men) realize they are Brazilians, they go crazy for us

and the women don't like that. They get angry: Brazilian fuck up.” (RO).

“The Surinamese think we dress poorly and that we want to steal their husbands. They don't like us.” (MY).

“The Brazilian women are not well seen. The Suriname seem to feel anger towards them, think they are going to take away their men.” (MA).

“The women over there already look at us differently; they already know what we do there.” (AL).

“The Brazilian women are discriminated, like they are here. But, there it is much more. They think the Brazilians are thieves, both women and men. The kind of treatment is very rude, also towards the women. Suriname men like the girls, but they don't like the Brazilian girls to get involved with Brazilian men. The Brazilian men are thieves. They say: At least you deliver sex services and make money, but the Brazilian man is a thief, he's no good. We feel bad because we are Brazilians” (RO).

“Of course, there is discrimination over there against the Brazilians, it is sad, we are diminished.” (BE).

They notice the women's explicit discrimination and many times they feel accepted by the Suriname men (those they were trafficked for), which use and abuse of their power related to the fact that they are native men, to appear to be the saviors.

In some of the accounts, however, there is acknowledgment of how the position of Brazilian migrants is entirely marginalized from the society.

“But there are also problems because the foreigner does not respect the Brazilian. They don't look at you as women, they look at you as poor, as needy.” (MA).

“It is very bad to be in other people's country, we undergo a lot of humiliation there”. (RO)



6.6.2 Migrating to mining towns

Brazilian migration to the gold mines is different in Suriname. The operations also differ from the French Guyana, where the mines are open and administered by Brazilians and where they are persecuted by the French. In Suriname, the mines are administered by Surinamese who charge the Brazilian prospectors tax for working there, and for any economic activity taking place in the mines, including prostitution.

Besides taxes, the prospectors and the women are assaulted regularly when they return to the city with the gold they have prospected or earned. In other words, the prospectors and the commerce that goes with them are of great social and economic importance for a certain segment of the Surinamese community.

Stories of trafficking in women and adolescents around the gold mines of the Amazon are known (SILVA, 1997; DIMENSTEIN, 1992) and continue to occur (SASTRE, 2007). The situation in the mines of Suriname is no exception to this. However, it would be a mistake to believe that the migration of the prospectors brought with them the trafficking in women to Suriname.

Prospectors are often presented as dangerous, criminal elements. Defending the interests of the mining companies or indigenous territories, among other things, the prospectors were persecuted and expelled from many areas where they were working, and were even sent beyond the country's borders with Suriname, for instance.

Prostitution is another Brazilian contradiction and many prostitutes suffer historically from the persecution, marginalization and criminalization of their activity. Two “outlawed” activities meet in the middle of the forest, in the hands of small and medium-scale businessmen who exploit the labor in a tense relationship of negotiation and control. However, trafficking in women for prostitution in Suriname was not introduced with the increase in the number of mines. It already existed a long time ago, organized and controlled by Brazilians in Belem and by the Surinamese and Dutch in the cities of Paramaribo and Nickerie, with a focus on brothels. Contradictorily, with migration gravitating towards the mines, the social isolation of the Brazilian women in the clubs was broken by the presence of a Brazilian community, who offered the opportunity to earn money in the gold mines, run away and earn the money they dreamed of. The gold mines, which were synonymous with violence and exploitation, also became an el dorado for many women who were trafficked to the clubs. In the gold mines however, the recruiters have Brazilian names and the gold ends up in other people's hands.

“I went, but I didn't stay long there because there was a lot of stuff going

on. It was dangerous, and you could catch malaria. I thought it wasn't worth it.” (AL).

“So I went to another gold mine in Suriname and I met other people. That was where I met her father (the father of her daughter) and spent nine months with him. He was bad to me, he didn't let me go anywhere, so I ran away from him too. I ran away from the mine. I went shopping in the city. He had a canteen, and I ran away from him and have stayed away till today. He was going to give us a ride in his car but I left and he had no way to come after me.” (LA)

“I ran away from the club..”

“I went to the gold mine. It was good because we earned more, we earned gold. There, you could make in a week what you earned in a month in a club.” (LI)

“Today I wouldn't go back to the club. I'll go to the mine, but if I had other opportunities I wouldn't. There are girls who go two or three times to the club. It's crazy. The first time is fine if you don't know, but not after that. At the mine you are independent, it's much better. The other two times I went there. That's where I'll go this time, to the French mine. It's really good there. You can work independently.” (MA)

“When I realized that it wouldn't be possible to deposit money in Brazil every day, I decided to go to the gold mine. I managed to get some gold there, but then I was robbed. I didn't know how to keep the gold safe and my colleague who knew how didn't tell me. I actually think she is the one who robbed me. At the mine I met “I” (the father of the child she was expecting) who was already my client at the club. So I stayed with him, and was only his woman. He owns a gold prospecting machine. He beat me to get my gold, and took all of it.” (RO)

RO was working as a manicurist and stopped working as a prostitute because it didn't make sense, since her husband took all the gold she got. When she was asked about feeling humiliated or exploited, she said that she felt that way at the mine, very much so, and that she felt that way both with the clients and her husband.

“I think she didn't even spend two days there (at the mine). She came right back horrified at what she saw, in the middle of nowhere as she put it. She was afraid of those mosquitoes, you know? Because my daughter is very weak, anything happens and she gets like that, you know? That's how she felt.”



She said: “Mom that's the way it is... you can't even compare it to anything... I don't know how people manage to spend year after year, month after month there. I only went once and I will never go back there again.”

“She will never go back to the mine, God help me.” (NA's parents).

6.6.3 Undocumented migrants

A migrant who is in an irregular situation has no rights (health care, education etc.), which makes him or her a prime target for exploitation. Whoever lives as an irregular foreign migrant is condemned to live “informally”, with all of the violations that this implies. Upon arrival at their destination, the situation of vulnerability is inversely proportional to the support of social and family networks. The state of vulnerability is generally more serious when the foreign migrant, man or woman, has an economic dependent in their own country (10 out of 13 interviewed had children when they left the country).

Within this framework, the abandonment of their own family members and, often their own children can lead to feelings of guilt, frustration and defeat, for those who go, as well as for those who remain behind. This type of vulnerability especially affects the younger generation, which experiences migration without the possibility of participating in the decision-making processes that got them there in the first place. They also don't participate in the subsequent decisions of changing the migratory project, or implementing or bringing it to conclusion (LUSSI, 2007).

The foreign migrants' situation of vulnerability, especially those who are living in irregular situations, stems from the fact that they are living in a context where their fundamental rights such as health care, for example, are not at all recognized (LUSSI, 2007). The women working in the clubs are obligated to undergo periodic examinations to see if they have any sexually transmitted diseases. The women themselves pay for this obligatory service and when they get sick they have no right to be treated.

“It was even worse when a nurse was bad and she didn't like us, the Brazilian women. The girls complained when she examined them because she put that thing inside them forcefully, I don't know, like she was angry.” (LU).

“I paid for any medical service I needed. I got sick, I don't know if it was malaria or dengue, I only know that I was feeling really bad and I needed a doctor

and everything. I paid for the medical care but it was awful and really expensive. There isn't anything like you have here, the emergency room. If you needed medicine, you had to pay for it. A Dominican woman who was in the club helped me and was very nice to me. The Surinamese are not your friends. If you don't pay there is no way they will help you". (RO).

"Mom... I don't know, one day K had an accident, she fell and broke her foot and we took her to the hospital. Mom, it's so different here than in Brazil, I don't know.. it seems they don't care about people, even if we pay, almost as if we weren't worth it. I don't know." (mother of NA).

6.6.4 Resistance

The migrant is more vulnerable, and his/her spirit is more likely to be "broken" as he/she experiences his/her life as a migrant with great difficulty. It is a reality that he/she doesn't know or understand very well yet, and in which he/she still has very few personal, social and work relationships. He/she is very limited in this situation with regard to the possibilities of developing relationships and autonomy, as well as coping strategies, insertion and even survival in this new reality (LUSSI, 2007).

It is often the most courageous, the bravest and the physically strong individuals who choose to migrate. Stories of resistance take shape with their life stories and the social history of marginalized women in the Amazon: flight, relationship with the oppressors, small-scale revolt, but always alone, like in an individual revolution, without joining together with others in an organized resistance movement, and without the help of NGOs or other services. They are all alone, against the world.

"So I said: No one is going to make me do anything, not even take off my clothes to do a strip-tease for anybody. I won't do it."

"Look, sometimes when I ran away it was because I wanted to make them suffer, but they made me suffer. I ran away, I went to the clubs, I went to restaurants, I took a group along with me, so then they didn't have any women. I took a bunch of girls, we went to the supermarket, we went out a different exit to another street, but we didn't know that the whole thing was theirs so when we got there, they already know where we were." (DI).

"Sometimes I was sick. I didn't eat and I cried a lot, so he said that I had to work even if I was sick. I said that I wasn't going to work like that. The owner came into the room, sent in the security guards, and I defied them, I'm no weakling and I said: You can beat me, but when I'm sick I'm not going. But they forced me."



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

“One day R wasn't there and they would clean the disco at about four in the afternoon so that it would be ready at seven in the evening. I called a friend and asked her to help get me out and she came at three and picked me up.” (CE).

“I ran away. While you were there, you had to go every month and get a stamp at migration. So one time, I asked for my passport. I said I was going to migration to have it stamped and they gave it to me. So I took advantage and I ran away. I didn't take anything with me. I left everything at the club.” (BE).

“I ran away from the mine. I went shopping in the city. He had a canteen and I ran away from him and stayed away until today. He had arranged to give us a ride and I left and he had no way of catching me.” (LA).

“I fought a lot in the club. I demanded my rights and I sent a lot of girls to the police too. I fought with the manager. I wasn't feeling well and asked if I could go to my room. She didn't want to give me the key. She said I just had to work like that, feeling sick. I said that I couldn't and she took a \$200 fine and was going to take another 200 if I wanted to go out. I called my friend at immigration. I had friends, I knew how to get in and how to get out. I took the key from her and ran away. I went to the police and then they had to let me go. (MA)

“At the club, there was a Brazilian boatman who saw that I was very sad. He said to me I don't want anything from you: I just want to talk to you. So I was happy and I went upstairs with him and he said: The boat is going to leave here in 10 days. If you want I'll take you with me, only you have to leave everything and you can't say a word to anyone. He charged me US\$150 and said, 'Look at times like these, you have to forget your friends, so don't tell anybody.' ” (BE)

Anyone who is living as a foreigner in a place where they weren't born feels twice as lonely: they are estranged both from their culture and from people they can socialize with, and with whom they share this culture. This situation alone makes them very vulnerable, especially with regard to the physical and psychological integrity of the mobile person (LUSSI, 2007).

This condition becomes more acute in the case of women who are in a situation of trafficking. If in the case of the average migrant, the effort to be inserted in the community does not occur without tension and conflicts, what can be said of the image and stereotyping of Brazilian women in Suriname? Trafficked, prostituted, illegal. What is their space and their status as defined by them or to which they can aspire? Brazilian

community in the country which, in an effort to build up a positive image and establish themselves as an ethnic group, they cannot assume any connection with representatives from the stereotypical low class Brazilian. They epitomize a poor image which the Brazilian immigrant community is struggling to free themselves of.

6.7 HOW TO FULLY RESIST AND FIGHT THE PROBLEM

6.7.1 Understanding in order to fight

Initially, combating trafficking in people reflects a political position or will not to accept any violation of the rights of people who are made vulnerable from and by trafficking in people.

Based on this position, one must define and implement strategies that are then translated into public policies and services. Although the trafficking to Suriname is widely publicized and denounced, there is very little specific knowledge about it at Governmental level.

Although the families involved try to resist exploitation, their success will depend on the effectiveness of the responses of organized civil society and the government, very few of which have translated into positive experiences.

For people to resist trafficking, it must be recognized as a crime, and they must see themselves as targets of trafficking. The problem with trafficking in people probably has to do with the fact that the victims do not see themselves as having rights.

The women talk about the logic behind trafficking, according to which the victim's consent would disqualify it from being considered a crime in violation of his/her rights. In fact, although they acknowledge the existence of trafficking in people, they don't see themselves as targets, since they agreed to go, made their own decisions etc.

Only those women who accessed some type of assistance or service (Federal Police, participation in prevention programs) acknowledged that they were the victims of trafficking. Most would not denounce or collaborate spontaneously with any process against trafficking in people. The first step in fighting the problem would be in an awareness-raising campaign for those who are targeted for trafficking.

P: "Do you know what trafficking in people means?"

R: "No". (CE)

"I don't think that it really exists because if a person proposes a job to you



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

outside of the country, you know what you are going to do there. You may not know exactly what you are going to do but you can just imagine how it will be, and that it is like a normal job, from Monday to Saturday, with Sundays off.” (AL).

P: “Do you think that what happened to you was trafficking?”

R: “No, I don't think of it like that, I went because I wanted to and because I thought it would be ok.”

P: “Do you think that there is trafficking in Belem, Para, Brazil?”

R: “Yes I think so, I saw it on television.” (AD).

P: “Did you feel that you were the victim of trafficking in people?”

R: “Yes.” (BE)

“I have already been trafficked. You leave your country to be exploited, only you have no idea. And you feel like you are living at the time of slavery, being sold and shipped from one place to another. You don't have your own will anymore. But we are fighting this, so that no more Brazilian women will be exploited.”

“There are victims and recruiters. It goes even further than that. These are people who have been tricked. The prostitutes are not victims. They know what they are getting into. They are going in search of a dream, to earn more money. They know that they are going to pay for it. The prostitutes know. Many go because they want to, because they like it. But there are others who go and don't know what they are getting into. In my opinion, those are the ones who are trafficked. No one has money to have a better future. Those who go and know what is going on, they go because they like it. They are not trafficked, they are enslaved, that's different. There are slaves and there are those who are trafficked.” (DI - participant in the program for the prevention of trafficking in people).

“I was 14 (2005) when I went to Suriname. I was the victim of trafficking.” (LA – rescued from trafficking in Suriname and testifying in a trial against a network of Brazilian traffickers).

P: “Did you ever hear of trafficking in people?”

R: “Yes, it's when people are taken somewhere under false pretences.”

P: *“Do you feel that you were a victim of trafficking in people?”*

R: *“No, because I knew what I was doing.”*

(MY)

“In the case of NA, do you think that she was the victim of trafficking?”

“No, I think she went because she wanted to, she went of her own free will...She already knew how it was there ... it would be another story if someone had forced her to go, and she had said “I don't know what it's like there...” (NA's parents).

“I think trafficking exists, mainly in Suriname. But I don't feel that I was a victim of trafficking. I have a friend who is with a Brazilian guy now who got her out of the club. But she was tricked. I wasn't.” (RO)

6.7.2 How to deal with trafficking in people

The women interviewed say that the government has to get involved in combating trafficking. Some of them acknowledge that this would initiate a move towards guaranteeing social public policies.

“If they had another job, other options, they wouldn't go.” (RO)

“I think that if the government would try harder, and would give young people more chances, that type of thing, there would be less people involved in trafficking, don't you think? That's what I think because, look, a girl who is going to turn 17 or 18 years old, a junior in high school, where is she going to work?” (NA's parents).

They talk about the steps that need to be taken to deal with trafficking in people, something that requires a thorough and extensive intervention since it has to do with organized crime.

“It is like crystal, one needs to be very careful to mess with importante people.” (DI)

“One person alone can't do anything. More people have to get involved, the government, NGOs, Federal Police and women, and it requires a lot of will power.” (DI)



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

Although this is a social problem, one way to help deal with it is by raising awareness. It seems that the economic and social problems that motivate the women to risk migrating (temporarily) would be less critical if they had concrete information and contact with people who could inform them of the conditions and type of work that they are getting into once they are out there.

“When you find out that someone is going to be travelling, sit down and talk to them about the situation outside of the country.” (DI)

“It would be good to talk to Brazilian women to see which countries they are going to work in, to give them more information. Because in Fortaleza, for example, there are a lot of foreigners who invite them to go with them back to their country, but once they get there, they become a different person. Here they treat us well.” (GL).

“Through information, campaigns, courses.” (MY).

“I think something must be done to prevent girls from falling into this trap. Those who want to go should know what they are getting into, but they should not be tricked into going.” (RO).

With regard to prevention, they want the police to take a position, showing that something can be done both at the place of departure and at the destination. They also stress the necessity of oversight and inspections, with humanity and without constraint.

“They should arrest those people. Because they seem to do it because they think that they can get away with it so they continue to do it. I haven't been in contact with anyone lately, I only know that she ran away.” (LA)

“Start outside the country, with the Brazilian consulate and law enforcement officers. That is where trafficking has to be fought, they need lawyers, they need police. They need to investigate. You are there in a foreign country, no one is there for you, you have no support. I had a colleague who went to Suriname and they killed her. They were from Loc (club). They raped her and beat her because she didn't want to turn tricks because their penises are very big. So she died. No one did anything, it just happened, just like Caiena, they mistreated us here in my country too and the government didn't do anything.” (LU)

“I think that the Federal Police should have asked what the girls were going to do, and should have investigated. If it was prostitution, they should have

checked the conditions under which they were going. Here, the Federal Police asks us what we are going to do. If we are going to turn tricks we lie and say that we are going to a friend's house who is waiting for us. The person who takes us already told us what to say.” (RO)

“The Federal Police has to do something, they need to have more control, but without constraint. It's very sad, it's a real shame. The control has to be when leaving the country, setting up a team in a room to talk to the person who is going.” (BE)

The Federal Police suggests taking action.

“For example, if a person applies for a passport, the Federal Police has no way of refusing them. Once they come to pick it up, we can interview them, and figure out whether they have the means to travel abroad, but we cannot refuse them a passport. Based on that information, this person can be accompanied and investigated. At the airport, the Federal Police can do this with people who are traveling, in order to prevent this type of crime. This is done principally through denouncements and information that gets to the desk of the Federal Police before the person in question leaves the country. Because today, most of the time, we take more action once they have already left the country. If we had this information ahead of time, we could do something while they are still in the country, which would help to prevent this type of crime. We could weed them out when they first apply for a passport. We could analyze the condition of that person, since they are a suspect. If she is being taken overseas to be a victim of a sexual crime for example, we can already do some pre-sorting. Once we have a suspect, we start to investigate the case in question. We do the sorting together with the policeman, who can verify, from the person's record, what her situation is. If the place where she is headed has a great incidence of this type of crime, such as Suriname or Spain for example... If this person is unemployed, one can find out who is paying for her trip..” (Federal Police)

6.7.3 Experiences of the services

The women's experiences with government services were generally frustrating. Only the Jepiara program's prevention and legal assistance services were mentioned twice as a reference, although they have had only a limited effect.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

“Here in Belem I only saw it once, there in the bar and they gave the information in a little pouch like they said. I took it and put it away. I still have it...”

P: “Does anyone in the group use the pouch?”

“No, but that colleague of mine, I was thinking of asking them to try to find her.” (GI).

“The only person who still comes here is that lawyer from the Center for the defense of the child and adolescent. When there is a hearing she comes.” (LA).

Out of all the services, the Federal Police stands out as the agency with which the women have had the most contact. Experiences differ tremendously. Two mothers, who strongly believed that their daughters had been trafficked and who had specific information about the recruiter sought help from the Federal Police. In both situations, they got no response.

The Federal Police, which did not use the information given, (telephone numbers, names, addresses, and other information) sent the families back home to wait. It is interesting to compare this information with the interviews with the Federal Police, who were dismissive of the families' searches. Their talks were fruitless.

“I went to the police station several times. I went back to the Federal Police to see Commissioner S., who told me that I should be patient and said that she was over 18. We'll see what can be done. So I went to her house (the recruiter) again and said that if she didn't give me back my daughter I'd burn her house down. My daughter had fallen into their trap. So she finally managed to come back, without the help of the Federal Police. It was God's help (BE's mother).”

“No, I didn't want to go there (to the Federal Police after she came back) because it's one big plot and it doesn't help.” (BE)

“She didn't say anything. They are part of her mafia, S's family (the recruiter). She gave a number, but no one ever answered and the number doesn't exist. I think that the Federal Police is not doing a good job. We already told them the telephone number and address of S and they didn't do anything. Couldn't they trace her? Especially since S says that she speaks to this girl on the telephone.” (Mother of DU – who disappeared in Suriname).

“The main denunciations that we have here are from relatives, from mothers who come here once the daughter is already gone, and is already over there. And she has nothing, she doesn't have a person's name, telephone number, the name of a place where the recruiter took her, where one can find her. It is all very vague. What happens in most cases is that the mother comes here, generally when she is totally desperate, once she has already lost contact with the daughter since a while, or if the daughter makes some contact from abroad but she is already over there. What we can do in this case is alert Interpol. And Interpol can do something in the country of destination. They can try to free her from the claws of these gangs. But once she has been freed, the gang disperses. Then it becomes much more difficult to arrest them. We need to have this information ahead of time.” (Federal Police).

In another situation, the family and the victims were only used as informants and had no idea that they were part of a process of defending their rights.

“No. I was hoping she would come back. When she arrived, I don't know how, but the Federal Police went directly to the house after her. So she had to tell them everything, but I don't know if that was the report they filed, I don't know. They went to the house twice, the first time was to hear the story and the second time to point out her house. So I sent my D (nephew) and the Federal Police.” (Mother of CE).

There are some women who say that the Federal Police treated them well, and that they felt at ease and protected, which comes out in their conversations. This is different than their conversations with the judge, where one woman felt worthless.

“I went there to work at one thing, but I ended up doing something else. At the Federal Police Department they said that a lot of the prostitutes would be deported. I was relieved when I saw it in the paper and the Federal Police said that nothing would happen to me. The officer asked me to accompany him. I got desperate but he was polite. We just went into a room and talked.” (MY)

“The judge was talking a lot of nonsense. He said 'And now everyone is going to the airport'. They asked us a lot of questions, which lasted almost eight hours, one after the other. The judge talked a lot of nonsense. He said that I was lying. I said that I was telling the truth and that I had a right to say what I



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

wanted. He was really mean. I was upset because he said that I could be locked up there, but I was just telling the truth.” (MY).

The operations of the Federal Police do not correspond to the discussions with regard to the problems of conducting an inquiry, nor in the help offered to the women.

1. The investigation is limited to Belem and does not seek to investigate transnational trafficking. It seems that they use the same type of investigation that is applied to drug trafficking. Finding drugs on someone is a material crime. But to find a woman who has taken off...
2. Although the two reports that were filed and discussed above provided a wealth of information, they did not result in any investigation. When women are involved in an inquiry and they were not the ones who made the denunciation they are not always duly informed of its status. These inquests are carried out based on a tip or due to the diligence of specific police officers.

The tremendous turnover of the police officers within the Federal Police force, which was already seen in Pestraf (HAZEU 2003), hinders the continuity of the inquiry and seems to be the real reason for the limited investigations, in addition to the complex materiality of the crime which is investigated only at the exit point.

“Perhaps part of the problem is the lack of communication, and not knowing who they are looking for. You came here, but up until then I didn't know your organization. And we are also on the road a lot. You might come here one day and speak to me. The next time you come, you speak to someone else. Our lack of manpower is also a hindrance from that point of view, mind you, not just from that point of view but from every point of view.” (Federal Police).

The only testimony of the way people were dealt regarding the experience of trafficking in people shows the complete lack of preparedness of the services and the network for helping women. One must bear in mind that at least two families were seeking help from the Federal Police and the four other women interviewed appeared as if they were victims of the judicial process.

“When I arrived I stayed three months in the hostel with an awful woman who didn't let me do anything. I didn't have any help or assistance. They arranged for us to go there, but we went and didn't manage to get anything done. We had no

money and no bus ticket so we didn't go anymore. It is hard to get a medical examination and there is no ticket, so I'm not going back. When I was in the hostel there was a psychologist.”

“They asked if I wanted to go into the protection program. But I didn't want to. Because it was only two years and then what? If they had at least offered me a job so that I could work, right? But they didn't offer anything and after two years, the contract would be up and where would I go? What would I do? There was one girl who accepted and when the two years were up she didn't have anywhere to go so she went back to the hostel. She was back there again.” (LA).

You need a lot of strength to “survive this type of fight,” which doesn't seem to affect the trafficking in people networks and is even less of a reference for the women who were interviewed. Information (for government workers as well as for the vulnerable segment of the population), qualification of the women's care network, concrete actions, specific and intelligent prevention strategies, supervision and punishment, the formal engagement of the state which has kept their distance from the victims and their families, all this continues to be of great necessity and at the same time, a huge gap, when dealing with trafficking in people.

So, the necessary question is: What kind of country is this that condemns part of its population to subject themselves to such degrading life situations in other countries? What type of life do these people have in their own country?

Objections and complaints as to the action the state has taken in fulfilling its affirmative role, in the promotion of public policies that guarantee quality of life and the dignity of people must be voiced here. Individuals should not have to submit themselves to situations where they abdicate their rights and their dignity as human beings, in their attempt to survive.

Any condition or alternative to combating this problem should be sure to guarantee access to “warehouses where the necessary tools are stored: good schooling and many options and possibilities.” (SARTI, 2005).

Would be an exaggeration to say that the state is the number one violator?

It is necessary, although quite common, to insist on the necessity of development policies that take into consideration the quality of life of the poor population, and social



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

policies that guarantee access to goods and services. The discussion about migration policies and hypocrisy should be approached in all seriousness to eliminate the prejudices and the moralistic vision that has permeated the actions for combating trafficking in people. This has prevented women from being effectively seen as individuals with rights.

7

Dominican Republic





A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

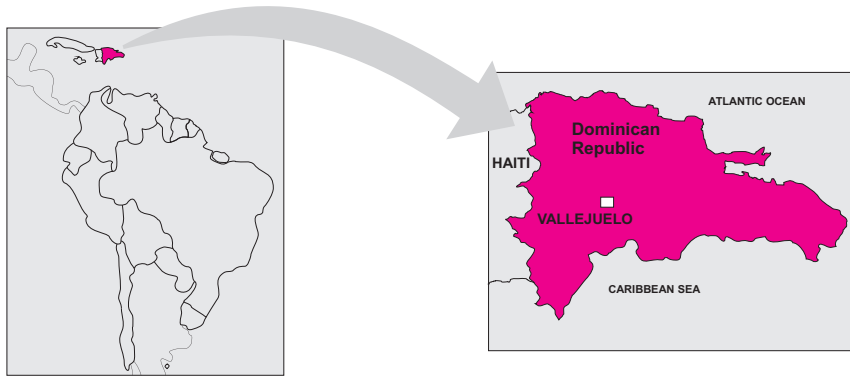


Fig. 3: Dominican republic

Area	48,734 km ² wikipedia
Population density	201/km ²
GDP	US\$ 89,740 million (IMF, 2007)
Remittances from abroad	13.3% of the GDP (2006) (World Bank, 2006)
Inhabitants	9.365.818 (census 2001)
Minimum wage	200 dollars
Child Labor	48,000 children and adolescents, 66% sleep in the house where they work (INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, 2004)
Early pregnancy	Between 25 and 30 % of the births registered in the Dominican Republic are those of adolescents (EMBARZAOS, 2006)
Families headed by women	40% of the families
HDI	0,779 (wikipedia)
Foreign debt	US\$7,266.12 million 23.2% of the GDP (2006) (Ministry of Finance, 2007)
National debt	US\$1,113.06 = 3.6% of the GDP (Secretary of Finance, 2007)
Languages	Spanish (French and Creole)
Religions	Catholic (95%)

Table 6: Information about the Dominican Republic

7.1 CONTEXT IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic is located in the center of the Caribbean, in the archipelago of the Greater Antilles. It shares the island of Santo Domingo with the Republic of Haiti. Its area is 48,442.23 km² and it has a population of 8,562,541 inhabitants, 4,265,215 of which are men and 4,297,326 are women, based on the last census taken in 2002 (National Office of Statistics, 2003). The estimated population in 2007 was 9,365,818 people (Central Intelligence Agency, 2007).

The Dominican Republic is a developing country, whose economy depends on agriculture, remittances, tourism and its duty free zones. At the present time, tourism brings in over a million dollars and it is calculated that the remittances sent to the Dominican Republic by Dominicans who live in the United States, Europe and Puerto Rico, is over two million dollars.

The service sector is the main generator of employment, a result of the growth in tourism and the duty free zones. The minimum wage is about \$200 per month. However, employees in the formal sector earn less than \$90 per month. In fact, 1.2 million people (13.1% of the population) live in extreme poverty and the rate of unemployment is 16.5%. Women are more prevalent in the informal sector and are the heads of households in over 40% of the households. Part of Dominican reality is accelerated urban growth and a high rate of illiteracy.

The country's GDP grew 8% in 2007. Despite the great economic growth that the country has been experiencing over the past 50 years, the national rate of human development according to the United Nations Development Program (PNUD, 2005), confirms that “the character of exclusion of the economic model thus far has not transformed itself into any benefit in favor of the population.” In 2002, the country was in 13th place (out of 177) on the list of countries that had least improved their Human Development Index (IDH). In 2006, it was in 94th place.

On the other hand, the Dominican Republic is one of those countries with the highest level of corruption in the world, with a grade of 3.0 (99th place) in the rate of perception of corruption (TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL, 2007), which measures the degree of corruption in the eyes of business people and analysts from all over the world. The number 10 is considered “highly transparent” and zero is “highly corrupt”. Corruption has a direct impact on two variables regarding the question of trafficking in people: vulnerability and a low rate of denunciations of trafficking, with the consequent challenge of quantifying the number of victims. This in turn favors the trafficking in people networks.



7.2 MIGRATION

The Dominican Republic, with its geopolitically strategic location, and excellent touristic conditions, is a country with a substantial migratory history. Outside the country it is publicized as a “land of beaches, sun, *merengue* and beautiful women.” That is why every year millions of European, Canadian, North American and other tourists flock there from North America and the Caribbean. These characteristics, in addition to the socio-economic factors, make the country vulnerable to sexual tourism, migrant smuggling and trafficking in people.

“There is no country on earth that has not been affected by migration” (INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION, 2005) and the Dominican Republic is still far from being an exception: 73% of the Dominican population is a mixture of European and African descent, 11% principally of African and 16% of European and Arab descent (Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians etc.) (CONVENCION, 2007). Among the minorities there are Chinese, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Dutch, Italians, Americans, Haitians and Dominico-Haitians.

Haitians, who share the island of Santo Domingo with the Dominicans, make up the principal minority group due to their precarious socioeconomic situation. The non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch estimates a presence of 500,000 Haitians (or 6% of the population), “many Haitians are illegal immigrants, others were born in the country and some are legal immigrants.”

In this way, the Dominican culture is the result of a mix of various ethnic groups, nationalities and cultures, a consequence of the different migrations and Spanish, French, Haitian and U.S. military occupations.

According to the anthropologist Tahira Vargas (2007), it is present in our ethnic, social and cultural make up, and is thus known as a people that is part of all of our history [...] this can be confirmed from the religious and linguistic aspects, as well as the food, the music, the dances, the family structure and the types of social relationships, among other factors.

The Dominicans' official language is Spanish and the religion is Catholicism – with a Hispanic influence. One can also perceive this linguistic-religious influence in their music, choreography and instruments. The African slave's greatest influence, however can be observed in the music, dance and instruments. Among the latter, we should mention the *palos*, the *gaga* etc. On the other hand, what also stands out is the African, Christian and

West Indian influences, with their magical-religious beliefs among Dominicans “who maintain syncretic traces of animistic religions.” Time, the most important cultural holidays are carnival and the saints' days, which are dedicated to the patron saints.

The migratory dynamic of the Dominican Republic first began in 1961. After 1979 it started to take on characteristics of massive migration. Between the 60s and 80s, the migration of Dominicans abroad was led by men. The end of the dictatorship of Trujillo brought favorable political changes to the opening up of migratory movements, whose principal destination was the United States, a country that offers tremendous diversity and better work conditions.

To this day the United States continues to be the predominant destination for Dominican migration. Today the Dominicans form the fourth largest Latin group in the United States of America, after Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans.

Intra-regional Dominican migration is also still considerable and has even increased, especially to Puerto Rico. In the year 2000, Dominicans in Puerto Rico made up 56.1% of the immigrants present on the island, working mainly in the service sector. Many also work in coffee farming.

Starting in the 1980s, the Dominican migration became more “feminine”, especially in the direction of Europe and the Caribbean. Migration to Europe truly started to increase at the end of the 1980s. The Spanish census of 2001 registered 31,582 Dominicans. The 2007 registry for the inhabitants of the Spanish municipalities already mentions 64,422 Dominicans (NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS, 2001, 2007).

Italy became the second most important destination. In the 2001 census, 11,222 Dominicans were registered in that country. There are records of the presence of Dominicans also in Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Greece, Germany and Austria among other countries. However, this openness has been limited over the past years due to the European Community's process of integration and the closing of the borders, obliging the women to diversify paths of entry into these countries, and therefore making the most of the migratory networks.

Over the past few years, Argentina, Costa Rica and Brazil have been identified as new destinations in Latin America. Other countries on the list include Lebanon, Israel and Japan. There is also currently an increase of migration activity towards other countries in the Caribbean. There are data to substantiate a Dominican presence in Curacao, Aruba,



A trinationnal study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

San Martin, Dominica, French Guyana, Suriname, Antigua, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Trinidad. Another destination is Haiti, a neighboring country where it is easy to cross the border. The existence of traffickers, who offer jobs that are paid in dollars, stimulates the recruitment of women for this country.

According to information from COIN, there has been an increase in the number of Dominicans migrating to French Guyana and Suriname. A great number of women who were contacted in these countries confirm having gone to Suriname, thinking they were going to Holland or Spain, but were soon left to their own devices or sold to brothels in Suriname. A similar situation was observed in Antigua and Dominica. In both countries, there was a great number of young Dominicans who got there through trafficking networks, with job offers, and afterwards were sold to clubs. Others arrived after irregular migration, with the hope of using these countries as transit points on the way to Europe.

Along similar lines, a great number of Dominican women reside in Guadeloupe and Martinique. To first get to Guadeloupe, they use different migratory routes: they either go directly from Santo Domingo to Guadeloupe or from Dominica to Guadeloupe. Many of them are sexually exploited or work in the sex trade temporarily for lack of other options. Unlike other countries in the Caribbean, there are many indications that Guadeloupe is a destination for Dominican women, as it offers better work conditions.

In Haiti, many Dominican women work in beauty salons while others work in brothels. Some arrive independently and others get there through organized trafficking rings that operate in both countries.

7.3 SMUGGLING AND TRAFFICKING IN DOMINICAN WOMEN

The situation with regard to migration in the Dominican Republic is rather peculiar: it is tri-dimensional. A country with a long history of migration, people transit through there on their way to the United States and Europe. It is a destination for Haitians, Cubans, Chinese, Venezuelans and Colombians.

Illegal and clandestine migration has increased, as has the smuggling of migrants. Besides the number of travelers detained in the United States there is also information from the Dominican Naval Office, from frustrated journeys, and constant reports of travelers who have been shipwrecked and/or disappeared, especially those on small boats heading for Puerto Rico. Cases that are part of the lucrative transnational business of smuggling migrants and trafficking in women for the transnational sex trade are on the rise both in the Caribbean and in Europe.

In the Dominican Republic, the smuggling of people and trafficking in people are closely linked, especially in the case of women. The conditions in both phenomena are generally the same, but the consequences are not. The difference lies in the violation of human rights that is inherent to the trafficking in people.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that the Dominican Republic is among the top 10 countries with the highest number of women abroad, or the fourth country with the highest number of women working in the international sex trade, right after Thailand, The Philippines and Brazil.

About 200,000 Dominican women live overseas. At least a third of these migrant Dominican women who live in Europe, the Caribbean or in different countries of Latin America have been the victims of trafficking for domestic labor, forced marriages or sexual exploration. Most of these women leave their country with the promise of lucrative work, unaware of the conditions of exploitation and coercion to which they will be subjected by the traffickers once they arrive at their destination (INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION, 2001).

There are different ways of recruiting women who are targeted for trafficking in people:

Existen diferentes formas de reclutamiento de las mujeres objeto de Trata:

- Offers for contracts to work in the service sector (domestic labor, nannies, caregivers for the elderly);
- Offers for contracts as dancers in night clubs, or as waitresses or models;
- Arranged marriages with foreigners, which almost always end up being forced marriages;
- Networks of families and friends;
- Announcements in local newspapers and on the Internet.

Quantifying the cases of trafficking in people in the Dominican Republic is an arduous task, just like in other countries. This is mainly due to the clandestine nature of those who operate in the sex trade, as well as the absence of denunciations on the part of the victims and registered cases on the part of the authorities. The cases are considered simple deportations.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

There are no reliable statistics that can gauge the magnitude of the problem. However, known cases indicate that many women are victims of violence and labor exploitation on the part of traffickers and employers. Sometimes they also suffer violence and ill treatment on the part of the police or those working in migration.

The risk factors of trafficking in women are common in all countries and have been identified in different occupations. Some of the factors that play a role in the increase of trafficking in Dominican women are: the interest and will to migrate combined with major restrictions on the regular migration of the poorest segments (a consequence of the increasing inequality between countries); the foreign demand for women for “female work”; and the existence of trafficking networks and recruiters.

Added to this is the lack of information on the serious conditions of human rights violations of the women who are targets of trafficking (especially in forced prostitution, a reflection of the unequal relationship of power between genders). The lack of adequate enforcement of existing laws is also a contributing factor. Such laws, when applied to traffickers and recruiters, should have a dissuasive effect and prevent this crime from occurring.

Although the focus on and the treatment of the topic “trafficking in people and smuggling” has improved over the past few years, it is still tinged with sensationalism, especially in cases that involve Haitians, who remain longer at the center of the public debate. The vague and confused terminology “irregular migration”, “human smuggling” and “trafficking in people” also continues to be used. It gives the impression there is no internal trafficking in Dominican women and that trafficking only occurs due to forced prostitution. It is very common to hear the old and outdated term “white trafficking”, when dealing with the topic, including on television. The focus has centralized and concentrated on the victims based on an individualistic perspective, paying little to no attention to the actual sex trade, the network of traffickers and the actions that are limited to the State, in an effort to combat trafficking in people and smuggling. In the research report of the Institucionalidad y Justicia Foundation (VILLAYERDE, 2006), on the presence of the topic in the Dominican written press, there is reference to a case of 50 Dominican women who were trafficked, with the promise to go to Holland and Switzerland, but who were taken instead to Suriname in January 2006.

7.3.1. Gender, sexuality and trafficking in women in the Dominican Republic

Gender is a social construction that establishes the roles that men and women should play in a particular society. It makes reference to the sexual dichotomy that is imposed socially through roles or stereotypes, due to which the two sexes see each other as being diametrically opposed. The gender differences are shown through roles assumed by

the woman and by the man in a specific society. This includes the analysis of the relationship of power between the two sexes.

Traditionally, in the Dominican society, just like in other patriarchal societies, the man has been taught to play the public and productive role, while the woman remains in the private and reproductive one. This reality places the woman at a disadvantage and in an inferior position compared to the man. Consequently, the mother is more affected by poverty, has little access to power and decision making, handles an excessive amount of work, and has little right to and control of economic resources.

One of the expressions of this situation of female subordination in our society is the violence against the female gender (ill treatment, rape, murder), of which hundreds of women and girls are victims every year in our country. In 2006, over 12,000 cases of intra-familiar violence were registered, and over 150 women were murdered.

Social changes are reflected in the roles they play, and women have been motivated to integrate into new socio-economic structures and existing policies. They participate in the different strategies that generate economic entries, harmonizing this with reproductive work at home, all in all carrying a much heavier load than the men. Many men, on the other hand, maintain sexual relations with different women outside of the home and spend money on alcoholic beverages and gambling.

Consequently, the woman has increasingly to be the economic backbone of the family. This is one of the main reasons why women chose to migrate.

An investigation carried out by the Aqualarre Center for Support (LUCIANO, 2005), entitled “Drugs, violence and trafficking: A perverse triangle”, confirms that besides economic motives, the partner's violence plays an important part in the Dominican women's decision to migrate.

7.4 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION

According to the constitution “the Dominican Republic recognizes and applies the standards of general international and American rights, in the measure that public power has adopted them” (article 3, paragraph 2). The treaties, conventions and other instruments of international standards, once they are approved by the Parliament and duly promulgated and sanctioned, are considered above adjectival laws and regulations. And since this hierarchy is conferred by the constitution as the primary and fundamental law, the international standard has the same authority if it doesn't contradict it, which is why the sanction, in cases of violation, must be the same. In other words the hierarchical order is as follows:



- A) Constitution of the Republic
- B) Treaties, conventions and international standards
- C) Laws and regulations.

7.4.1 International Legal Framework

Convention of the United Nations against organized transnational crime and protocols

The preponderant instrument used with regard to trafficking in people is the United Nations convention against organized transnational crime and its complementary protocol. This convention was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on November 15th, 2000 through resolution A/RES/55/25. Its first complementary protocol is against the illicit smuggling of migrants via land, sea or air. The second complementary protocol is known as the “Palermo Protocol” whose goal is to:

- a) Prevent and combat trafficking in people, with special emphasis on women and children;
- b) Protect and help victims of trafficking, fully respecting their human rights;
- c) Promoting cooperation between participating countries to achieve this goal.

The American Convention on Human Rights

The American Convention on Human Rights, the San Jose pact of November 22nd, 1969, which was signed by the government of the Dominican Republic in 1977 and ratified on January 21st, 1978, is one of the foundations of the inter-American system of human rights protection. This convention obliges the countries to “respect the rights and freedoms recognized in it and guarantee the free and full exercise of those rights to every person subject to its jurisdiction, with no discrimination”, and will also add legislative or other measures, should it be necessary. It specifies the organizations that deal with the issues related to their area of expertise: The inter-American commission and the court of human rights.

Given that the State is part of the convention, if one or many people who are victims of trafficking do not receive the necessary attention in terms of legal matters to defend their rights, the commission would be responsible for examining the request presented, always when the facts alleged refer to an established law from the convention cited. The court case of Velasquez Rodriguez against Honduras (Costa Rica, 1989),

contains an important interpretation with respect to the acts committed by individuals in the sense that it establishes a principle of complicity and recognizes the responsibility of the state with regard to the non-compliance of its obligations as related to human rights (Costa Rica, 1987).

The Convention of Belém do Pará

The inter-American convention to prevent, sanction and eradicate violence against women, commonly known as the “Convention of Belem do Para”, was adopted on June 9th, 1994, and ratified by Brazil on November 27th, 1995 and by the Dominican Republic on March 7th, 1996. This convention recognizes the following as cases of violence against women: trafficking in people, torture, forced prostitution and kidnapping, among others.

7.4.2 National legal framework

Constitution of the Republic

The *magna carta* establishes the respect to the individual and social rights, recognizing as the State's responsibility the effective protection of human rights and the maintenance of the means that enable this to be improved progressively within the order of social justice, such as Law 137-03. (Dominican Republic 2005, p. 39, Art.8).

The constitution is currently being revised and among the proposals is that of the “Women's Forum for Constitutional Reform”, which would focus on gender and human rights.

Law 137-03

The Dominican Republic, which is different from most Latin American countries, has a law against smuggling and the illicit trafficking in migrants. Law number 137-03, on the illicit smuggling and trafficking in migrants was enforced on August 7, 2003.

In this law, in article 3, the crime of trafficking in people is considered:

The capture, transport, transfer, receipt of people, children, adolescents, women, through the use of threats, force, abduction, fraud, trickery, abuse of power, situations of vulnerability, concession or receipt of payment or benefits to obtain the consent of a person who has authority over the other, using them for begging, sexual exploitation, pornography, forced labor or service, debt repayment, forced marriage, irregular adoption, slavery or similar, servitude or the extraction of organs, all with the consent of the victim. (Dominican Republic, 2005, p. 36, Art. 3).



The following are also punishable for the illicit smuggling of migrants:

An action that promotes, induces, obligates, finances land, sea or air transport, or collaborating in any way in illicitly bringing to or taking out of the country, either as a destination or an origin, or to transit to another country, without obeying the legal requisite, with the finality of obtaining, directly or indirectly a financial or other kind of benefit for oneself or for others. (Ibid., p. 35, Art. 2).

According to Law 137-03, the sentence for illicitly smuggling migrants is 10-15 years of imprisonment and a fine no less than 150 and no greater than 250 minimum salaries (approx. 1,818 US 1 x 33). The penalty for trafficking in people is 15 to 20 years in prison and fines of 175 minimum salaries (approx. 2,121 dollars). The same law also establishes special sanctions for people with a civil status. An attempt will be dealt with the same way as an actual occurrence (Ibid., p. 38, Art. 5), and complicity will be punished with the same penalty as the others (Ibid., p. 38, Art. 6). The victim's cooperation is considered an “exonerating” cause (Ibid., p. 39, Art. 8). On the other hand, it establishes an appellant of five years on top of the causal penalty for an aggravating circumstance. In the case of the victim's death, physical or psychological permanent or temporary trauma, participation of a civil servant, a member of the armed forces or the national police; national or transnational organized crime, plurality of victims, a mentally handicapped victim or a minor (less than 18 years old); a spousal, conniving or relation of the accused, reoccurrence; falsification of documents or furnishing of them” (Ibid., p. 38, Art. 7).

This law, which came into being with the collaboration of civil society, has a holistic nature and focuses on human rights, in such a way that it includes actions for assisting and protecting the victim (Ibid., p. 40, Art. 9-11). However, actions relative to legal assistance, physical care, both psychological and social, social reinsertion (adequate housing, medical attention, access to education, capacity building and job opportunities) and confidentiality in the legal processes still leave much to be desired on the part of the Dominican authorities. It is especially necessary to establish by law a guarantee that “the State, through the corresponding institutions, will protect the privacy and identity of the victim of trafficking in people, ensuring the confidentiality of any legal actions” and the specific enforcement of fines established by this law.

The country is prosecuting different traffickers through the trafficking department of the Attorney General's office, although it has not dismantled entire networks because each case is treated in a particular way.

The possibility of pushing through modifications in the law and the promulgation of its regulation is being discussed in the country, especially in the inter-institutional Committee for the Protection of Migrant Women (CIPROM). Most of the sectors want to support the modification of the law, approving the version prepared by a consultant from the ILO, Dr. Guillermo Moreno, who proposes significant changes with regard to proof

.7.4.3 Related legislation

The penal and labor codes in relation to sex work

Trafficking in people is frequently confused with the voluntary sex trade or with sexual exploitation on the market per se. This ultimately protects the traffickers. It is therefore important to know the legal basis for sex-related work and how it is applied, its influence and the acceptance or lack thereof of this profession, which has an effect on attitudes towards victims of trafficking.

According to Dominican law, sex work is not prohibited, but sex workers or prostitutes are socially stigmatized. The penal code sanctions “ruffianism” in article 334:

Whoever, in any way, helps, assists or ensnares individuals, be it men or women, for prostitution or recruitment of people for sexual exploitation; whoever, through this practice, benefits from prostitution; whoever, being involved in prostitution, cannot justify the resources that correspond to his lifestyle; whoever prostitutes his/her partner and derives benefits from this; whoever contacts, trains, and maintains, even with their consent, a person, man or woman, or any individual over 18 for purposes of prostitution, delivers them to prostitution, relaxing the other's customs; whoever threatens, pressures, maneuvers or uses any other means to thwart any actions of qualified organizations to prevent, assist or re-educate people (men or women) who have been delivered into prostitution or are at risk of prostitution.

This interpretation results in one more instrument against trafficking in people.

Penal procedure code

The number one tool used in prosecuting cases in the Dominican system is the new penal procedure code, which is “inspired by the constitutional principles and standards,



leaving behind the inquisitive system, as is the tendency in Latin America. This law no. 76-02 was promulgated on July 19th, 2002 and also establishes the “supremacy of the constitution and treaties.” Here one has the procedure for taking penal cases to court.

Code for the protection of children and adolescents.

This code establishes a system for the protection of the fundamental rights of children (boys and girls) and adolescents. It was promulgated through law 136-03 on August 7th, 2003. Instituting the rights of children and adolescents to personal integrity, it declares as the responsibility of the family, the State and society to protect them against any form of exploitation, ill treatment, torture, abuse or neglect that affects their personal integrity (Art. 12), and explains the procedure to follow for the restitution of their rights wherever relevant. In addition, it prohibits their marketing, as well as their involvement in prostitution and pornography. The content of this code is important for the very reason that the research detected: the presence of Dominican adolescents in a situation of trafficking in Suriname.

7.5 FIGHTING TRAFFICKING IN PEOPLE AND ASSISTANCE TO THE VICTIMS

Civil society started to call attention to the problem and to take certain actions in the early 1990s. The first initiative on the part of the State was in 1999, with the creation of CIPROM, but it was in the Palermo Protocol that these initiatives were consolidated. These actions also helped apply pressure for pushing through State policies and for establishing a joint collaboration between the State and civil society regarding the way the processes would be handled. Despite these efforts, much remains to be done to fight this problem both in the country and in the region.

7.5.1 Non-governmental initiatives

- In 1985, the Center for Research for Feminine Action (CIPAF) started a process of reflection with publications and research about the smuggling of women for purposes of sexual exploitation.
- In 1994, COIN began a program for the prevention of irregular migration and support for migrant women. It included campaigns in the areas of communication, training of community educators, awareness raising and lobbying with the government and consular authorities, among others.

- In 2003, the first Center for sheltering victims of smuggling and trafficking, which operates within the COIN, was created. 210 women who were victims of trafficking have already been received at the center.

- New initiatives were begun in 2003, such as the creation of a national network against trafficking in people, the RNCTP, in seven states and one municipality.

- Institutions with over 10 years of work experience in caring for women, the Aquelarre Support Center (CEAPA), the Movement of United Women (MODEMU), You woman, among others.

- Civil society participated actively in the process of development and dissemination of bill 137-03 (FINJUS, CENSEL, COIN...).

- NGOs trained a network of community leaders, professors and students in various communities.

- NGOs participated in various research efforts on the topic (CIPAF, COIN, CEAPA, You woman) and ensured the legal accompaniment of processes of denunciations against traffickers and recruiters, and of violations of human rights against women who were victims of trafficking.

7.5.2 Governmental initiatives

- In 1999 the Inter-institutional Committee for the Protection of Migrant Women (CIPROM) was created (integrating government and civil society organizations).

- In 2001, the Dominican government signed and ratified the Palermo Protocol.

- In 2003 law 137-03 on the illicit smuggling of migrants and trafficking in people was drawn up and promulgated.

- In 2003 trafficking in people departments were created in various state institutions (consulates, migration, attorney general's offices, police departments).

- The consulate trains consular staff and creates a consular network against trafficking in people (2003-2005).

- Capacity building for workers in the judiciary, police department and migration.

- From 2003-2006, four courses were given on migration, trafficking and human smuggling for government workers and representatives from civil society organizations who work on this problem (SEM/CIPROM/FINJUS/IOM).



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7.6 TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO SURINAME

For purposes of data analysis, we have selected two basic elements in order to understand the complexity of the problem of trafficking in people, especially women. The focus is on gender and human rights.

Gender as a dynamic category includes social processes, symbols, images, standards, and socio-political, psychosocial, economic and sexual organization. The sex-gender system adjusts itself according to individual and collective subjectivity, i.e. the state of being a man or a woman in society, and the relationship of power between them. (TAPIA, 1993).

7.6.1 Profile of women interviewed

It can be risky to describe the profile of women who are trafficked, since this information can be used by the countries to restrict access of such women and increase sexual discrimination in different ways (CHIAROTTI, 2002). The profile is established by the traffickers based on market demand (the clients) in order to select the proper merchandise (the women).

More than a profile, we will be talking about the characteristics of the women interviewed, bearing in mind that this is a qualitative study that does not seek to be representative for the entire population under a situation of trafficking. Eight women between the ages of 21 and 38 were interviewed. They are at working age and sexually active. Most of them were not married at the time of the interview.

Six of those interviewed come from socially marginalized areas of the capital of the country (villa Mella, Sabana Perdida, Herrera, Guerra), one is from the south of the country (San Juan de la Maguana) and one is from the north (Monseñor Nouel, Bonao). Seven are single mothers with sons and daughters. Four have one child and three have two children. One of the women has no children.

In six of the cases, the children live with their mother and in two of the cases the children are from different fathers. As can be observed, most of them are heads of families.

With regard to their level of education, all of them say they can read and write. Four have had a fundamental education, three finished middle school and two took classes for their university degree, which they started after their trip to Suriname.

Two had taken technical courses before the trip (computer and baking courses).

Two of those interviewed had been trained as educators and were working in social service programs for people with HIV/AIDS. They also worked in the prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS among sex workers, in addition to doing informal work. One is a domestic worker, another works in a beauty salon and two are independent sex workers. Sometimes they turn a “sporadic trick”. Two of them are currently unemployed and one is supported financially by her partner.

7.6.2 Family relations in the context of trafficking in people

In the Dominican culture, the family of reference is that of the father, mother, legal guardian, or those with whom we spend our childhood. The family as a social institution has changed through time, in terms of structure, components, and roles, depending on the necessities and social requirements of every era.

The socially valid “family model” is different from the various types of family structures that exist today.

Especially in Dominican society, women are increasingly alone in assuming the family responsibilities of maintaining, educating and emotionally supporting their children/grandchildren/and older adults.

Many of the Dominican families are supported by mothers who have been abandoned by their husbands. In other cases, when a man is physically present, the wife carries a greater load to the detriment of her own personal development.

Often this sense of responsibility for the family, combined with the constant promotion of a better life outside of the country, pushes the woman into the international or national sex trade.

In the Dominican Republic, women are the heads of households in 35% of the families (National Office of Statistics, 2003). They are women who, in the midst of sexual, racial, social, work and other forms of discrimination – often starting from very young – must provide emotional and economic support.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

“I was about a month or a month and a half pregnant with a little belly. I was pregnant and that was it! A queen when I arrived, but then my father left with another woman and abandoned her.” (AG)

“My father and I hardly speak because he has a terrible character, very rough. I communicate a little better with my mother, but not about everything because I'm a little embarrassed. I hardly even speak with my sister. I am friendly with a girl who is a friend of my husband; we are friends”. (MA)

The precarious economic situation in which many Dominican families live is a factor that forces many girls, who are still minors, to work as maids and in the informal work sector. In this type of job, there is always exploitation and sexual abuse.

“I was seven or eight years old, I already didn't want to go barefoot. I collected bags of cement, would shake them well, got water for money and sold the bags of cement, I think for two.. After I turned nine I went to work for a family [...]. The first few months they didn't pay me. That is something that stayed with me my entire life and still hurts to this day because I say to myself why didn't I complain?” (MI)

“A woman came to the field who, according to her, wanted to bring a girl to the capital (from San Juan de la Maguana to Santo Domingo) to work. She (the stepmother) said: Take her. And they brought me to her, and I came here, to work. At age nine [...] she treated me well, but the brother-in-law tried to rape me a few times.” (CO).

Another factor to take into consideration is the social maternity that many girls who are minors need to undergo, doing housework and different jobs that prevent them from enjoying their childhood.

“My two sisters were seven or eight years old and Deysi was four or five, but what was I doing in my job? I woke up early and did what I had to do, cooked what there was in the house, took a shower, got dressed for school, cooked on the wood fire for my sisters, combed their hair, and fixed it nicely. Look, I don't know how I combed their hair and took them to school so that they could study. I just remember that when I registered them at school, a lady gave me a uniform as a gift because they didn't have any and I wanted them to go to school.” (MI)

Child abuse is a frequent violation of human rights in the traditional family model. Spanking is used as a disciplinary measure and is considered normal for both parents and victims alike. Violence has become a natural part of life. It is “standard behavior” which, in its different manifestations, permeates women's thoughts.

“No, they never spanked me. But I remember that my mother hit me with a stick. That was because I had a bad habit, which was when she sent me to scrub, I always had to go to the bathroom first. This became a mania. Anything she sent me to do, I first had to go to the bathroom: Wait a minute I'm going to the bathroom. And I don't know why, but she lost her temper and hit me.”

“She slapped me and I'll never forget it till the day I have grandchildren. I didn't say anything because I knew she was right.” (AG)

Feminist studies have shown that home is one of the most dangerous places for women and children. There is often sexual abuse, and incestuous relationships are most frequent in the family environment.

The model of the “man” who cannot control his sexual impulses is supported by Freudian theory, and has been used as proof to legitimize, tolerate and stimulate this supposed “intrinsic nature” of masculine sexuality. Despite scientific evidence, our societies end up being accomplices of the sexual aggressors, justifying this “uncontrollable impulse”.

Sexual violence is a concrete act that satisfies the needs of power and male domination over women, girls and boys. These ideological experiences sustain the sex trade, among other things.

In the case of adolescents or women, sexual abuse, beating up, family abuse and amorous relationships, can be factors that lead them to abandon the maternal and paternal home at a young age.

“What hurts me most is never having spoken to my grandfather again, and the fact that I will never speak to him again.”

“How old was he when this happened?”

“My grandfather was (70), but it wasn't just at that age, because I lived there when my grandmother was still alive. I remember that he always tried to rape me and would rub his penis on my body. I think that I was five or six years old and he did that while my grandmother was still alive. We would always lie down and he would always do that and I could not defend myself until that day when he tried again..” (CO).



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

Racial discrimination is one of the many forms of violence experienced by those interviewed. This is very frequent in our country especially against Haitians. The effects of this violence remain with the victims for their entire lives, says MA.

“My uncle mistreated me really badly. In my house, I was the darkest one. When they got angry with me, they said you damned Haitian! They said that I was a foundling, that I was not part of the family. You know, when you are a child, this is very disturbing, also because I couldn't stand Haitians and I wasn't one... I said so.. But then you get over it, because as you can see, these are girl things, they were things they did on purpose to bother me, because they knew that I would get upset. They called me Haitian, foundling, and I cried and screamed and made a big stink. And then, at a certain point, I said I would never sleep with a Haitian, I felt nauseous, I hated them, because of what they called me, that's why I didn't like it. Thank God, I got over it. But the worst part was when they called me Haitian and foundling..” (MA).

7.6.3 Gender and sexuality and the relations with trafficking in people

The gender aspect is an essential one within the framework of trafficking and smuggling women, even if it is a question of male trafficking. The focus on gender shows the differentiated treatment, in which discrimination of women is greater due to their subordinate position.

Gender socialization establishes distinct characteristics and spaces for men and women, which manifest themselves in fewer rights, opportunities and conditions for decision making and autonomy (Movimiento El Pozo, 2005).

Gender-related studies in the area of trafficking in people acknowledge that there is trafficking in men and women, and that there are similarities and differences in relation to their vulnerability, social exclusion, race and age. The violations have different consequences and impacts on public policies and programs.

Despite the limited data specific to each sex for quantifying the amount of trafficking and smuggling, empirical evidence suggests that the majority of victims are young women.

Trafficking in women for exploitation on the sex market is like a commercial exchange system in which the client takes advantage of the situation of the person who is

offered, or the victim, including their will, freedom, obligation, or bondage. This is even more serious when one considers that many of the victims are children (female) or adolescents. In 1996, one of the main conclusions of the World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation, which took place in Stockholm, was that gender discrimination was one of the main causes of sexual exploitation.

A series of incidences can lead a woman to seek prostitution as a solution for survival. There is access to a type of market that is linked to the practice of forced prostitution and related activities, where the merchandise consists of the bodies of women and girls. This is combined with restrictions regarding access to land and money, an extended work day, occupational division (duty free zone, administrative service jobs), different pay scale for men and women in the same position and the consequent feminization of poverty. In the specific case of the Dominican Republic, for every 100 households where the woman is head of the family, 24 are poor. For every 100 households where the man is the head of the family, 20 are poor.

Trafficking in people occurs in different ways. Exploitation can be practiced in the work place, obliging the victims into forced labor by using them and not paying them. With regard to the sexual aspect, the person can be pushed into forced prostitution or sexual slavery. The recruiter takes advantage of the victim's vulnerability, as she is in a foreign environment. The victim gets used to being a passive object of trafficking, which violates her human rights through exploitation and deprivation of freedom.

The social imagination permeates the dichotomist discourse of women when they confirm that men and women are equal, although they acknowledge the differences in the way boys and girls are raised. They repeat the social stereotyping according to which girls are weaker and need more protection, while the men are raised with more freedom, more is expected of them, and they are treated much tougher.

It has been put in girls' heads from when they are small that their future revolves around finding a good man to support them. It is recognized that women don't have the same opportunities as men in society.

Contradictions abound, the social discourse on femininity, the deep-rooted stereotypes, and the myths of an “easy life” appear in the female discourse:

“They make life easier for women, yes, easier [...], I know that I get more help because I'm a woman, you know, I have more of a future, an easier time, you know. I have more of a future, easier than for men, you know, we can find a man who helps us with everything.” (JO)..



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

Women's rights are perceived from the worker's point of view, with some space allowed for equality between men and women. Gender as a social category is deep-rooted and pre-determined.

“I say that there is no difference because a woman can work just like a man. Now this is about women's liberation, as they say, but that was from before, when a woman couldn't do a man's job.”

“Because we are human beings, equal, we are just a different sex. You are a man and I am a woman because I have a vagina, but I can work and support a household just like a man, just like I work now, supporting my family and household. It is the same thing, and just like you can leave the country, I can do that too.” (MA).

The change of behavior is a personal condition that starts from within. However, women were sold on the idea that people can be changed by influencing them, especially couples. In the interviews, this condition is very similar:

“I feel that, when I change partners, I go down two notches and he goes up one. We get exhausted, ok, now I don't feel that way anymore but I did before.” (MI).

“We have the same rights.”

On another subject, it was said about the ruffians: *“Because if I do it, I do it for money and it's because I need it, so they are in the same position as me”. (CO).*

“I went at dawn to a hotel, and while we were there, he (her partner) left early in the morning and I didn't see him anymore (...), I didn't have any money, so I left and started walking. A young man appeared (...), so I explained to him my situation and that I needed money and he said: I can help you but only if we go to my house (...), so we went, (...) he wanted me to do it with his friend too. He wanted to help me, but the one who was going to pay was his friend, you get it?”. (AG).

Dreaming about a prince on horseback who will come and rescue her and give her a night of pleasure and a lifetime full of happiness is deep-rooted in the woman's social imagination. However, the reality for many women is that these stories only occur in their fantasies.

Seduction is a common element that is disguised as “consent” when there is no physical violence. As shown in this study, this situation occurs starting from a very young age, between 14 and 17 years old, due in some cases to difficult economic situations.

Half of those interviewed had their first sexual relations for money before their trip, two of them already as sex professionals. When asked why, the economic factor prevails.

In this context, there is also the question: Do they see themselves as sex workers?

Some of the women respond that yes, considering that they have already worked in prostitution before the trafficking experience, however this can in no way be compared to what they experienced in trafficking in people. Others respond that no, that they were always working against their will and that they don't want to relive that experience.

“No, I say no because I don't want to be a sex worker.” (RO).

For others, the dream becomes a nightmare, the crystal breaks in a thousand pieces, when they are obligated, forced to have sexual relations against their will.

“But if you are in this business, you have to do it or they threaten to kill you. All sexual relations that I had were against my will, from the first to the last in this country, because I was not at all in agreement with it.” (MA).

Disappointment increases, and the deepest pain enters the soul. The magic of the first night disappears when it turns into rape. The words melt away, feelings rise to the surface, and the descriptions for such a painful memory are simple, as an adolescent who was the victim of trafficking recounts:

“An auction, an auction, as if I were a chicken that they were selling, with the finest feathers: An auction! Who would pay the most for me, a virgin?” (MA)

7.6.4 Migration as movement for autonomy in the context of exploitation and loss of freedom in the trafficking in people

Migration is the movement of people from one country to another or within one's own country in order to take up residence in a completely different place from one's place of origin or residence. International migration can be legal or illegal and it occurs either freely and voluntarily, or under coercion or necessity. Historically, large groups of a population



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

migrated due to problems and a lack of opportunities for surviving in the place of origin. One might say that this type of migration occurred voluntarily but not freely because it is a way to flee the very limitations that have restricted their freedom.

Migration is a historical phenomenon that was originally related to war, slavery and the use of the woman as a sexual object. During colonial times, the indigenous people and Africans were trafficked like slaves to provide free manual labor, slave reproduction and to serve as a sexual object (CHIAROTTI, 2002).

Although migration is not an exclusively female phenomenon, there are increasingly more women in the groups that migrate, due to the feminization of poverty, the increasing burden of maintaining the family, and as a way to resist and survive.

Chiarotti (2002) says that borders between countries are becoming less and less permeable. “This fact, combined with the lack of legal opportunities for migrants, often steers the women right into the hands of the traffickers, increasing their vulnerability and abuse. As we have seen, migratory restrictions at the borders have become a factor that increases trafficking in people,” she confirms.

However, overemphasizing the connection between migration and trafficking in people can strengthen positions that use the problem of trafficking and the protection of women as an excuse for restricting migration. Not all migrants are victims of trafficking and not all victims of trafficking are working in the sex trade.

In the Dominican Republic, trafficking in women has been practiced since the time of the conquistadores, when women were used as war “booty”. Later on, during colonial times, the first standards were established according to which the activity was punished, just like ruffianism, for which the penalty could even be death.

Trafficking in people is currently considered the third most lucrative business in the world. The principal merchandise is women, girls and boys.

There are two basic attitudes regarding the sex trade, with one side lobbying for the legalization of “sex work”, and the other that considers the recruitment of children and women for sexual exploitation circuits, which is called “sexual slavery”, and prostitution, as being among the many forms of violence against women.

In the Dominican Republic, trafficking in women is in most cases for purposes of forced prostitution or forced marriage. In the situations analyzed for this research, women were obligated to work in prostitution or sex work.

What is the likelihood that women “choose” to be prostitutes?

“An auction, an auction, as if I were a chicken that they were selling, and had the best feathers, an auction! Whoever wanted me had to pay the most money because I was a virgin. And the first, the very first time this happened, he knew that I was crying so hard. He had problems with the owner of the business because he didn't want to deflower me. He said no, that he was not a profiteer; he was not a rapist, what he wanted was a young lady, but it had to be because she wanted it too. So a conflict arose because they didn't want to give him his money back. Before giving back his money, they called the same doctor back and looked at me again to see if the man had done anything to me, or, if I was a piece of merchandise that they had to fix. So the one who deflowered me in the end was the owner of the business, and that was by force.”(MA).

These conditions can be combined with the fact that living on an island was fertile ground for sowing the idea that leaving the country would place them in a better economic situation. This is a common dream among those interviewed. When they live in conditions of poverty, with limited information and formal education, the only way out is to travel. In a country like ours, where women have become the main providers for their families, with limited access to social benefits, traveling abroad seems like the “best option”.

“I was trying to improve our situation. At home we are poor. I have a daughter and her father gives her very little, (...) so I decided to take a few trips to see what was out there...I was looking to improve our situation because no one who is doing well in this country wants to leave, unless it is to go on vacation, to go traveling because you want to, but imagine, if I was doing well in my country, I wouldn't want to go anywhere. Everyone who goes, I think, it's to try to improve the family's economic situation.”(MA)

“Women travel out of necessity. They think they are not worth anything and each step they take is worse, that's why they go. We think that everything is going to be better out there, that everything is going to be ok out there.”(AN).

“I think that people travel to another country because sometimes they want to get some money and because we all want a better situation. Sometimes we want a house. If we stay here, even working, it won't be possible to buy a house. We won't get one. So we go thinking that out there we can get one.”

“I think that men go for the same reasons: to change their lives.”(RO).



If the land is fertilized with fantasies, the dreams sprout roots, the ideas persist, and when the moment arrives, they do anything to achieve them.

“Look, when they tell us that there is a place in heaven where the streets are paved with gold, where they throw away new televisions and refrigerators, and since you need those things, you say wow! If they throw away all those things there, I can get them cheaper and bring them here. It's a dream, they sell you a dream. That's it.” (AG).

“Well, I don't know how they found my friend, but he found me through my friend. I think that it should be that way, right? By word of mouth, especially among poor people. They talk to us about a more comfortable trip and we get blinded and want to go on that trip.” (MA)

7.7. ORGANIZATION AND DYNAMICS OF TRAFFICKING IN PEOPLE

7.7.1 The recruitment process

Together with the factors listed above, the migratory atmosphere of the island, the dreams about traveling, which are synonymous with prosperity, permissiveness and social impunity, facilitate the work of the recruiter(s).

The social and economic subordination of the women becomes the focus of attention of the sex trade, using the territorial proximity and “reliable” people – an old man, a guy from the neighborhood, a woman they know, a cousin – or strangers who, with a convincing speech, attract the attention of women who are seeking opportunities and better economic conditions.

MA is 24 years old. She is the second oldest out of three brothers and sisters. She was victim of trafficking eight years ago, when at age 15 she was recruited as a dancer together with 22 other young people, who were delivered to a “group of folkloric dancers.”

“I asked my mother's permission. She thought that it was for real. I was 15 and in school, the second year of middle school. I left school because they told me I'd be part of this folkloric dance troupe and that they were going to put me in a school, that I would be able to continue studying, and that things would be better. They drew castles in the air for all of us and everyone got into it and we went. Afterwards things changed because they didn't actually hire us to dance, or maybe they did, but not folkloric dance.”

With a trace of delusion in her voice, she said:

“It’s a lot for a dream. You dream of being an artist, of being a dancer, of being somebody, and at that very moment someone comes along and makes a proposal exactly as you would like to have it. Yes, that is my dream, but I have to convince my mother: If I go, I have to go with her because... People have dreams. When you are a child you say, I want to be such and such. I said: Yes I can, I’m going to be a dancer. I am going to be an artist because I want to be famous. Those were my dreams: To be a dancer, or a doctor. I was active in a theater in my neighborhood and I liked to dance, to take care of my body. I couldn’t get fat. I was always very slim, with a beautiful body, because I was going to be a dancer. So since I wanted to be a dancer, when the idea of traveling came along, and something folkloric that wasn’t going to hurt me, I thought: It’s the dream I have been waiting for. I didn’t want to get married. No, I wanted to be a dancer. So, when they came to my house, they started to choreograph a dance, you know? They really did it well. They choreographed a dance so that we would think it was for real.”

“Then some Americans came and some people from other countries. A friend of mine had met them somewhere else, I don’t remember where, and she spread the information throughout the neighborhood. When the Americans left, a guy who we knew, who bought us ice cream, who bought us all kinds of things, gave us money. Little by little he was buying our trust. For a while he kept up the relationship with us. If someone had a birthday, he would buy cookies, sodas, made a little party, had some games. We thought he was a nice guy. It was afterwards that he came up with the idea of a trip. It had to be with our parents’ permission. My mother asked me if this was what I really wanted. She herself asked me and I told her: Yes mother, don’t worry. I’m going with so and so. He won’t do us any harm. You know him. Nothing will happen, and also I want to dance more than anything.”

“It was a tour, supposedly we were going to go on a tour. Our destination wasn’t Suriname. It was a Caribbean tour, which is what he sold us on, but in the Caribbean there is more than just Suriname.”

“It was a Caribbean tour. It was going to take a while, as he said. We were going to spend 15 days in Saint Martin, for example and in those 15 days we were going to such and such a place and then another place. He put together a dance, a very nice dance, made dresses for us, did everything, as if to show that it was for



A trinalational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

real. He taught me to dance with high heels, everything. He even taught us how to put on makeup so that we would look beautiful in the photos because we didn't know how to put on makeup."

"I was just a child. I knew that there were exotic dancers but we never thought about it. We said to him: But what will we dance? And he answered: It's not Mangulina, it's folkloric music, Perico ripiao, folkloric music from the Dominican Republic. You will see. You are a Dominican Group. You are going to be the folkloric ballet of the Dominican Republic. We thought that we were going to dance folkloric dances."

"He bought everything and said that we would pay part, and that we were going to pay him with our work, with dancing." (MA).

Others said that the most important factor was economic:

"The person who deceived me... well, for me it was poverty, the way you live, the space you live in, the size of your family. For example, I live in a suburb of Buenos Aires and I don't want to live in a suburb all my life! I want to move up, leave the suburb, go to Mexico, or something like that. That's why people want to travel or get involved in this kind of mess. Understand?"

"For economic reasons! So they look for those kinds of people, people who live in situations of poverty, who are discriminated,, understand? And they brainwash you and take you away, they trick you. So you are blinded by all that. Because you know what you want...It's like J's bachata,³ which says that we have illusions, we are desperate, and we want to go somewhere. Listen, people think about everything, from what they will buy to what they will bring. Yes, because they make you think that over there, money grows on trees. Yes, I think that there will be a lot more victims. (MA).

The range of offers is unlimited: caregivers for the elderly, folkloric dancers, working in gold mines, in beauty salons etc. That is what the criminals propose who prey on the necessities and aspirations of these women. This apparent confidence with which they get close to the women is based on tricks and lies. In the whole range of possibilities, the possibility of sex work is never mentioned before the trip.

"She just said that I was going to take care of some elderly people."(RO).

3 Kind of popular music in the Dominican Republic

“Because the guy told us that they were going to take us to a gold mine to work, paying us US\$80 twice a month.” (MA).

“She said that I was going to work in a beauty salon, putting in hair extensions.” (MI)

In the apparent desire to serve and help women, and in order to speed up the process, the traffickers normally take care of all of the documentation. The victims give them their documents and, of course the money that will be used to buy back their freedom...

“He took care of everything. I didn't have to do anything. He just asked for my identity card and a passport and he took care of the rest. I didn't have to go anywhere.” (MA)

“I gave him about 15,000 pesos for the documents.” (AN).

“My goodness ! I gave 50,000 pesos !” (RO).

“Some traffickers are so interested in “helping” that they agree to wait to be paid once they have arrived in the country of destination. If any relative is suspicious, why don't they say anything?

Pay when we get there. Also, when he came to my house, my mother said to me: MA, this trip doesn't sound right to me. It doesn't soundt right with me that he wants to pay for everything now and you pay when you get there? My mother told me that she suspected that this wasn't ok. And I, in all my enthusiasm, said to my mother, sometimes things are not what you think. But my mother sensed that something wasn't right because she is an adult. So she told me: I heard that they take these women there and even lock them up and they never see the sun or the stars again, nothing. And I said: Impossible! It's not like that. Maybe it's not the same everywhere, right? So, I went and completely trusted them. And that's exactly what happened. Just like my mother said. I thought about her a lot. That's why we need to believe our elders.” (MA).

There are so many different situations and proposals that no one ends up staying. Some of them, for some reason, don't “manage to get a visa”. They travel with the identity card of another woman, or with a forged passport.

“It was great because it was only for a month. Before you knew it, it was over.” (RO).



A trinationnal study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

“I didn't have a passport, it was in someone else's name and I had to doctor it up.”

“I was a young lady when I got there. I never saw any passport; my passport never reached my hands. I traveled using someone else's name, with my photo and my fingerprints. Since I was tall, they added a few years to my age, using someone else's papers who I never knew. When we got there, they made us go into a house, and a “doctor” checked me. When he saw that I was a virgin, they auctioned me off. At the beginning I didn't want to dance, I didn't want that, but when I danced they said I owed them. They threatened to hit me and they hit me a lot. To call home I had to use the telephone of one of these secretaries where you push a button and you hear what I say and I hear what you say.” (MA).

Contracts seem to make the work more secure and legal. However, these procedures are usually done in a hurry and since they trust the trafficker, reading the contract doesn't seem to be so important before they travel...

“That was my mistake, that I didn't read it, I knew how to read, and I might have seen if they said something about where I was going, right? Or maybe it would have said that I was going to a gold mine because he would have changed it. They change all their things. But I should have read it.”

The atmosphere of friendship, familiarity and confidence in which the trips are organized don't raise any doubts or suspicions. But the women who are being trafficked are not given much information. Wherever they go, no matter how or where, it will bring them prosperity:

“A cousin of mine invented, I say she invented, that she was going to be traveling. The guy had left me a hut or a small wooden house and I sold it. She said to me: Look, we can go. I said: Woman, you know that I don't like this. And she said: No, no, we are going, because you are not going to do over there what you do here, you are not going to sell your body for two pesos.” (CO).

They had no idea how the country was where they were going, but they imagined that it would be very beautiful and economically stable.

Interviewer: “How did you imagine Suriname was before you went there?”

AG: “A beautiful place.”

“I actually imagined that it would be beautiful (expressing the illusion in her voice) and at the same time, thought: Maybe it is also ugly, there must be places there like in the Dominican Republic, but I imagined that it would be beautiful, that the people there were another kind of people, you understand? That they were not so evil.”(MA).

7.7.2 The Arrival

The place, the distance, the language, nothing matters when there is some hope of realizing the dream of a better life. But once you arrive at your destination, the scene starts to change dramatically:

“Let me tell you: I felt like a sleepwalker in Suriname. I don't know what they did to me or what they gave me because I was laughing about everything, everything. Everything made me laugh, I really felt like a sleepwalker. I will only say that we arrived there at night, we stopped somewhere, I don't know.. If you ask me, I couldn't tell you anything about it over there.”(MI)

The nightmare begins and doesn't end. They realize that they are suddenly illegal migrants and that things have changed.

“Migrants? Very bad, very bad, they are exploited. Just imagine: we are in a foreign country illegally. We have to do what they want so that they don't deport us. They threaten to take your documents to migration so that you'll be deported. So you are afraid and you have to do what that person tells you to do. Then they start to exploit you and treat you badly, doing a lot of horrible stuff. (MA).

7.7.3 Quality of life and working conditions in Suriname

To be sure that the “merchandise” arrives at its destination, the recruiters, as an act of “kindness”, accompany the women to Suriname, and put them up in small hotels or houses in order to take them afterwards to their final destination: sex clubs, meeting houses etc.

“When I arrived there, everyone was very caring. They knew that we were really scared when we first arrived, they knew that...”

“...So, at the beginning they don't tell you what you are going to do right away. Listen to what they told us when we got to the house: You are not going to be



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

introduced yet because you have to sing a bit more; we have to get contracts somewhere else. After that we'll start performing and keep on going, with one (performance) after another.” (MAN).

Dreams destroyed, hopes dashed, illusions in shambles when reality hits them about the type of work they will be doing and under what conditions:

“She said to me (her cousin): Let's go, we have to go somewhere else! But for what? And she said: Woman (laughs), for what? But I said: No, and then they kept talking, they kept on talking. We fought and argued a lot and for a while we didn't speak to each other, like enemies. But since you are already there, you have to do it. (CO).

“When we arrived there, we saw that that was not what we had arranged. This was not the gold mine. And they said: Of course this is the gold mine, you are going to make a lot of money.”(AG).

“When we got there, they took me someplace. That was the gold mine, where they dance naked and where they go with men for money. That's what it was. Take it or leave it. It is a life or death decision. I didn't have any papers. If I wanted to return to my country.. or do something... that was what I had to do.”(AG).

When a woman dares to protest or question her “savior” the bad wolf takes off the sheep's clothing: “You already know why you came.”

There are places filled with clothing and shoe stores, beauty salons, dining rooms and dormitories, everything they need, so that they have no reason to go out. That is still slavery. Only the outward appearance changes.

“The house is a mansion, but a real mansion, like in the soap operas. You see downstairs there are two ground floors but they have a single ballroom ,you know the kind? Those that are round from inside. So down below there was one house and in the other part, was the bar, in another part was the dance stage, so everyday... up there were the houses, the store, in another was the living room, the house was a dream, it was beautiful, very special.”

“They brought us breakfast in our apartment. They gave us a really pretty apartment. We didn't go out, so they told us that this was a hotel and not a house and that we could sit in the lobby downstairs, where the guys were. They would pick and choose and would say: I want this one. We could have a few drinks. That was included in the price of the hotel.” (MAN).

The paradox is present once again in a place called 'Life', where trafficked women are held in captivity, under threat, and are forced to use drugs and alcohol. They live in terrible conditions of exploitation and those who attempt to leave are beaten.

“Sometimes I had problems with the clients when they didn't want to use a condom. I even had to fight with them. I have a scar on my back from a fight with a client.” (AN).

“A man who I had a fight with, that was the worst thing that happened to me. I had a fight with him because I didn't want to have sex with him and even though I didn't want to I had to.” (MI).

Female sexual slavery is an objective social condition of exploitation and sexual violence (BARRY, 1988). It is a common experience among women both locally and internationally, and it is an expression of patriarchy. Forced to sell their bodies like merchandise, without protection, without anyone caring about their health, and for long days, they have to deal with clients with no exception. They get a short break to rest and sleep, but only if there is no client awaiting their services. The women are held in captivity, without the right to come and go.

“Oh, we were locked up in the apartment and when the clients came, we had to take care of them. They forced us, the clients and the owner too. If we said no, the client left and the owner came in, and we worked from 6 o'clock until the business closed.” (RO).

“To earn a telephone call after you had prostituted yourself, you had to behave well, and do everything they said, and when you made your call you had to speak loudly, so it was never private. All you could say was: How are you? Yes, yes, fine. So then they would say something so that the parents of the girls didn't get worried.” (MAN).

A common practice in slavery, to prevent escaping, was to whip the slaves in public, to set an example for others. This is a practice that is used today for trafficked women. Only the setting has changed, from a public square to a night club, using it to set an example, to show the consequences of disobedience to others.

“She ran away, but she wasn't very smart and went to another place, because she had spent three days on the street. Since I was there, I could talk to her.



A trinalational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

Three days in the street and she was already so hungry that she was dying, and she was eating things like... So she decided to go to another place that wasn't too far away. When she was in the other place, when the administrator found her, just walking along, he said that this woman was not one of theirs and took her and beat her and took us so that we could see what happened to those who escaped.”(MAN).

All of the conditions that the women experienced during captivity make trafficking in people like a form of modern-day slavery. Add to that a series of elements like coercion, preventing any coming and going, captivity due to debt, ill treatment, violence, exploitation, all of which are similar to the conditions of slavery in former times. Also, now just like then, the business generates a substantial profit for those who promote and implement it.

As a way to keep their “merchandise” in good shape, some of the owners of clubs or their managers take the women to health centers for medical examinations. In other cases, the doctor is called in so that they don't have to go out. The quality and frequency of these services are questionable.

The illusion of being a mother became a nightmare for one of the women interviewed, because she gave birth to her son in captivity. This was horrible for her, and, thanks to her strength, today her son is her “motor”, her reason to live.

“Oh, my son. That was the best thing that ever happened to me. I have a son who I love very much and he loves me.”(RO).

To be able to call their families, they have to be well behaved, and do everything they are asked to do, how and when their bosses want it. If they comply, they can speak to their families, but always under supervision.

“You can make a phone call only after prostituting yourself for them. You have to behave well, and do everything they say, just to make a phone call, and you have to speak loudly. It's not even private. All you can say is: How are you? And yes, fine. And they would act a certain way so the parents wouldn't worry.”(MAN).

Others were not allowed to communicate because the traffickers were afraid of being denounced.

“No, there was no telephone there inside the club, no. And if a man had a cell phone, he had to leave it at the front desk, before going with a woman to a room. They were very worried.”(MA).

Just remembering the painful experiences of trafficking and when asked about the men who frequented the club for their services, they said:

“Well, I think that these men are... For me they are.. let me see if I can find the right word.. maniacs! They aren't normal .. you see, because for me this is like... This is not normal, it's not normal for me. Even the way that most of the men go to women like that, they are not good and never do it right, I mean, most of them, when they are going to do it, they don't do it clean, you understand? Most of them use drugs or something, which I don't think is ok.”(MAN).

“Well, they are animals.”(RO).

7.7.4 Returning home

When reality treats one badly, dreams are destroyed, and hope for a better life is lost. The desire to go home is like a way out. To go back to one's family, and to go back to their beloved land is a goal. The focus is clear but one has to develop strategies, alliances with clients and work colleagues, and try to escape or wait for the contract to expire. In the latter case, they must be open and clear with their family so that they can send the money back.

“Since I was there, my friend told me that a law was passed that said that if I had been trafficked or smuggled, the State owed me something, or migration would send me or my parents something if they could prove that I was trafficked. So, when I went there (migration), they wanted to convince me that I had gone of my own free will, and this and that, when I went to talk to them. I was brave and said that it wasn't like that. I showed them everything. I didn't even have a passport. But there was all this pressure. I told them that they received money from these businesses. They said to me, they tried to make me believe from the very beginning, that I had gone there because I wanted to. Maybe I had a debt to pay and that was why I wanted to go back to my country, so that I wouldn't have to pay this debt.”(MAN).

“This is hell. I will never travel anywhere else. I won't be tricked. They can tell me that I am going to find gold, I'm not going, because that's not what I would be doing there, it's just a trick. You go with a clean mind and conscience, with the intention of changing your life, but you are actually going to do other things, because that's how it ends up. It isn't easy letting a man touch your body when you don't want him to.”(CO).



“Look, I am not going to say a thing, all I want is to arrive safe and sound. Don't worry about me. When are we actually leaving? He said: Young lady, why are you so desperate? Calm down, we have already started the process.” (MA)

7.7.5 Changes occurred

All the women talk about the changes they have undergone after the trip in different ways. Four of them say that they feel more experienced in life and that they will never again get into that situation. They feel that life is better because they can count on their family's support, which they didn't have before. They are finishing their education and are moving forward for the good of their children. However, two of them say that their situation has not improved at all, that now things are worse and that the trip was a low point, a setback in their lives. One confirms that she is resigned to this and what she really wants to do is work and live with her children. The other didn't express any particular desire in response to this question.

With regard to their plans to travel again, almost all of them say that they would travel again if it were legally and for vacation, but none of them want to travel the way they did before. They consider the trip in question a nightmare, like hell. If they go out again, they don't want to have the same experience. One said that she wouldn't travel ever again, because it was really bad and she doesn't want to repeat the experience.

7.7.6 Reasons for the lack of charges: the enforcement of law 137-03

Approving a law and not enforcing it is the same thing as endorsing what you want to prohibit. Richelieu

If we analyze the many reasons why some Dominicans, male or female, do not report the experiences, neither in the civil arena, nor in the penal system, we must consider their lack of confidence in the legal and police system, impunity, the inefficiency of the investigative processes and the protection and confidentiality of the accusers, the lack of existing laws, the high costs and the slowness of the processes, and end up at “the authority of the irrevocably judged” (CAPTITANT 1987).

But if we refer exclusively to the issue of trafficking in people, and the reasons why these women do not denounce the incidents, we see that this law is not yet entirely effective, as well as the fact that the cases are only reviewed by the government service organizations several years later.

However, we must analyze why law 137-03 is not more widely enforced in the Dominican Republic. First of all, in addition to the reasons mentioned above, the ignorance regarding “what happened to them” was a violation of human rights. What they experienced was not just a mistake or a spate of bad luck on their trip. This is an international crime: tolerating it compromises entire countries. Second of all internal trafficking is less recognized than trafficking abroad (outside of the country of origin). The same occurs in other Latin American countries, where “cases of exploitation in domestic service and forced labor are not denounced because they are culturally not considered reprobable.” (BOGOTA2006).

In the Dominican Republic, girls from rural families, who are very poor and numerous, are often “presented” to others who can give them more opportunities. Many of these end up being internal trafficking cases, in violation of workers' and children's rights.

“A woman appeared there in the interior who, according to her, wanted to bring a girl here to the capital (Santo Domingo), I guess to work, and she said 'You can take her!' And I was delivered to them and then came here (Santo Domingo) to work.”

- How old were you?

- Nine years old. (CO)

On the other hand, they are afraid that society, the family and the authorities know that they were sexually exploited and are especially afraid of being victimized, blamed, stigmatized, under the conviction that “she knew what she was doing”, which is generally widely repeated among Dominicans, with the aggravating possibility that the authorities violated the confidentiality that they should have in these processes in virtue of law 137-03.

In addition, there are arguments directly related to the traffickers and their power (reason number four), like the victims' fear of denouncing them due to retaliation against them or their families.

“They asked what we were going to say when we got here.” (MA).

In a few cases, there is the false belief that there is still some debt owed to the trafficker, especially in cases where the victim manages to escape from a “servitude for debt” arrangement. This could be solved with an effective protection model, which we will speak of later, and prevention.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

“It's because I wasn't free to do that. I was locked up in a house, and if I went out I had two people following me so that I wouldn't run away.” (MAN).

The lack of protection of Dominican migrants abroad and the lack of knowledge of their rights as migrants, within the context of outside trafficking, is our fifth reason. It results in a fear of being caught and/or deported because of their irregular situation of being in the country illegally due to an expired visa or false documents, or having had them taken away by the trafficker. The same traffickers threaten and promote this fear, with threats of prison and deportation if they try to escape. That is why it is necessary to increase protection, have a local counselor in place, coordinate with the local authorities in the country of destination and prevent trafficking.

Once the migrants return to their country, either voluntarily or forcibly, they have no idea where to go and which authorities to seek. In case they go to just any authority, they are faced with the fact that they do not have any knowledge on the topic, or there is no coordination to respond effectively to these cases.

Response from the Dominican police, when one of the women went to file a report on her case:

“Well, they said these are things for the government to deal with. They said that they had nothing to do with it and if we got into it, it's because we wanted to. And that was not the case, not at all.”

And for the sixth and seventh reasons, we must analyze the effectiveness of law 137-03 and the influence of corruption in the area of trafficking in people in the Dominican Republic, but given the importance of both, we have dedicated a special paragraph.

Law 137-03

There is a lack of proof and information on the identity of the traffickers. Normally they use nicknames, false names, or multiple false personalities and legal ID cards, and don't leave written proof of their crime. The government needs to invest more in this area.

“A Dominican man spoke to me about his trip (he was paid in cash, to bring women to Suriname). There were about 12 women with me and another five (5) were already at the airport. At the airport there was already another man waiting (he looked like a foreigner).” (NA).

“Well, this guy appeared just like that. I knew him. I heard a girl talking about the trip. That’s the girl who I told you is from the same place as me and we traveled together. I can’t tell you how she met him. I got in touch with him through her. That’s the way I met him.”

7.7.7 Corruption

The involvement of the authorities and civil servants at airports, like those of migration, who are used as contacts, means that they let a person travel even if they see that their documents are totally illegal.

“I traveled using the name of another person, with my photo and my fingerprints. I was a minor, but since I was tall, they said I was a few years older, and I used the papers of another person who I didn’t even know. There was one guy who organized the trip, and had all the passports. And I tell you he must have had his contacts at the airport. Once I traveled legally, I saw how they do it. They always ask for your passport everywhere. So he walked around with all of our passports. He called us by our names and asked us ridiculous things, like if we were “artists”. He’d call you by name and had a signed card, and we went through. After that we never saw him again.” (MAN).

As mentioned before, a high percentage of the population believes that the authorities are corrupt. There is a culture of distrust and a high percentage of corruption, which leads the victims and accusers to feel uncertain about the authorities' trustworthiness and the efficiency of their protection, as there is currently no particular system in place. The same holds true for countries where the Dominican trafficking networks work together with the local authorities, who visit the clubs and bring back the girls who run away.

“I think that the police are in contact with the people involved and a lot of money is being moved around. The police never mess with the business and some policemen even go as clients. The day they caught me, they laughed at me when I told them what had happened (some of them spoke Spanish) and said: You are inventing this, young lady. And they brought me to the airport.” (AN)

As discussed in Celestine Nyamu-Musembi's analysis (2007) “Gender and corruption in the administration of justice, “corruption in the legal system affects men and women differently” and “when a vulnerable group is also socially stigmatized, there is a higher level of extortion, when there is ambiguity in the laws and procedures, or



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

inadequate supervision that guarantees the responsibility of the authorities on the street to ensure that laws and procedures are abided by. This risk increases due to the probability that those affected publicly challenge this behavior because of the social stigma.” To explain the first argument, the case of the workers in Azerbaijan is used as an example, where, despite the fact that this profession has been legalized, it is also stigmatized. Thus, the women “are vulnerable to extortion by the police, bribing them so that they may avoid being obligated to be examined by a doctor by force and illegally”, because they can be penalized by the spread of a venereal disease.

However, the police can only start an investigation based on information from third parties and they know that it is unlikely that these young stigmatized ladies will challenge their corrupt behavior.

“She didn't give us back our card. She only gave it to us when we were already in the hospital, to see the doctor. We had a pap smear done with a disposable speculum. We had blood tests taken a few times, twice while we were there anyway. And that's it. But they didn't give us back the results, they gave them to her. If any of us had an infection or something, she knew it and she herself went to the pharmacy and bought us medicine and said: You have to take this because that's what you do if you have this, that, or the other thing, like for an inflammation, or an infection, or something like that.” (MA).

“The doctor wasn't a gynecologist or anything, he examined you down there and if he saw anything opaque, or a... no, no, no... (something quick) and that was all.” (MAN).

The second argument was the possibility of examining the data on corruption and the gender perspective to explain the “inadequate response of the legal system to trafficking in people, particularly women and girls, for sexual slavery”, “and the acts of organized crime that sustain it”, like “false documentation, bribery of high-level authorities, and the inefficient responses when the witnesses and accusers are threatened with violence.” Thirdly, the lack of attention to “minor” and daily errors in the system increases existing inequalities in the access to justice, which consequently normalizes corruption and discourages those who are seeking justice. They feel that these gaps “have a relatively greater effect on certain categories of users”.

“(…) the problem was that I didn't see him anymore. That's what I told my mother: If I knew where the guy lived or where he was from or something, because the police are going to ask me... When I denounce him, they are going to ask where the guy is who paid for my trip? Where is he? He gave me an address, but I went and he doesn't live there. It was a false address. That's what happened.” (MA).

7.7.8 Role of NGOs and the governmental organizations: perceptions, intervention, difficulties, challenges

The feminist non-governmental organizations for human rights and women have been pioneers in denouncing the trafficking in women and in developing proposals to fight it.

However, the economic profitability in the sex trade is high and there are entire networks that control this market. Besides the fact that the NGOs denounce wrongdoings and develop proposals for dealing with the problem, there is no satisfactory response as yet.

Organizations like CIPAF and COIN are pioneers in the investigation and publication of information on the trafficking in women.

As part of the government response, CIPRON was created, the law was promulgated and protocols were ratified. The main concern now is how to proceed, especially since, although it is known that the networks operate at the national or international level, there are no ready answers for eliminating them.

In the denunciation process, the victim becomes the focal point, and she is accused and blamed for having gotten involved with this type of journey. One phrase that makes the complicity of the aggressors clear is: “They know why they are going,” blaming them for the commercial sexual exploitation of which they are victims.

The ignorance on the part of the women interviewed and their families with regard to the terms “trafficking” and “smuggling” is a common factor when they discover that they have been tricked. But they are aware that they have been duped, and that they are the victims of fraud, ill treatment, and exploitation. Giving them support is essential for their social reinsertion, which is why they are seeking help from organizations that can offer this in some form or another, such as COIN, which they recognize as a place where women who were trafficked help each other. Some have already participated in the program before the investigation, and others have become integrated through the research process.

8

Conclusions and recommendations: what the trafficking in brazilian and dominican women to suriname shows us





A trinationnal study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

Each and every story told brought new information and strengthened the understanding that trafficking in women cannot be understood based on lone explanations or isolated facts. It must be seen as a process of violation and resistance within the historic, economic, social and cultural context of every country, as a process of human rights violations and as a consequence of social and gender inequality in which the women, who are targets of trafficking, live.

Poverty and social exclusion, a situation in which millions of Brazilian and Dominican women live, is the cause of what is called the feminization of migration. This essentially implies an increase in the migration of women under risky conditions.

Once again it becomes clear through this study that trafficking in people is yet one more manifestation of violence that specifically affects women, as a product of their gender condition and the political, social and economic discrimination that places them in a position of extreme vulnerability in the face of the actions carried out by trafficking networks.

A first thought-provoking question is: Why Suriname? One hypothesis that was mentioned on another occasion was that what was first thought to be a short-term “internship” for Brazilian and Dominican women in Holland ended up not happening. On the contrary, the women actually stayed on there.

In the case of the Dominican Republic, the women are fooled by the traffickers with offers of well-remunerated work (as folkloric dancers, working in the gold mines, or as beauticians, among other offers), and who facilitate all of the preparations for the trip. For Dominican women, Suriname represents a bridge that one crosses to get to other countries of the Caribbean or Europe. The reality of trafficking does not allow them to realize this dream. Instead they are locked away in the brothels of Paramaribo, under slave-like conditions and with no possibility of escaping, that is, until the traffickers allow them to, or until they meet someone who will help them. Outside of the brothels there is no Dominican community or consulate that can support them.

The situation is similar in the case of Brazilian women, the only difference being the geographic proximity between Belem and Paramaribo, the easy access to transportation (regular direct flights between Belem and Paramaribo), the demand for foreign prostitutes by Surinamese men and the presence of the constantly growing community of Brazilian gold prospectors, all of which make Suriname the principal destination for the trafficking in women from Para.

Research reveals that the women who are being trafficked in the two countries are adolescents and young women (two women 14 years old, one 17 years old and the others between 18 and 38). The fact that adolescents are involved makes it a more serious trafficking crime, whose meaning and urgency need to be dealt with to confront and hold responsible the three countries involved.

Two other focal points are the women's living conditions and extreme poverty. The women who are trafficked are of humble origin and learn from a very young age that they cannot dream or expect much from life or, like in the Dominican Republic, they grow up with the idea that one can only hope to improve one's life by leaving the country. The most obvious characteristics based on the stories that contribute to or complement each other in defining the profile of vulnerabilities are:

1. Early pregnancy and the necessity of bearing the burden alone at their own cost. It is common to be abandoned by the family and by the father of the child. Often they must abandon their studies if they are still in school, and go look for work. What is left for these adolescents and young women? The lack of support and the dearth of options make prostitution and a vulnerability to trafficking likely paths to follow. Pregnancy and maternity change the identity of a young woman in search of a future into that of a mother who needs and tries to care for her children as best as she can. They assume all responsibility for their children in a man's world, limited by gender discrimination and alone. This reality is a huge challenge: everything that this young mother does carries a double responsibility, for her as well as for her children. She judges herself and is judged, not like a poor young woman any more, with no place and no community, but like a mother who is responsible for raising and educating her children. This role limits her options in her place of origin, while at the same time justifies radical decisions such as abandoning everything (the situation of poverty, with no perspectives, with children...) and traveling to an uncertain and dangerous destination. The situations show the absence of programs for adolescent mothers, as well as the necessity to protect these mothers with preventive measures;
2. Domestic child labor is common in the history of these women. The children are generally brought from municipalities in the interior of the country to work in the homes of families in the city, either without salaries



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

or with extremely low ones, while being subjected to various forms of violence, including sexual. Can this be considered a first experience in internal trafficking? Such experiences end up making them vulnerable to trafficking.

3. When they are approached about traveling, their low level of education is clear. They generally don't finish fundamental education, which leads one to think about the lack of information and opportunities other than sociability and professional qualifications. This is another element that increases their vulnerability to trafficking. From this point of view, however, the possibility that they will be taken care of efficiently once they return from the trafficking situation shows a major difference in terms of opportunities for women. Two women in the Dominican Republic concluded a university course after the trafficking experience. They got support for their studies through a shelter, which functions within the COIN and the MODEMU, non-governmental agencies that are active in the prevention of trafficking and taking care of women who are victims of trafficking. It is clear that it was not the action of the government, as this had nothing to do with government policy. This fact strengthens the importance of having continuous care and development programs for the women who return. Programs that accompany them and give them perspectives of sustainable social insertion in their country of origin are extremely valuable.

In Brazil, their situation gets worse after their trafficking experience. These women return damaged from the physical and psychological violence that they have suffered. They confront, alone, the task of starting their lives over again. Many return to or start with prostitution. They have health problems, such as alcoholism, drug addiction and psychosomatic and depressive illnesses that they cannot free themselves of without support. Specialized care and treatment are essential. Families are not always close, neither physically nor emotionally.

Family relations are also significant in some situations. All of the women have some history of family or other violence. Either in the family of origin, in the family into which they were adopted, or the one they build during their marriage: there is always some form of violence. Some of the women don't see their experience as violent, as they get used to it or they accept it culturally. This seems to prepare them for accepting other violations as natural when they occur as part of trafficking.

It is difficult to specify the type of family that could be a model for trafficked women. There is however, a series of factors in the family experience that marks a woman's trajectory. All of these factors combined seem to affect the woman's vulnerability for trafficking in people. The aforementioned domestic child labor, the estrangement from

family life, and slave-like working conditions seem to set them up for a life of trafficking in people at a later point in time (given that two of these characteristics are present in trafficking in people).

When the women travel, the children stay with the family or with relatives. The problems get worse when the woman doesn't return home for a long time. Women who are in a situation of trafficking generally cannot send money home. When they manage to send some money, it is barely enough to sustain their children, and the person who is taking care of them always needs more, due to the increase in costs or because they spend the money on other personal or family necessities.

When they return, they don't bring enough money to change their lives, but sometimes they bring presents and enough money to leave them still with the dream of going back and bringing more.

There is a logic of perverse exploitation – everyone wins in some way with the situation of trafficking in women: the family, the traffickers, the exploiters, the related markets, even the governments of the countries of origin and destination. In the countries of origin, remittances sent by the women enter the country, besides “exporting” a legitimate demand for social policies. In the countries of destination, the women are used as cheap labor, with no voting rights or access to public service, doing work that is often rejected by the native population.

There are children who abandon school waiting for their mother to return, fantasizing that she will take them abroad or thinking that she will never return. In Brazil, the reality of the situation is that the children are abandoned, which creates the potential for a cycle of poverty and exclusion for future generations. The father should also be held responsible, so that he can assume the education and care of the children. This should include foreign fathers, with whom the woman gets pregnant and brings the children back to Brazil to raise them alone.

What the women seek is the possibility of improving their quality of life and that of their family in Brazil and the Dominican Republic, working for a certain period of time outside the country. That is why the migration is always seen as temporary. However, trafficking prevents them from realizing this dream.

There are stories of migrations in many families. In numerous cases, the families apply pressure and provide an incentive for the women to migrate. On the one hand, migration is a way to benefit from the remittances that the women send. On the other hand, the families don't always manage to receive or even save them. Sometimes the families simply abandon them because they don't have any way of getting them.



A trinalational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

The family's role and participation requires a very specific examination. It is essential to come up with policies to protect/care for the families, as a preventive measure, in order to guarantee conditions and opportunities for them. In this way, independent of the arrangement, the family assumes its role as a reference, providing support and protection for young women as well as their children.

Productive work is a part of women's lives starting from very early on. At the most they fulfill the immediate expectations of survival, especially since soon they will be convinced that it is not possible to have any perspective of accumulating sufficient resources to be able to buy a house, escape poverty, or at the very least, have better living conditions.

The consequence is a process of repetition: assuming and repeating the traditional role of the poor woman, wife, single mother, domestic worker, salesgirl or prostitute. Pregnancy and early motherhood can seem like a concrete situation to be dealt with and a reason to take a risk, to go beyond the restricted possibilities that they impose. Leaving or running away from home in search of an “El Dorado”, a place that holds the promise of a possibility to structure one's life. One possibility, which is for them a concrete one, is to manage a minimum life structure (house, job, conditions for raising one's children) and social recognition of her condition as a subject (to be someone). That is why they trust the “trip organizers” and believe their promises about work and earning a lot of money outside of the country. For someone who is “crumbling apart”, any path seems like a way to ascend.

The Brazilian women's dreams don't go very far. They generally don't have the U.S. or Europe in their sights, but a country without any apparent attraction, Suriname. This is also because the option presents itself modestly, like the dreams that these women manage to have. It is real life, the day-to-day, that steers them towards their fate: a neighbor or someone from the family who already went there and tells stories about all the possibilities. There are also Surinamese who go to Belem and spread the news about how “wonderful” it is to work in that country.

The Dominicans on the contrary, come from a culture and a reality that has a strong tradition of migration. They hope to get to Spain, Holland and the United States, for example. In fact this is so much the case that they change the subject, after their arrival from Suriname, about the true destination of their trip.

The reality about trafficking in people, as it is found in Suriname, is almost classic and hard to believe, with its manifestations and mechanisms, as well as its magnitude, especially when one considers the size of the country.

The receiving markets, in this case in Suriname, demand non-Surinamese women for working in services and places where native women rarely are found, such as organized prostitution in clubs in the cities, or in sexual services in the interior of the country in the gold mining area.

For the recruitment strategy to work, it is necessary that the women recruited don't achieve their objectives quickly, if ever. This obliges them to “adhere” to a scheme of organized exploitation, or to leave and try their luck elsewhere, in other clubs or gold mines.

Part of this strategy seems to be expressly the way the owners of clubs, using public services organize a strict and institutional system of control, which includes obligatory examinations paid for by the women and fines for being late or not going to the said appointments.

The women go to these examinations surrounded by the strong and explicit control of the security guards, although the workers forget that they are even there.

Another strategy involves client-friends (protectors), who appear as the saviors of those women who are more resistant to the dictates of the business, women who insist on running away.

These clients take the women who are a little more rebellious as their protégés. They don't escape the conditions of submission and debt: they only change “masters”.

The status quo of this reality is facilitated by the connivance of the Surinamese community, which discriminates against and specifically excludes Brazilians and Dominicans. This makes their exploitation all the more natural.

In the case of the Brazilians, small victories are granted to the women, such as the possibility of returning to Brazil with appliances, nice clothing and gifts for the children. They do this to maintain the dream of better days and an illusion of success. However, in Brazil, none of those interviewed said that their lives improved or that they managed to continue to work autonomously. At the same time, their living conditions and perspectives in Brazil also didn't change. When they come back, they find themselves in the same situation of unemployment, with no way of continuing their studies or training for a profession? Where to start?

It seems that the Dominican women do not care to repeat the experience and don't harbor dreams of going back to Suriname after returning to the Dominican Republic.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

They don't want to relive the violence they suffered. Some speak of traveling again soon, but to another country and legally and independently. New women are recruited without mentioning Suriname as the final destination. If they even speak of Suriname, it is just as a country of transit on the way to the Caribbean and Europe.

The women leave their countries the same way as they lived in them: unassisted and unprotected. They have no access to information, prevention or orientation programs for migrants, neither during the recruitment and decision-making process, nor when they left the airport or arrived in Paramaribo.

Brazilian women generally expect to be able to count on the support of a Brazilian network, but the reality of confinement and control makes access to this network difficult. Moreover, there is a bond between Brazilian and Surinamese exploiters. The Dominican women seem to count more on the solidarity between the women themselves who travel together or live in the same space, which, in practice is made difficult by the club owners.

Migrating is always an act of courage, sometimes even desperation. It means believing in one's strength and facing the new and the unknown. Migrating also means, especially in the case of Suriname, discrimination and segregation. The women, who in Brazil were simply young women or poor mothers, in Suriname are seen as “shameless whores”, threatening marriages and subjected to the morals of Surinamese society. Severely stigmatized, in addition to their routine of incarceration and submission, they spend an exhausting day dealing with clients and constant threats.

Among the different faces of omission is the question: whose responsibility is it to fight trafficking in women?

Data seems to corroborate that behind the crime of trafficking in people, there is also a great crime of omission, which manifests itself in three main ways:

- 1) If there are different factors that make women more vulnerable to trafficking in the long and medium term, these are the ones that need to be dealt with immediately.

The reality of trafficking is a clear manifestation of violence that specifically affects women. It is a product of their gender condition and the political, social and economic discrimination against them, which places them in a position of extreme vulnerability in relation to the trafficking networks. Fighting the trafficking in women means, first of all, eliminating all the manifestations of gender discrimination that affects women in our countries, so that human rights for women and men may be equally respected.

Trafficking in women is clearly a social question – of governments and of families – that combines crime and a situation of misery while it had previously been treated as an individual problem.

The potential to be recruited is clear at the moment when the women, who are trying to solve problems of survival on their own, are attracted by the apparently seductive proposals. They don't realize that their basic rights are being stripped away.

Now, there is an initial question: What is the role of the State in investing in public education, work policies etc.?

Despite all the accusations and discussions, and even recognizing the progress made in the role and the situation of women in “post-modern” society, it is undeniable that these citizens (women) form the majority of the Brazilian and Dominican populations. They contribute a great percentage of the productive labor for their country, although this remains invisible and is not considered in the statistics.

Female work and the necessities of this segment of the population continue to be ambiguous, not only in terms of statistics, but also in the direction of specific policies.

General numbers, which confirm the increase in the participation of the woman in the labor market (where they receive salaries that are lower than those of men) or in the access to schooling, for example, also conceal the reality of a great number of these women, to whom this very access is denied.

A large segment is not included in these statistics. It is this group of women that is lacking initial training, educational, professional and work opportunities and even conditions for feeding their children, problems that they must face alone.

So, to fight the problem of trafficking in women, one must first of all guarantee conditions and opportunities in life that young men and women deserve in their own country. It means ensuring, not just that their modest dreams of saving up money to pay for a class, to be able to give gifts to their children or afford a house to live in, will come true, but also to realize the dreams that are both professional and personal, of a full and dignified life. This should be the case for Brazil and the Dominican Republic. It should also be made clear that migration is a safe option, one among many, and not a risky one, a “lesser of two evils” option between the Dominican Republic and Brazil.

- 2) What are seen on the other hand are feeble actions and a lack of responsibility-taking. A first step would be to recognize that there is a crime to be dealt with. How



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

to invest massively in awareness-raising among women? How to investigate the accusations exhaustively and without prejudice? Confronting the trafficking in women also means a serious compromise for implementing intelligent strategies of punishment and suppression. It isn't possible that the explicit network – between Brazil, Dominican Republic, and Suriname – can't be confronted and dismantled through the cooperation and partnerships between the different security and care agencies. Between the three countries, in this specific case, much depends on diplomatic relations.

The evidence is clear: clubs registered as hotels, airport workers offering addresses for women when helping men to take their suitcases to the car, the ostensive scheme to keep an eye on the women at the health clinic in Paramaribo.

What is the role of the airline companies in the purchase and sales of tickets to traffickers?

Who does the money stay with for the return tickets, which are sold, but not used, while the women need to buy their return ticket another time?

- 3) The third piece of evidence is that of omission. This manifests itself in the lack of care given to the victims. Trafficking in women is a typical example of a crime that hides itself behind the image of individual options or actions from the very beginning.

The woman seeks or is seduced by this option due to a lack of concrete alternatives for survival. Once she is in Suriname and is subjected to a routine of incarceration and exploitation, she also seeks confrontation strategies (“self-exploratory” in order to pay the debt more quickly, attempts to flee, hooks up with a client-exploiter, climbs the network ladder as a way of “ascending”, playing the role of recruiter etc.)

Everything seems to be a personal option. In Suriname, attempts to seek help or official support are in general frustrated. There is no network or structure that takes care of the migrants, especially in a situation of trafficking. Why not organize a sensitive and systematic support system to care for these migrants, in a country with a large Brazilian community and with an identified trafficking route for women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic?

The lack of attention is the same when they return home. Cases where there were attempts to help were paralyzed due to the lack of preparation and commitment to deal

with the woman and her situation. The distance between the State and the victims of trafficking is enormous. At the most, there are incomplete reports or accusations that only serve to strengthen the feeling among the women that it won't help to do anything. Some denunciations only result in more vulnerability towards the trafficking network (which is far more efficient and organized), without any concrete return in terms of punishing the guilty ones.

In the Dominican Republic, the work of COIN stands out. Together with the International Organization for Migration, they help women who return, or those who have been identified by migration officials. Their help makes an enormous difference, something that is still only a dream in Brazil.

The situation of women generally tends to get worse once they return to Brazil, when they have no condition and no perspective to be reinserted into the job market, go back to school or get professional training.

Conditions and services for helping women who have been victims of trafficking should therefore be strengthened (in the Dominican Republic) and created (Brazil and Suriname). These services should help the women deal with the different situations with which they are confronted upon their return, based on the specific necessities of each case, and the formalization and accompaniment of procedures. If necessary, support should be available during this time, including for reestablishing links with the family, and training for insertion in the job market. Help should be proffered so that the woman doesn't revert to the situation that made her vulnerable to trafficking in the first place.

This means that the State must assume responsibility for the situation of violence in which the woman found herself and not make her into a victim again, treating her (as has happened many times) as if she were the criminal. The damage done to these women should be “repaired”, since the State is ultimately the one responsible.

In order for this commitment to be effective, some recommendations are necessary:

- 1) A section should be set up at the Brazilian consulate in Suriname and a Dominican consulate should be opened in Brazil. The women who return do so with the help of clients and friends. They don't receive any official help, which means, in some cases, that they incur a new debt. Once they are in Suriname they have no one to turn to.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

- 2) Oblige the Federal Police to investigate denunciations, regardless of the age of the woman, and to punish those found guilty.
- 3) Start a fund to cover the expenses for the women's return and support – the IOM and the consulates in the countries involved should lend their support to the women upon their return.
- 4) Set up a shelter for migrants with problems, a place for orientation and reference in Suriname that is easily accessible and secure, a way to face the problem head on, lending psychological assistance, support, and legal aid. It should be a place of reference and help for women in different situations to help them reintegrate into society or return to their own country.
- 5) Fight the discrimination that Brazilian and Dominican women are subject to in Suriname. Human rights conventions or international laws must require that help be proffered to foreigners, even if they are there illegally, within the framework of human rights. This, on the other hand, means acknowledging that trafficking exists and must be fought. Laws must be implemented that make individuals responsible. Support services must be established.
- 6) Use the same logic to guarantee access to health services, even for foreigners. It is also a violation of human rights to charge them for health services that are free for locals. In Suriname, they charge for tests and fines which increase the women's debts, since this amount is registered on their account by the owners of the clubs. Sending the results of the tests directly to the owners of the clubs is another violation.
- 7) A policy regarding care for the gold prospectors. They seem to be operating in a no man's land. There is no security and abuses are considerable. It is necessary to develop strategies that guarantee basic rights, and ways to protect the application of workers' laws.
- 8) It has been proven that there is a dynamic in trafficking that links the three countries. It would be opportune to hold discussions on migration with the authorities from the three countries through international organizations that guarantee joint actions to combat the problem, including an exchange program to make the aggressors take responsibility.

- 9) It is necessary to observe carefully international markets for women which, in essence, provoke or stimulate traffickers' actions. This implies understanding what the relationship is between migration, smuggling and trafficking in people.
- 10) Be careful not to combat trafficking by combating migration. On the contrary, there is a labor market that can absorb migrants, just like there are communities that take them in. Trafficking seems to be less intense in societies where migrants have already engineered some services or rights and formed communities. Combating trafficking may mean strengthening the position of the migrants and eliminating the obstacles to migration. This may refute the statement that migration must be limited in order to combat trafficking. On the contrary, migration and the greater reintegration of migrants facilitates or helps support trafficked women. If society attracts migrants, and, at the same time imposes barriers, it only facilitates and stimulates trafficking.
- 11) Governments should implement actions to help the children of the trafficked women. They always stay with a member of the family, but also don't have any guaranteed rights. It is necessary to intervene to take care of the education of the children, a situation of vulnerability caused by the departure of their mothers.
- 12) The care of children of migrant women must be arranged before the women travel. Whoever remains behind to take care of the children must do so legally.
- 13) It is also necessary to invest (including financially) in the group of women who will return and can become the educators of women who have been victims of trafficking, lead by women who were also victims themselves (education of equals). An intervention model based on help by colleagues, so that they can show through different concrete situations that it's really not worth it.
- 14) Strengthen action and communication between non-governmental organizations that are active in combating trafficking in people, which may contribute to strengthening the capacity for international pressure.
- 15) Strengthening institutional action to get to know, see and hear about trafficking in women in every country, including new studies that provide more specific information.

Last but not least, it is worthwhile examining the symbolic markers that are present in the configuration of the crime of trafficking and the patterns that reveal themselves in this research.



A trinationnal study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

There are two elements that blend together – the determinants of class and gender. What these two have in common is a naturalized way of eliminating inequalities. On one hand, we have what we call “subaltern subjectivities or internal slavery,” on the part of poor women (the subjects of this research). On the other hand, a naturalized perception of the action of exploitation is disguised here in the form of helping women solve their problems.

It seems urgent and necessary to invest in changing people's mentality, to recreate relations between people and between the sexes. Since prejudices and stereotypes regarding femininity and masculinity seem to be traditionally conserved or confirmed, in principle, they can (and should) be dealt with in the more detailed analyses of the different relationships and experiences of the individuals who appear here.

The idea of submission seems to justify trafficking and the women seem to accept some of the canons of the gender ideologies and asymmetries. However, this does not mean total submission, once they devise forms of rebellion. That is when they acknowledge their condition, strengthen their individual and collective identity, and identify and use elements of subversion in a given situation.

Women obviously enter into these situations at an extreme disadvantage: decades of training for heteronomy and submission, the burden of dual responsibility in caring for and providing for the children, the inconvenient perception of the female body as an object etc. They can also, however, build up resistance to this and occupy the space denied to them. This occupation comes, in principal, from the role they are expected to play (possibly submission) and, upon returning, use the notion of the role as an instrument for action. That is the only way to change things, to reconstruct. The oppressed individual seeks to understand the reason for this oppression, and to triumph over it. So, the more the woman assumes this role, the greater her chance of conquering it, and of positioning herself well in the different areas of social life.

These experiences and ideologies can be channeled constructively. This is an important part of preparing proposals and strategies for the women. Any proposal in this direction would necessarily need to be a part of a process of reflection on the role of the woman as a subject, who then becomes a protagonist by assuming her autonomy.

The women's shelter must be a space where they can both break with the past and build on the future, sharing with Silva (2006 p. 8) the notion that: It's not only through negotiation that the individual establishes with their environment, in every situation of conflict of the necessities and meanings, that helps them to form their behavior and their identity (...); it is also through the negotiation that they establish with the way the describe

themselves as a person, and in the game and relation of different identities and positions they assume.

This implies thinking of a new position for women that also “prepares” ways that they may position themselves in relation to masculine control, and in relation to the binary structure according to which the inequalities and asymmetries are built.

Some concrete measures are urgent and necessary to deal with questions of gender that underlie trafficking, such as:

16. Strengthening the gender equality programs in governmental and non-governmental offices.
17. Concrete investment in policies of affirmation and equity. More education, more health care, more work, better training and better qualification. The reasoning behind this is that educated women, who have a better quality of life, and more guaranteed rights, are less vulnerable.
18. Strengthen programs for girls and adolescents in situations of risk. Use education as a preventive measure, educating by gender, which seems simple but is very important.

In conclusion, the facts that appear here come from a very specific context. It is not possible to generalize and it is not our intention to tackle all of the dimensions of this crime. However, these facts should not be ignored either. The accusations and indicators on actions to implement and the dynamics of the trafficking in women on the “Brazil-Suriname” route and the Dominican Republic-Suriname need to be acted upon. These stories, reports and concrete experiences all tell us to open our eyes, and commit ourselves to finding effective measures for combating this crime.

Besides being the principal objective of the investigative process, the main expectation of these women and their families is to find ways to combat this crime. They hope and believe that by telling about their experiences, they are helping other women to avoid the same fate.

That is the commitment to them, not to the agencies mentioned or those that conducted the research, but to the entire society in the three countries that are indisputably involved.

Individuals and institutions must also commit to this.



A trinational study about trafficking in women from Brazil and the Dominican Republic to Suriname

Lastly, there is also the hope that all of us will contribute to improving the strategies for combating trafficking in women. This applies to the resistance strategies, as well as gender inequalities. This is not the work of just a few individuals; it is that of the entire community, collectively. We are convinced that this is the only way to really fight this crime.

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