THE CONSTRUCTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AS A 
SOCIAL PROBLEM;
A CASE STUDY OF NORWAY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Trafficking of human beings for prostitution and slave labour has along with smuggling of immigrants, become one of the fastest growing worldwide problems in recent years (UN 2007). The U.S Department of State estimates that about 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked annually across national borders (U.S Department of State 2004). According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 80% of the victims, mostly women and young girls, are forced into prostitution, while the remaining 20%, often boys or men, are faced with forced labor. The total market value of illicit human trafficking is estimated to be at $32 billion, whereas 10 billion is estimated to be derived from the initial “sale” of human beings and the rest from earned profits from goods and services produced by the victims of human trafficking (Hoffman 2007).

The UN defines human trafficking as a global problem and characterizes it as the modern-day slavery of our time. No country is immune whether as a country of origin, as a destination country or as a transit country for victims of human trafficking (UN Trafficking in Person Report 2006).

These facts illustrate the extent and the severity of human trafficking in today’s society and how it is considered one of the most important issues on the international political agenda (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006). However, Human trafficking has existed for centuries (Kempadoo 2005, Joshi 2002, Bales1999, Coontz and Griebel 2004), so why did it just recently get defined and recognized as a social problem? What makes a society define a condition as a social problem?
This research seeks to explain how human trafficking to the sex industry developed to be a social problem by using social constructionist theories. Norway will be used as a case study to investigate this and to test whether or not the social constructionist theories receive empirical support.
2. METHODOLOGY

Human trafficking is a complex issue which contains a vast body of knowledge. The research’s goal was to systemize this and find an answer to how human trafficking to the sex industry was constructed as a social problem.

**Case studies** are valuable to use where the research context is too complex for experimental or survey research (Bloor and Wood 2006). Human trafficking is a global problem that occurs in all parts of the world. Oslo, Norway was chosen as a sample to provide a detailed description of the situation as it is not possible to research the entire world community.

Consequently the research question becomes: *How was human trafficking to the sex industry in Oslo, Norway constructed as a social problem?*

Cases can be chosen based on their accessibility or familiarity with the setting (Bloor and Wood 2006). The researcher holds knowledge about the Norwegian society and is familiar with their public and political community. Norway was therefore a natural choice. However, familiarity can also result in subjectivity, which the researcher needs to be aware of and avoid (Bloor and Wood 2006).

In the theoretical framework used here, the social constructionist theories indicate that media and government response are the most important places where claims-making- and response activities can be observed (Loseke 1999, Spector and Kitsuse 1977). **Content analysis** was therefore chosen to search for themes related to this (Shutt 2001), such as law enforcement, policy and public response. “Content analysis is a research
method for systematically analyzing and making inferences from text” (Shutt 2001). The units of analysis were collected from semi public and public documents which were accessible online. Data from the Norwegian government could be found at their homepage: [http://www.regieringen.no/](http://www.regieringen.no/). Here, a stratified sample of government reports and government research reports on human trafficking were collected. Most of the public discussions and newspaper articles were found in Norway’s most read newspaper *Dagbladet*, which were accessible at [http://www.dagbladet.no/](http://www.dagbladet.no/). *Dagbladet* was therefore used as a sample of units from the public response. This data revealed both reactive and active responses to the issue of human trafficking in the Norwegian society. Through the theme observations, the researcher noticed a discourse between the government response and the public response.

“Discourse analysis engages in characteristics of manifest language and word use, description of topics in the media texts, through consistency and connection of words to theme analysis of content and the establishment of central terms” (Neuendorf 2002:5). Discourse analysis was therefore used to gain a better understanding of how human trafficking was constructed as a social problem as a result of a dialogue between the public and the governmental response.

The main disadvantage with case study research is that the results can not be generalized (Bloor and Wood 2006). However, the research will produce an in depth description of the problem that can lead to suggestions for future research. The content- and discourse analysis have been applied to describe the government and public response and the dialogue between these responses.
3. THEORY

3.1 A Social Constructionist Approach

This research will use Spector & Kitsuse's and Loseke's theories of social construction to analyze the issue of human trafficking. The approach utilizes the reality of social problems, as best understood through the terms, categories, and interpretations that human beings construct. Thus, the focus of the theory involves how we subjectively understand or experience structures or institutions, rather than focusing on the structure's or institution's "real" existence. Hence, social conditions are a result of individuals' and groups' definitions and are created through language on a discursive level (Korsnes, Andersen and Brante 1997). Therefore, social constructionist theories are important to use as a framework when studying a social problem such as human trafficking. The problem thus can be analyzed with the different definitions of the problem; how it has developed historically; and how it may be seen from the perspective of different groups, such as law enforcement personnel or human right activists. There is no doubt that human trafficking exists as a problem. However, the definition and the term "human trafficking" have been defined and operationalized by the United Nations. Their definition is one construction to understand the problem and would lead to one perspective regarding what measures could be taken to combat the problem.

3.2 A Sociological Perspective on the Emergence of Social Problems

In 1977, Spector and Kitsuse offered a new way of defining social problems in their book Constructing Social Problems. They argued that definitions of social problems had not been consistent within the literature of sociology and that sociologists
needed to “focus on how and why social problems emerged and evolved” (Best 2001:1). Consequently, they searched for a definition that would not just focus on the objective conditions (the harmful social conditions people call social problems) but rather construct a definition of the problem that could be tested empirically (i.e. how people thought about and discussed social problems) (Best 2001).

Objective conditions are the things or people that exist in the physical world that we can see. When defining a social problem, objective indicators such as age, ethnicity, or gender are used as measures to indicate the types of people who caused (or are a part of) the social problem. The fields of functionalism and feminism use this approach and are concerned with examining the real conditions in the social environment that cause harm and not what people “think” are problems. Social constructionists believe this is important as humans “make the world” and are the ones who morally construct the troublesome conditions. Consequently it is about how “we” understand and perceive the world and the meanings that we create about the conditions. Objective conditions can be present long before there are any worries about them (Loseke 1999) or an agreement that a problem really exists.

In the case of human trafficking, the objective condition existed for centuries but it was not until recently that it became a widely understood social problem. This was similar to the issues of child abuse and domestic violence. Why does this happen? Constructionists argue that there is not a tidy relationship between objective conditions and what we worry about or perceive as a social problem. A condition can be present without being agreed to as a social problem. It first becomes a social problem when it is named and given a meaning. Social constructionists argue that a social problem does not
exist until (and unless) it is defined as such (Loseke 1999). Consequently, social problems are not a kind of condition, but rather a kind of activity; a *claims-making activity* (Spector and Kitsuse 1977).

Spector and Kitsuse define social problems as: "the activities of individuals or groups making assertions of grievances and claims with respect to some putative conditions" (Spector and Kitsuse 1977:75). Further, they state that the central issue for a theory of social problems is accounting for the emergence, nature, and maintenance of claims-making and responding activities. The authors strongly argue that the focus should not be on who made the claims (the objective conditions) about the social problem but rather on the *claims-making and responding activities*. An official government response to such activities is the most important criterion to measure the effects and success of the claim-making activities. This is what needs to be documented and analyzed. Examples of claims-making are demanding services, filing lawsuits, passing resolutions, and supporting or opposing some governmental practice or policy (Spector and Kitsuse 1977).

### 3.3 Stages of Social Problems

In 1971, Herbert Blumer developed a five-stage model to present the natural history model of social problems. Based on this model and the argument that objective conditions do not alone constitute a social problem, Spector and Kitsuse developed a four-stage model of social problems. Their model differs from Blumer’s model in that, in their theory, the fate of a social problem “continues” after some official or governmental response has occurred. They argue that social problems can be re-defined through an
evaluation of the public response that can lead to alternative responses to the established procedures. According to Blumer, they also argue that the development from one stage to another is uncertain and problematic and that official and governmental agencies play an important role in social problems activities (Spector and Kitsuse 1977).

In the first stage of the model, "complaining groups or victims of the imputed conditions, attempt to assert the existence of some condition" (Spector and Kitsuse 1977:43). The condition may be defined as offensive, harmful, or undesirable. The assertions attempt to create controversy that can lead to a public debate or create a political issue over the matter. This then may lead to the second stage of the model where the legitimacy of the claim-making group(s) is recognized by some official organization, agency, or institution. If the situation gets institutionalized, it can lead to an official investigation, proposal for reform, and the establishment of an agency to respond to those claims and demands (Spector and Kitsuse 1977).

In the third stage, dissatisfaction is expressed with the established procedures for dealing with the imputed conditions and new claims and demands are raised by the original group(s). This can lead to re-negotiating the procedures, changing the current practices, or establishing a new, more specialized institution. The expressed dissatisfaction with the current system can lead to stage four. This occurs when groups base their activities on the contention that it is no longer possible to "work within the system" (Spector & Kitsuse 1977:153). The complaining group rejects the agency's or institution's response, or lack of response, to their claims and demands the development of activities to create new and specialized institutions to solve the imputed social problem. Two directions can be developed in this stage. One is to create new alternative
institutions to develop a social and political base for radically changing the existing procedures, while the other alternative is to withdraw from the current institutional system to create alternative institutions as limited solutions for group members (Spector and Kitsuse 1977).

Spector and Kitsuse thereby established the grounds for subsequent social constructionist perspectives. However, over thirty years have passed since their original theory was developed, and in that time, new empirical research and subsequent theories have been put forth. Loseke offers a broader explanation and describes which claims are
most efficient. She illustrates how social problem claims-makers have constructed, shaped, and transformed the complexity of daily life into images of types of conditions and types of people, and how the claims may be categorized (Loseke 1999:126).

3.4 Constructing Social Problems

Loseke uses the same terminology as Spector and Kitsuse, such as claims, claims-making, and claims-makers. In addition, she adds two new terms: audience (the people who hear the claims) and competition (the obstacles to win the social problems game). Further, she uses the term social problems work to explain the human activity of subjectively categorizing some conditions and people as social problems. The social problems game involves convincing people to do something about the problem. According to Loseke, a social problem has become successfully understood when it convinces an audience that a condition exists and something must be done to change it. In order to be successful, different strategies must be used (Loseke 1999).

The issue of morality underlies all claims (i.e. why are the condition troublesome?), and therefore, it becomes important to investigate moral perspectives when studying social problems. There is a hierarchy of credibility among of the claims-makers, where researchers and scientists receiving the most respect. Hence, a claim has more “weight” when they are the claims-makers, or the problem is backed up by research or science.

The audience differs in their evaluations of morality and how much they care. A problem, therefore, is identified successfully when it convinces audiences that a condition exists and something has to be done about it (Loseke 1999)
3.4.1 Constructing Conditions, People and Solutions

In order for a claim to be successful, it must typify the conditions and the people in them. The world is too big and complex for us to know the individuality of each and every thing, condition, and person in the world. “Typification or image should therefore be understood as social resources to get through the day” (Loseke 1999:17). In addition, a successful claim requires that important audiences are convinced that there is a type of frequent and widespread condition that has troublesome consequences or otherwise violates morality. It is critical to construct the claims in this specific way, because if successful, the claims-makers become the accepted authority and thus, also gain advantage in constructing solutions in the future. In order for the social problem to be characterized as a troublesome condition, the victims of the condition must be judged to be worthy of our sympathy (i.e., the victim is in no way responsible for the harm they experience) and the villains must be judged to be responsible (i.e., they intended to do harm). Further, when the claims are made, the audience needs to have categories to help them understand the problem, and it must differ from earlier social problems. Thus, when making a claim about a problem, there needs to be a “difference within the sameness” (Loseke 1999:81). A claim is also more successful when people are the cause of the social problem rather than social structures. The strongest claim will be widespread, personalized, and have a focus of the problem that is extreme, with devastating consequences (Loseke 1999).

There are two types of solutions to the social problem that can lead to social change. These are individual changes that impact how people act and think and solutions
solved through public policy. Public policy are solutions that uses social resources to repair conditions and/or to encourage or coerce individual change (Loseke 1999:100). The solutions need to be “better” than the problem, and the policymaker prefers easy solutions. Solutions to change individuals, rather than to change social structures, are therefore, more appreciated, since individuals are easier to change than social structures. “It is easier to convince audiences that ‘crime’ can be solved by changing people than it is to convince them that the crime can be stopped only by better schools, more jobs, and an end to racism” (Loseke 1999:109). The individual solutions thus seem quicker and easier than solutions requiring changing the basic organization of our social order (Loseke 1999:109).

Scientists who have the most credibility in the hierarchy will be at an advantage in making claims in the public arena. Yet, even so, the solution has to “fit” the political agendas and be politically acceptable (Loseke 1999). Successful claims thus lead to changes in individual behavior, beliefs, or social policy. Consequently, “to win the game of constructing social problems is to gain the ability to direct social change” (Loseke 1999:143).

3.5 Strict Constructionism versus Contextual Constructionism

Spector and Kitsuse’s theory has been criticized for ignoring objective conditions and the “real” world outside our construction of it. This is the strict constructionism where the analysts have to avoid making assumptions about objective reality. Contextual constructionism, however, remains focused on the claims-making process but also acknowledge making some assumptions about social conditions. This allows analysts to
ask questions such as, “What was going on in the social environment that led to claims-making about this problem at this particular historic time?” (Loseke 1999:206).

3.6 Constructing Human Trafficking as a Social Problem

This research will have a contextual approach to the social problem, in that there is clear evidence that human trafficking exists and this type of abuse happens every day. When defining how human trafficking became a social problem, sociologists would look at which individuals or organizations took action to raise the awareness of the problem of human trafficking and what actions were taken to respond to the problem. Since human trafficking has been occurring since the last century (Kempadoo 2005, Joshi 2002, Bales 1999, Coontz and Griebel 2004), why did it just recently get defined and recognized as a social problem?
4. HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NORWAY

4.1 Scandinavia- The Passion for Equality

Norway has been ranked by the United Nations as the best country to live in for six consecutive years. This is based on such criteria as life-expectancy, education, and income. Norway is also acknowledged for its generosity by being named one of the “world's most generous foreign aid donors per capita, giving away nearly 1 percent of its gross national product” (UN’s Human Development Report, 2006). Norway, along with the other Nordic states (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland), is known to emphasize equality and the assurance of the basic physical needs of its citizens. Relatively few other societies in modern times have been able to provide this, and “in their concern with equality and social justice, they have established new criteria for state action” (Graubard 1986:9). This is known as “the welfare state” which includes:

“broad public participation in various areas of economic and social life, the purpose of which is to promote economic efficiency, to improve the ability of society to master its problems and to enrich and equalize the living conditions of individuals and families. In social policy, the cornerstone of the model is universalisms; set out to develop a welfare state that includes the entire population” (Erikson et. al. 1987: vii).

The goal of the welfare state is to have an egalitarian society with a redistribution of income and other resources that will ensure the population with an equitable standard of living. This ideology has influenced the institutions of social policy, and these institutions have influenced the welfare of the population (Erikson et al 1987).
4.2 The Norwegian “World View”

Studies of Norway have illustrated how it compares itself to countries that are near, rich, and Western, especially with the other Scandinavian states. “It is a country whose people are internationally committed and feel that it makes a difference that they are committed. The people have an image of how the world ought to be and that image requires first and foremost that the world be a larger edition of Norway” (Ramsoey 1974: 412). Thus, there is a strong emphasis on values in Norway, as well as in the Norwegian foreign policies having to do with development, cooperation, and human rights (Gudmunsson 2007).

4.3 Human Trafficking in Norway

According to the UN, Norway is among the transit countries with a very low incidence of human trafficking and they are on the medium level of reported incidents as a destination country on a scale ranging from “very low” to “very high” (UN Report 2006). However, human trafficking has been increasing in Norway over the years. Norway is affected by trafficking in persons as are most other countries, and is seen as a transit and destination country for victims of sexual exploitation. According to the Norwegian government, Norway is an attractive market for human trafficking for prostitution because it is a rich country with strong purchasing power and few cases have been exposed or prosecuted (Ministry of Justice and the Police in Norway 2006-2009).

Human trafficking is in strong contrast to Norway’s ideology of equality and an egalitarian society. How can human trafficking take place in a country that emphasizes
these values? This research will explore “how did human trafficking in the sex industry become a social problem in Norway and how was it responded to?”

4.4 Human Trafficking as a Social Problem in Norway

Spector and Kitsuse define social problems as: “the activities of individuals or groups making assertions of grievances and claims with respect to some putative conditions” (Spector and Kitsuse 1977:75). In order to see when human trafficking became a social problem in Norway, we will need to explore several questions, including: How did the problem emerge? Who made the claims? How, and by whom, were the claims responded to?

Human trafficking started to receive attention in the Norwegian society in the latter part of the 1990’s. Since then, it has been an important part of the political agenda and public discussions. Three reasons can be mentioned as the explanation for this attention (Skilbrei and Polykova 2006).

1) The prostitution scene in Norway’s capital, Oslo, changed. Women from Sweden and Denmark have been part of the prostitution scene in Oslo for a long time. However, during the 1990’s, women from Thailand and Eastern Europe entered the prostitution scene.

2) The problem of human trafficking became important in the international political agenda to which Norway is committed. Norway was thereby forced to take the
problem seriously; perhaps more than they would have had to if the problem was less internationally significant.

3) As a result of the international focus and international commitment, interest groups, organizations, and individuals continued to create controversy over the issue and encouraged public and political debates (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006:7).

This research will further describe these three reasons in detail by using government research reports, government documents, and newspaper articles (Dagbladet) to explain how human trafficking became a social problem in Norway. Four major research reports have been conducted as part of the government’s plans of action to combat human trafficking. One of the goals has been to obtain more knowledge about the issue that will lead to a broader insight of the problem. The following reports are part of the first (2003-2005) and second (2005-2008) government plans of action to combat human trafficking.

4.5 Changes in the Prostitution Scene

In Norway, prostitution is legal, meaning that it is allowed to sell- and buy sexual services from people over the age of 18. However, making money off somebody else (“pimping”) is prohibited (Criminal Law 202). It is also illegal to buy sexual services from children under the age of 18 (Criminal Law 203) (Sexhandel.no 2008).
The first statistical research on prostitutes and human trafficking in Norway was conducted in 2003 ("Crossing Borders: An Empirical Study of Transnational Prostitution and Trafficking in Human Beings, 2004"). The statistics showed that there were about 600 prostitutes in Oslo, Norway, with 1/3 of the prostitutes coming from Norway (mostly drug addicts working independently) and the remaining coming from Asia (the largest group) and Eastern Europe. The qualitative research illustrated that there is a large difference between the women in terms of age and education and also a great difference in how the different nationalities operate (Brunovskis and Tyldum 2004).

4.5.1 Asian Prostitutes in Norway

The women from Asia, mostly from Thailand, often entered prostitution after staying in Norway for an extended period of time. Their motive to enter Norway was not to prostitute but to marry a Norwegian man or stay with married relatives living in the country (Kristvik 2005). Research shows that they entered prostitution as a result of a crisis, such as not getting a regular job because of language barriers. The Thai women do not operate in the streets, but mostly through massage parlors. They operate in a more discrete manner and hence, are more "invisible" and receive less attention. Research conducted in 2005 to investigate the Thai prostitution could not document human trafficking the way that it is defined by the UN. They were in Norway on their own consent and ran the services alone or on a cooperative basis (Kristvik 2005).
4.5.2 Eastern-European Prostitutes in Norway

The situation for the Eastern European women, however, is different. “Crossing Borders” illustrates the great variety between the women's experiences and how their situations change over time. The research explored the mechanisms behind trafficking and pointed out how the vast majority of the women chose to migrate and how some of the women knew they were entering prostitution. However, they still could have been exploited and hence, could have been victims of human trafficking.

The researchers found that poverty was not the exclusive cause for the Eastern European women migrating to Norway. Three reasons were mentioned as causes for leaving:

1) response to an acute crisis
2) long term poverty
3) wanting more from life.

The women thus entered Norway on different grounds and in different ways; some entered voluntarily with help from others while others were lured or forced. The report concluded that it is hard to draw an exact line between prostitution and human trafficking when pimps and other agents are involved in the process (Brunovskis and Tyldum 2004).

It is difficult to discover trafficked women, as it is not easy to make them speak. The traffickers exploit the fact that many of the women distrust and are unwilling to cooperate with the police. If they are discovered and helped, it is hard for them to report the traffickers because of fear for repercussions and the belief that reporting the trafficker will not make a difference (Brunovskis and Tyldum 2004).
Other qualitative research ("Women from Eastern Europe tells about the road to-and the life in prostitution in Norway") conducted in 2005 on Eastern European women in the sex industry (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006) confirms that the women do not necessarily choose to leave their country because of poverty but to search for a better life. Some of the women are EU citizens, others have Schengen visa, while others are in Norway illegally. The Schengen visa is based on a treaty signed my 15 European nations, to end internal border, checkpoints and controls. Thus, with a Schengen visa, you can enter one country and travel freely through the Schengen zone. Italy, Spain and Norway are all part of this zone (Euro Visa Info 2002). Hence, they have different opportunities to get established in the country. Once they have entered the prostitution, either voluntary or trafficked, it is hard to return home because of the commitments and expectations from home. Their family is dependent on them and many of the women state that the families back home are getting more and more demanding. The report further illustrates how the dangers the women experience decrease over time as the women become aware of them and gain enough knowledge to protect themselves. Paying too much for rent or services that do not exist (i.e. a place to stand in the streets when offering sexual services) are examples of how they can be tricked when they first arrive (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006).

The researchers state that in order to create a realistic and recognizable picture of the situation of human trafficking, it has to be understood as a continuum. The women’s situation changes over time. An example of a woman in the study can illustrate this. In her home of origin (Eastern Europe), she was offered a job in Norway as a bartender.
She ended up engaging in prostitution and has during this time, experienced being locked up and forced to sell sex. As she became aware of how the system worked, she started working independently and now has regular costumers and lives with the man she loves in a luxurious apartment in Norway (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006).

It is hard to determine the degree to which the women have been exploited and how vulnerable their situation has been. The report illustrates the complexities in the women's situation and stories that can contribute to a better understanding of the borders between prostitution-related migration and human trafficking into the sex industry. The researchers argue that it is important to create a realistic view of the situation, because if politicians have the wrong starting point, it creates obstacles for those working to identifying victims (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006). Many of the stories the researchers discovered were not dramatic or extreme. However, it is important to view the women's situation in light of their migration circumstances and the obstacles they meet in finding a well-paid, legal job in Norway, as well as the conditions they come from, in order to understand their vulnerability. Once their vulnerability is taken advantage of, it can be characterized as human trafficking. The researchers further conclude that it is important not only to focus on human trafficking but also view the women's vulnerability in connection with their situation in their home country, their relationship to the family, migration experience, and the stigmatization they carry with them by being a prostitute that is a huge burden that many of them want to keep secret (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006).
4.5.3 Nigerian Prostitutes in Norway

The scene continued to change and in 2004 women from Nigeria entered the prostitution market in Oslo. Their appearance made the prostitution scene more visible and placed the Eastern European women in the “shadow” of the Nigerian women (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006). About hundred women from Nigeria came to sell sex in the streets of Oslo within a couple of months. Since then, the number has continued to increase and statistics from 2006 show that Nigerian women are the largest group in the street prostitution in Norway today. The Nigerian women also are the most vulnerable group in Norway’s prostitution market because they have less opportunities to go indoors to work and they often do not have own apartments. Therefore, they dominate the city’s street prostitution and have to go home with the clients, which are considered more risky than if they could bring the client to their own apartments (Skilbrei, Tveit & Brunovskis 2006). The research further sought to investigate how and why the women left Nigeria, as well as how their life in Norway is organized and how they experience it.

The women left Nigeria due to poverty and the stress of living without security and future plans. When a woman leaves, it is an investment for the whole family. The women are dependent on traffickers or smugglers in order to leave their country, which leaves them with a huge debt (Skilbrei et al. 2006) that they must repay before they can return home (Bales 1999). The women are not necessarily recruited into prostitution, but the Western migration politics and the lack of legal work with high enough wages leaves the women with no choice but to enter prostitution in order to pay back the debt they own and to support their family at home. Most of them get a Schengen visa with residency in Italy or Spain, and from there, they commute back and forth to Norway. Some of the
women only sell sex in Norway while others also sell sex in their country of residence.

As with the Eastern European women, there is a huge difference in the personal experiences (how they got to Norway and who helped them get there) and thus, there is a vague line between different degrees of involvement and exploitation; from "helpers" to traffickers (Skilbrei et al. 2006). Different stages are organized by different agents with different motives. However, common for all the women are that they live under hard conditions in Norway. The women state that they are disappointed with the conditions in Norway, as they thought prostitution would be a temporary job until they would be able to enter the ordinary job market. In addition, they have to work in the streets (and not in clubs like they do in Spain and Italy) and there is less money to earn than expected. Despite the living conditions, they do not want to return home because of the commitment to the family and the expectation that they will succeed in the "West" (Skilbrei et al. 2006:8).

The change in the prostitution scene in Oslo, especially after the Nigerian women became visible in streets, has led to a huge increase in interest by the Norwegian media. A turning point for the media was when the police in Oslo raided a boarding house and arrested the owner, three employers and forty-nine women presumed to be from Nigeria. The owner and the three employees were later convicted for pimping. Since the end of 2005, a lot of the attention has been on where these women sell sex and how they approach potential customers. The women are known to be aggressive and "pushy" in the "fight" to get customers. This makes them more visible than the other prostitutes in the streets (Skilbrei et al. 2006).
As the number of prostitutes in Oslo has been increasing, the women have had a hard time getting enough customers. Thus, the researchers state that one can not necessarily argue that the sex-market is led by the demand to explain why so many women enter prostitution or become victims of trafficking. Despite the fact that more women are entering the prostitution scene in Oslo ("the supply"), it has not led to an increase in customers (the demand) (Skilbrei et al. 2006).

The research concludes that we need knowledge about the different sides of the phenomenon to deal with it without sending the problem back to where it came from. It is important to meet the women’s needs as well as the society’s need (Skilbrei et al. 2006).

All the research reports conducted by the government illustrate the diversity between the women’s situation and the vague lines that exist between prostitution, migration and trafficking. The women’s situations change over time, and it is not easy to recognize human trafficking “when you see it.” There are a lot of factors that play a part, and they all have to be considered and studied in order to understand how vulnerable these women are and whether or not someone exploited their vulnerability (which would be considered trafficking). The policies created and efforts undertaken to help these women need to appreciate this complexity.

4.6 Human Trafficking in the International Forum

Norway was forced to take the problem of human trafficking seriously when it became an important issue on the international political agenda in 2000. The Global Report estimates that between 200,000 and a half million illegal sex-workers, two-thirds
coming from Eastern Europe and the other third from developing countries, are living within the European borders (UN Report 2006).

4.6.1 Background for the International Response to Human Trafficking

The public awareness about human trafficking and the reason behind the UN protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking (2000) were based on some high profile cases in U.S. revealing human trafficking (Coontz and Griebel 2004). These cases led to the awareness of the lack of the anti trafficking laws in the country as well as a lack of legislation on an international level. Consequently, these cases led to a call for a broad legislative expansion (Joshi 2002).

Nevertheless, the issue of human trafficking was brought to the international legal community’s attention earlier, and thus, some legislation already existed prior to this.

The U.S. has historically experienced a great deal of migration from Asia, especially China. In 1870, the U.S. census noted 2,794 Chinese workers, with seventy-seven percent declaring themselves as prostitutes and the rest with service related occupations. This was a result of early globalization and people relocating followed by the abolition of slavery and the internationalization of the embedded wage labor. People were searching for new jobs and better life opportunities for themselves (Kempadoo 2005). The government saw the Chinese labor as a threat and in 1882, it passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. The government defended its actions by stating “in the opinion of the Government of the United States the coming of the Chinese laborers to this country endangers the good order of certain localities with the territory thereof” (Lee and Lewis 2003:176).
This set the stage for what was called the racialized social panic about the “white slave trade,” which was the white middle class fear of “their own sisters” entering the field of prostitution (Kempadoo 2005). The first legislation that was introduced to deal with this fear was the International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic of 1904, followed by the 1910 International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffick (Coontz and Griebel 2004). Human trafficking was during this time an issue of illegal immigration and seen as a threat to the national security.

In 1949, the UN passed the convention of the Suppression and Traffick in Persons and of the Exploitation of the prostitution of others (Coontz and Griebel 2004). However, the enforcement necessities of the Convention were extremely weak and the Convention has had very limited value (Defeis 2004).

In Europe in the 1980’s, cases involving human smuggling and trafficking were seen in connection with managing and controlling migration and toward the end of the decade, trafficking as connected with transnational organized crime and a threat to the society and its economy. Consequently, human trafficking was seen as forced migration across transnational borders and not as sexual exploitation of women. However, in 1993, human trafficking was addressed as a separate problem in the UN’s world conference on human rights in Wien in 1993 and in 1995, at the world conference on women in Beijing (Larssen 2007). As human trafficking started to receive attention in the public, the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking was introduced in 2000. Article 3, paragraph (a) of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking (2000) defines trafficking is as follows:
Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (UN 2000:2).

Further Article 3, paragraph (b) states that “the consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used” (UN 2000:2).

The Protocol is intended to "prevent and combat" trafficking in persons and facilitate international cooperation against such trafficking. It provides for criminal offences, control and cooperation measures against traffickers. It also provides some measures to protect and assist the victims. Some issues remain open with respect to the application of the Protocol to purely domestic activities (e.g. movement of victims within a country), which support international trafficking (UNODC 2007).

The key elements of the UN protocol serve to criminalize traffickers, protect the victims, and cooperation with other states in prevention efforts. The UN emphasizes governments’ engagement and the importance of international teamwork in the fight against human trafficking (UNODC 2007). To this date, more than 110 states, including Norway, have signed and ratified the Protocol (UN 2008). Another legislation that is used on human trafficking cases is the 2000 United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UN Report 2006).

The UN’s definition of human trafficking, the framework it has been developed within, and the enforcement of the legislation have received a great deal of criticism from human right activists, legal activists, and politicians (Kempadoo 2005, Lee and Lewis...
2003, Soederlund 2005, Coontz and Griebel 2004, Smart 2003, Bales 1999). This critique will be explained in more detail in the section 5.2.3.

4.6.2 Norway’s Implementation of the International Legislation

The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking was introduced in the year 2000. Consequently, member states needed to consider ratifying the law and implementing it in their own countries and pass their own legislation (UN 2000). Human trafficking thus legally was recognized as a social problem in Norway as a consequence of international law and the UN’s identification of human trafficking as global problem.

In 2001, Norway introduced a law that prohibited individuals from receiving sexual services for compensation from a child under 18 years of age. In 2003, Norway implemented the UN’s 2000 convention, also known as the Palermo Protocol (Ministry of Justice and the Police 2002-2003).

4.7 Political and Public Debates on Human Trafficking in Norway

An important place where social problems are identified is the mass media (Loseke 1999). After analyzing one of Norway’s most widely read newspapers, Dagbladet, this researcher discovered that human trafficking first started to receive attention in the media during 1997. After a closer look at the articles during that time period, it could be observed that human trafficking was considered an international problem and not a problem that occurred in Norway. The problem was seen as a result of
organized crime and was often seen as connected to drug trafficking and smuggling of human beings (Dagbladet 1997).

In 1998, Dagbladet started an investigative news series about the sex market in the capital of Norway, Oslo (Selvik & Vambheim 1998). This provided the first instance of human trafficking being documented in Norway, and thus, the first instance of the problem being brought to the public’s attention. The articles illustrated how the sex market had exploded in the last two years and how women from Eastern-Europe and Asia were coming to Norway for stripping, sex, and work in massage parlors. Further, the newspaper’s investigation pointed out that there were both incidences of “voluntary” as well as forced prostitution. Some of the women were in Norway on three-month visas, while others had married a Norwegian before they arrived (Selvik & Vambheim 1998).

As a consequence of this media attention, the government responded to the problem and hired its own researchers to investigate the problem. This resulted in the first government report on human trafficking of women in Norway. It was published by the Norwegian government in March, 2004 (Justice- and Police Department 2004).

The recognition of human trafficking as a legal problem in the international community led to increased attention and awareness of the problem in Norway. After human trafficking, as a social problem, entered the political agenda, the debate surrounded issues such as: Who are the buyers? How can we change their attitudes? Who are the victims of human trafficking? What efforts should be made to combat it? Should the focus be on law enforcement or social efforts and victim protection? In addition, examples of extreme and devastating personal stories of trafficking, as well as
reports of police actions towards traffickers, were being published (Dagbladet 1997-2008).

When analyzing the articles on human trafficking in *Dagbladet* from 1997-2008, an interesting observation came from the articles from 2004, dealing with victims of human trafficking from Nigeria who were becoming visible in the Norwegian prostitution scene. As a result of Italy and Spain's actions against human trafficking, victims from Nigeria were being transported to other countries, such as Norway. In Norway, the prices for prostitutes were more expensive than other European countries, and at that time, no one had been charged with trafficking. Hence, Norway seemed like a lucrative and somewhat “safe” market (Welde 2004). Nigerian women were looked “down upon” in the Norwegian media and morally judged as whores. The government researchers (Fafo) condemned this stance and stated that “as long as the prostitution was white, prostitution was defined as a social problem that was to be treated with social efforts and not through the legal system” (Fafo 2006). This illustrates how the visibility of an issue can change people’s attitudes towards the social problem and how this further can affect the efforts made to combat it. The researcher’s statement also illustrates how the Norwegian approach to the problem has emphasized social efforts in addition to law enforcement.
5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 A Social Constructionist Analysis of How Human Trafficking Became a Social Problem in Norway

How do the findings of the situation in Norway "fit" with the social constructionist theories?

5.2 Four stages of social problems

5.2.1 Stage One: Claims-makers

In stage one of Spector and Kitsuse’s model, claims-makers attempt to assert the existence of some condition that is seen as harmful or undesirable. The literature shows that two different claims-makers placed human trafficking on the political agenda in Norway. Spector and Kitsuse’s book Constructing Social Problems was written in 1977, before the time of cross-national diffusion of social problems (Best 2001) and the appearance of strong international law enforcement. Consequently, their theory did not include how a social problem can arise as a result of international "pressure" to recognize an issue as a social problem or how global problems are recognized within a nation. The research reports conducted by the government illustrate how Norway was forced to take human trafficking seriously since the issue was already defined as a social problem in the international forum and was responded to as such by the U.N and the U.S (Skilbrei and Polyakova 2006).

The UN can thus be seen as claims-makers that raised awareness about the condition in the international community. Consequently, they defined the condition and formed legislation and guidelines that its member states had to implement and enforce.
In the social problems game, there is a hierarchy of credibility of claims-makers, where research and science are the most respected. The claims-makers become the accepted authority of the social problem and thus gain advantage in constructing solutions to the problem (Loseke 1999). The UN is a well known and highly respected international institution. Hence, when a condition is recognized and defined by the UN, it will receive attention in the international community.

Once human trafficking was defined and recognized as a social problem by the UN, the Norwegian media became interested in the issue and started to investigate it. Thus, the media created a public debate around the issue of human trafficking. According to Loseke, the media is an important place where social problems claims are made (Loseke 1999). In Norway, political discussions usually take place in the public arena (Norwegian government 1997) and a broad public participation to master its society's problems is common (Erikson 1987). The media, therefore, becomes an important means for analyzing how social problems develop. Investigative reporters, as well as interest groups, organizations, and politicians, thus created a public debate and controversy around the issue and became the claims-makers that presented the condition to the public.

The stories that were presented in the media “fit” Loseke’s argument about claims-making strategies and how the claim has to be widespread, personalized, and the focus of the problem needs to be on the most extreme, most devastating consequences imaginable in order for it to be successful (Loseke 1999). The stories that were told were the most extreme cases of trafficking, both internationally and within Norway. This is
part of the claims-making strategy. In order for the social problem to be characterized as a troublesome condition, the victims of the condition must be judge as worthy of our sympathy (the victim is in no way responsible for the harm they experience). This explains why the most extreme cases of human trafficking are presented where the victim is typified as a helpless girl/woman that was lured and forced by a trafficker to enter the sex industry. However, research shows that the situation is more complex and there is not just one type of victim but rather a great diversity between the trafficked women’s stories. It is hard to draw a clear line between migration, prostitution, and trafficking as the situation changes over time and it involves several different agents with different motives. However, in order for the claim to be successful, it needs to portray a “black and white” picture of the situation to “catch” the audience’s attention. This explains why the media portrays such a “simple” picture of the situation of human trafficking. The articles also identify human trafficking as widespread and an extreme example of the negative sides of globalization.

Spector and Kitsuse’s theory does not account for multiple claims-makers. Best (2001) expands the social constructionist approach to constructing social problems and adds the fact that different claims-makers/transmitters are represented when a social problem is constructed. Stage one, therefore, is represented by the UN and the Norwegian media, which created attention, controversy, and public debate about the issue of human trafficking.
5.2.2 Stage 2: Claims Recognition and Legitimacy

This attention led to stage two of Spector and Kitsuse’s model, where the Norwegian government responded to the claims by implementing the UN protocol into its own legislation and developed a plan of action to fight the problem. This plan included, among others things, conducting research to investigate the issue and thereby gain more knowledge on the matter that would set the ground for forming public policy (Ministry of Justice and the Police in Norway 2003-2005). According to Loseke, the solutions have to “fit” the political agenda. In addition, she states that solutions to change individuals rather than to change social structures are more appreciated, as individuals are easier to change than social structures. The situation of human trafficking is a complex phenomenon, and the solutions seek to change social structures in order to combat the problem. Public policy, therefore, becomes difficult to form when the condition is of such complex character. Solutions are usually more successful when changing individuals rather than social structures and the situation is presented as “simple” and typified rather than complex (Loseke 1999). The solutions to solve human trafficking are complex, so consequently, a great deal of criticism has been raised against the Norwegian government’s plan to combat human trafficking.

5.2.3 Stage 3: Criticism against the Current Practices

The Government’s plan of action to combat human trafficking presented in 2003 was heavily criticized. This led human trafficking into its third stage of Spector and Kitsuse’s four-stage model of constructing a social problem. The critique that was raised was largely the same as the criticism that has been raised towards the U.S and UN’s law
enforcement: the victims are often criminalized rather than offered assistance and more effective social efforts are needed to enforce the laws (Coontz and Griebel 2004). Therefore, Norway also received criticism for focusing on criminalization rather than victim protection (Welde and Lesko 2004). Another issue that was largely criticized was the “reflection period,” where the victim is offered forty-five days to decide whether they want to witness against their traffickers. The opponents argued that this was too short a period of time for the women to decide on this matter, considering the traumatic situation they had been in (Welde and Lesko 2004). In 2004, seventy women had been interrogated in cases involving pimps and traffickers, and none of the women had used the reflection period (Welde 2004).

This criticism led to a new plan of action to combat human trafficking that was introduced in 2005-2008. This new plan offered new strategies developed in response to the critiques of the first plan of action against human trafficking (Larssen 2007:34). In 2005, the government developed Project ROSA, which is an institution that offers help and protection to the women by giving them, among others things, a secret address and possible juridical assistance (ROSA Report 2005). In addition the police developed its own police group, “Task-Force working to combat human trafficking in Oslo” (STOP), consisting of twelve specialized police officers to investigate and handle human trafficking cases (Ministry of Justice and the Police 2005-2008).

Nevertheless, the reflection period remained the same and the second plan of action continued to be critiqued. This led to the third plan of action, which was introduced in 2006, where the government responded to the critique and introduced eighteen new efforts to combat human trafficking. Among them was an extension of the
reflection period from forty-five days to six months (Ministry of Justice- and the Police 2006-2009).

The Norwegian government’s current plan of action against trafficking is a result of the social problem developing through the different stages and re-negotiating its procedures based on the criticisms that have been raised against it. Hence, as a result of public and political debates, the government has been able to develop a Norwegian understanding and approach to the problem at the same time as it corresponds with the international guidelines.

Six main goals are listed in the new plan of action to combat human trafficking.

These are:

- limit recruitment and demand
- ensure appropriate assistance and protection for victims
- ensure that child victims of human trafficking receive appropriate follow-up services
- ensure greater degree of exposure and prosecution of human traffickers
- ensure more knowledge and stronger inter-disciplinary cooperation
- strengthen the international framework and international cooperation


These goals are in accordance with the international protocol on criminalization, prevention, protection, and international cooperation.

Pro Sentret (the Pro Centre) is a “Norwegian national resource centre on all matters related to prostitution and a social service centre for women and men in prostitution” (The Pro-Centre 2005). The centre states that they are very pleased with the new plan that the government presented in 2006 and that the government wants to spend 200 million Norwegian Kroners (about $40 million) to protect the interests of victims of human trafficking in Norway. They think that Norway has the most solid plan in Europe.
to prevent and combat human trafficking and to assist and protect the victim’s exposed to this crime. However, despite the positive reaction to the plan, it is only useful for a few of the trafficked victims. First of all, the plan only applies to the victims that cannot legally stay in Norway. European Union citizens have legal residence in Norway, thus the reflection period is not offered to the victims who are from a country within the European Union. The instructions do not apply to those who have had their asylum application denied. Neither will it count for those who have applied for asylum or residency in another country within the European Union, which is the case for many of the women from Nigeria, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans (The Pro-Centre 2005).

Another example of how Norway has developed its own approach to human trafficking is the current debate about criminalizing the sex-buyer. This is a unique approach in the Scandinavian countries. In 1999, Sweden introduced this law into its legislation and the bill is currently pending in Norway. This also illustrates how Norway compares itself to their neighbor countries. In Sweden and Norway, the official view is that no prostitution is voluntary. Thus, they take a structural stand to the problem in which prostitution is seen as forced and the women that sell sex are victims of structural mechanisms. It has harmful consequences for both the society and the individual. They argue that gender equality cannot be reached as long as men buy sex and women sell it (Ministry of Justice and the Police Report 2004). It has been heavily debated whether criminalizing the buyer will have a positive effect in the fight against human trafficking in women. Some argue that this will “scare” traffickers from entering Norway and it will therefore decrease cases of human trafficking. In contrast, others are of the opinion that
by criminalizing the buyer, prostitution will “go under ground,” the prostitute’s condition will be worse, and the problem of human trafficking will just be moved to another country. This view sees criminalization as not combating trafficking in a global context (Jessen and Randers-Pherson 2007).

As a conclusion, human trafficking started to get attention as a social problem in the Norwegian media, which was reporting on international human trafficking cases and later, on the occurrence of human trafficking cases in Norway. However, identification of human trafficking as a legitimate social problem did not take place until after the international law enforcement (UN) required its member states to implement the legislation in their state’s legislation. This supports the argument that the claims-makers become the accepted authority and also gain advantage in constructing solutions (Loseke 1999) and Best’s argument about the cross-national diffusion of social problems and how the dominant transmitters influence the political strategies of law enforcement (Best 2001). The response to the claims have been developed through different stages and Norway has thus been able to develop its own approach (criminalizing the buyer/reflection period) as well as following the international guidelines(criminalize traffickers, protect the victims, and cooperation with other states in prevention efforts).

5.2.4 Stage 4: Rejecting the Institutions Response

In stage four, it is no longer possible to “work within the system.” Does this represent the situation of human trafficking in Norway? Is the government response to the problem inadequate to facilitate change and consequently, has it become impossible
to work within the system? Spector and Kitsuse’s model is hypothetical, meaning that
the model is open to change. Often, a social problem can attract different claims-makers
who, when generally allied in their concern about the problem, disagree about the details
of these characteristics (Best 2001: 9). This is the case surrounding the debate about
human trafficking in Norway. A great deal of criticism is still raised towards the
Norwegian government policy as well as their approach to human trafficking. Human
trafficking is a global problem and it has to be seen within a global context. The
Norwegian policy is built on International legislation and guidelines that have received a
lot of criticism.

Despite the fact that human trafficking was recognized as a social problem,
Kempadoo states that the international politics and regulation are developed on the fear
of unregulated migration flows and profitable cross-border activities that lie outside state
control. Thus, the focus is moved away from the trafficked persons and their rights to the
governments’ “hidden” political agendas, such as stricter immigration control. This often
results in the trafficked women not receiving the help they need but rather being sent
back to the home of origin that she once tried to escape. Kempadoo addresses the need to
develop a safer migration system. She argues that, because the global governance
paradigm of trafficking does not address the roots causes for the undocumented
movement and employment of people around the world, it also fails to significantly
reduce trafficking. She also criticizes how the trafficked women are seen as “victims,”
which serves to deny their agency. It is important to understand trafficked women’s
agency in order to understand their situation and develop strategies that will fit their needs (Kempadoo 2005).

Her main point is that more attention should be given to the underlying structural factors that produces the global structural inequalities and trafficking, rather than focusing on immigration alone.

The research reports conducted by the Norwegian government document the root causes and the importance of not seeing the trafficked women as “victims” but as women that made a conscious choice in leaving. The reports also emphasize the diversity in the women’s stories and how the illegal sex industry is growing as a result of the “West’s” strict immigration policy and the difficulties for migrant women to succeed in the Norwegian job market. Thus, the Norwegian government addresses these issues. However, as Loseke points out, public policy that seeks solutions to change social structures is rarely successful compared to solutions emphasizing individual change. The government also seeks easy solutions, which have proven to be hard when it comes to dealing with a complex problem such as human trafficking. Despite human trafficking being recognized and described as a legitimate social problem, few prosecutions have been made in the international community (UN, 2008). In Norway, only two convictions have been successful against traffickers since the legislation was enacted (Hansen 2006).

The governmental responses, which play an important role in social problems activities (Spector and Kitsuse 2007), are relatively new in a historical frame. Stage four occurs when groups base their activities on the contention that it is no longer possible to “work within the system” (Spector & Kitsuse 2007: 153). The author is of the opinion
that it has not reached this stage yet. However, this stage may occur if the current law enforcement cannot prove any positive result in the fight against human trafficking in the future. Because of the “hidden” nature of the crime and the relatively new legislation, it is too early to dismiss the system that has been created to solve the social problem of human trafficking.

The author further believes that the effectiveness of the response cannot only be measured in terms of prosecutions/convictions against the traffickers. Preventive efforts should also be considered in the evaluation, along with efforts governments construct to address the root causes. Norway is known to be the most generous aid donor and has multiple projects and cooperation’s with the trafficked women’s country of origin (such as Nigeria and states in Eastern-Europe) in order to conduct preventive efforts (Stoere 2006). These are efforts that, in the long run, can reduce the chances of women being lured and dependent on traffickers.

5.3 The Social Constructionist Approach

This analysis proves how a social constructionist approach can be used and tested empirically when investigating how human trafficking developed into a social problem in a country. From a social constructionist perspective, it shows how different strategies have been used in forming the claims as well as the solutions to the problem. It shows how the UN constructed a definition of the condition and created a legislation that the Norwegian government implemented in its own legislation.

Social conditions are a result of individual and group definitions and are created through language on a discursive level (Korsnes et al. 1997). Thus, Norway developed
its own approach to the problem based on critique and public debates that led to three different government plans of action within a three year time period. Norway has, through the help of research reports and public debates, developed its own understanding of human trafficking and the mechanisms behind it. The social constructionist approach can explain why the legislation and enforcement of the law has been unsuccessful, considering that its solutions are based on changing social structures rather than individuals, which makes it harder for the government’s solutions to succeed.

Social constructionists search to understand the emergence of an issue and the reasons why it becomes problematic. The research reports illustrate how vulnerable the migrant women are and thus, how easy it is for people to take advantage of them. Once this happens, it is defined as trafficking (UN, 2000). However, it is not a “black and white” picture and therefore, it becomes important to investigate the different mechanisms behind it to understand the situation. Why is human trafficking seen as problematic?

Answering this question attracts different claims-makers to the social problem. These claims-makers, while generally allied in their concern about the problem, disagree about the details of these characteristics (Best 2001: 9). Is it the fear of organized crime, transnational migration, and the “protection” of its own nation’s borders? Is it the fear for the “Other” and protection of its own nationality? Or is it the abuse and exploitation of someone’s vulnerability that makes human trafficking problematic?

The current debate on human trafficking contains these issues as interest groups and organizations have accused governments of having “hidden” political agendas behind the trafficking laws rather than looking out for the best interest of the victims. Loseke points out how the solutions have to “fit” the political agenda, which can explain the huge
international attention human trafficking has had the last decade and how its legislation can be used to “protect” its borders against transnational organized crime and illegal migration. It is not the thesis’ aim to answer whether this is the case, but rather to illustrate what led to the emergence of the problem and what factors contributed to its current state.

The presented literature has given empirical support to the social constructionist theories by proving how the objective condition (human trafficking) started to receive attention in Norway as result of subjective definitions and how different strategies have been used to promote the claims as well as the solutions to the problem.
6. CONCLUSION

This research has used social constructionist theories to illustrate how human trafficking to the sex industry in Norway has developed as a social problem. Three reasons have been mentioned as the cause for this: change in the prostitution scene, international focus on human trafficking, and public debates. Social constructionist theories have been used to show how the problem emerged and how the problem developed through the different stages. In addition, it has illustrated how different claims-making strategies have been used when promoting the claims, as well as forming solutions to the problem.

"To win the game of constructing social problems is to gain ability to direct social change" (Loseke 1999:143). The research has further illustrated how the claims have been successful in placing human trafficking on the political agenda in Norway and thereby making individuals become aware of the problem. However, the solutions have not yet been successful and structural changes have not been achieved. Thus, human trafficking as a social problem is still being developed in Norway. In time, we will see what solutions are successful and which ones are less successful.

Human trafficking is in strong contrast to the Norwegian ideology to have an egalitarian society with a redistribution of income and other resources that will ensure the population an equitable standard of living. It is clear from the research reports that migrant women have a hard time in Norway and are not ensured the same living standard as Norwegian citizens. It is difficult to differentiate between those who are trafficked and those who are immigrants that “choose” to enter the sex industry in Norway. It thus
becomes complicated to form policy that will be helpful and applicable to these women. This can explain why the current legal response has not yet been successful.

Nevertheless, the Norwegian government has conducted other efforts, such as cooperating with the trafficked victim’s country of origin to develop preventive efforts that will keep other girls/women from being trafficked. The Norwegian government is thereby addressing the “root causes” of the problem and seeks other solutions outside law enforcement and legislation. In addition, Norway, along with Sweden, has searched for alternative solutions to human trafficking, such as criminalizing the buyer. This is a unique approach and it illustrates their vision of equality and how gender equality cannot be reached as long as men buy sex and women sell it. Consequently, the Norwegian vision and ideology can be observed in their effort to fight human trafficking.

As a conclusion, human trafficking is still developing as a social problem in the Norwegian society and only the future will tell whether the Norwegian government will be successful in its effort to combat it.
7. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The research reports presented in this paper clearly illustrate the difficulties of identifying and separating human trafficking victims from migrant women in prostitution. More research should be directed towards studying the differences between these women. How can some women come here independently and why are other women dependent on traffickers? This can help to better develop preventive efforts to hinder other women from being lured by traffickers.

More research should be conducted on the processes of how the women came to Norway. Who are the traffickers? Why do they choose to become traffickers? How do they operate? A lot of research has been done on the trafficked victims. However, in order to develop preventive efforts, we need to know how the traffickers operate and how they recruit women. Preventive efforts should also be directed towards people that are in danger of becoming traffickers.

The same accounts for the buyers. Who are they? Most of the focus has been on the victims and not on the buyers. In order to combat trafficking, one has to reduce the demand. Thus, more research should be directed towards the buyer. In Norway, this issue has been addressed in that they are considering criminalizing the buyer. However, there have not been many studies directed towards the buyer.

If the current law enforcement and its legislation continue to show poor results. Alternative solutions should be suggested. More research should therefore be directed towards preventive efforts, both in the countries of origin, transit- and destination countries: what efforts work and which one does not?
Human trafficking is a complex problem. Therefore, other efforts should be developed besides law enforcement and legislation. As a conclusion, the author is of the opinion that more research and consequently more efforts should be directed towards preventive efforts.
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