

# Transnational digital networks, migration and gender

## Deliverable No. 10

Title of Deliverable:

### Thematic Report WP 8 – Sexualities Online

Date of Deliverable: 13 August 2012

---

Project coordinator: Panteion University (UPSPS)

Partners:

- Symfiliosi (SYM)
- Fondation Maison des Sciences de l' Homme (FMSH)
- University of Hamburg (UHH)
- University of Bologna (UNIBO)
- Peace Institute (PI)
- University of Hull (UHull)
- Utrecht University (UU)

---

Project no. 244744

Thematic Area: Culture in the creation of a European space of communication

Start date of Project: March 2010

Duration: 3 years

Dissemination Level

PU	Public	<b>X</b>
PP	Restricted to other programme participants	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium	
Co	Confidential	

# **Thematic Report**

## **“Controversies of prostitution and trafficking online”**

Mojca Pajnik with  
Veronika Bajt  
Iztok Šori  
Nelli Kambouri  
Maria Sarri  
Alexandra Zavos  
Matthieu Renault  
Dana Diminescu

**WP Coordinator: Peace Institute, PI, Slovenia**

Research teams

**Slovenia: PI**

Researchers: **Mojca Pajnik, Veronika Bajt, Iztok Šori**

**Greece: UPSPS**

Researchers: **Nelli Kambouri, Maria Sarri, Alexandra Zavos**

**France: FMSH**

Researchers: **Dana Diminescu, Matthieu Renault**

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	5
1.1. Grounding the Debate.....	6
1.2. Legal Framework.....	9
2. Mapping the Controversy: Analysis of the Prostitution versus Human Trafficking Debate On-line .....	11
2.1. Methodology and Sample .....	11
2.2. Data Analysis .....	13
2.3.1. First overview: the graph structure.....	13
2.3.2. Description of websites: Geographic location, categories and set-up .....	17
2.3.3. Forms of connection .....	24
2.3.4. Website's aims, main topics and target groups .....	25
2.3.5. Interactions between prostitution, human trafficking and migration .....	30
2.3.6. Framing prostitution and human trafficking .....	31
2.3.7. Type and content of texts.....	35
3. Case Studies: Methodology and Analysis.....	36
3.1. Peculiarities of the Digital Sphere in the Sex Economy: Between Opportunities and Instruments for the Market .....	39
3.1.1. Relations in Sex Economy: Gendered, Ethnicised and Racialised .....	48
3.2. Enablers and Hinderers of Agency: From Entrepreneurship to Surveillance and Control .....	52
3.3. The Private and the Public: Contested Roles of ICTs to Overcome Binarism ..	57
4. Conclusion.....	61
5. Supplement 1, Coding sheet.....	63
6. Supplement 2, Method for lightly structured depth biographical narrative interviews.....	71
7. References .....	78

## **1. Introduction**

In the last twenty years, information and communication technology (ICT) developments affected both the performance and the consumption of sex work related activities. The “old” patterns of how prostitution operates are still persistent; brothel prostitution is still a widespread way of organization in several countries across Europe, so is apartment or street prostitution, while various clubs, massage parlours may offer “softer” ways of sexuality-related exchanges. ICTs have enabled new ways of on-line exchanges that before didn’t exist, and increasingly is sex performed and consumed on-line via voice or video equipped chat-rooms, also dating-related on-line arrangements or cyber sex games, not to mention pornography and the abuse of it.

Interviews conducted for this research with migrant women and men who have experienced sex work related industry point to the value of ICTs that range from work-related use to private, family oriented practices of communication. What we can observe is the recognition of the fact that ICTs have a very significant role in the shifting of the public/private divide. For some migrants, ICTs bring new opportunities to redefine patterns of their work that mix with their private and intimate relationships, while for some their importance lies more in the possibilities to maintain contact with their loved ones across borders.

Still, the impact of ICTs on predominant ways of how prostitution operates is ambivalent. While, on the one hand, ICTs seem to offer new opportunities for sexuality related exchange, including those that would, for example, increase the autonomy of sex workers, it seems, on the other hand, that ICTs only added an e-dimension to the already known patterns – mobile phones, for instance, “only” made the communication easier but haven’t affected much the existing relationships determined by ethnicity and gender related inequalities in contemporary societies.

This study explores sexualities in relation to migrant mobility in Slovenia, Greece and France, as well as in the digital world as such, beyond national borders and boundaries, taking into consideration bias that regards gender, ethnicity, femininity / masculinity. The report follows a two-tiered analysis: in the first part we trace the positioning of prostitution versus trafficking debate on-line, while the second part debates the core findings of the three case studies. These two parts are importantly related, since they each portray an important – albeit different – aspect of how migrant sexualities on-line are gendered, as well as offering a glimpse into the virtual realities of sexuality commodification that has remained largely unaddressed by mainstream research. The focus is to analyse various representational strategies of transnational migrant sexualization practices as these appear in digital sphere. Stereotypical representations of migrant women and men in text and picture in various digital media are explored, where their impact on gender relations is of main concern. Here the focus is to explore how representations of

migrants' practices (and migrant women in particular) related to sexualities in digital sphere influence migrants' appearances, their visibility or absence, their self-presentation or their silencing.

### **1.1. Grounding the Debate**

The research study on the controversy analysis is applied in this report as "explanatory research" that is appropriate when little is known about the topic. While extensive literature exists on prostitution and human trafficking, both topics are under-researched in their relation to on-line appearances. No research exists that would tackle the debates on human trafficking on the internet, while some aspects of prostitution/sex work found some analysis that is, however, limited in scope. Also, analyzing prostitution, trafficking and migration together as potentially interrelated phenomena is not a common approach and these are most often debated separately, while relations to on-line environment haven't so far been analyzed.

The term "sex work" was coined by activist Scarlet Harlot in the 1970s to "refer to the explicit exchange of erotic labour for a mutually agreed upon amount of money, goods or services. Though "sex work" is often considered to be a euphemism for prostitution, the sex industry encompasses many different kinds of work, many of which never involve genital contact and some of which don't involve any kind of physical contact at all."<sup>1</sup> Its usage is linked to the sex workers' movement that begun since the 1980s to demand that prostitution and other paid sexual services should be recognized as a form of labour and that the human and labour rights of sex workers should be respected.

There has been a lot of criticism of the usage of this term, primarily by feminist scholars and activists who argue that prostitution is a form of coerced activity and should be not be recognized as work or labour, but as a form of male sexual violence against women. Proponents of this argument advocate an abolitionist approach and are against the usage of the words "sex work" or "sex worker" because they silence and obscure the abusive and violent character of prostitution. According to them, prostitution is neither a "profession" nor a "choice" that women make.<sup>2</sup> While acknowledging the multiple forms of male control, exploitation and violence that often dominate sex work, in this report we also emphasize the need to recognize sex workers' agency.

Today, sex work is associated with the sex industry, which, according to some

---

<sup>1</sup> Ray, Audacia. 2007. Sex on the Open Market: Sex Workers Harness the Power of the Internet. in K. Jacobs, M.Janssen, M. Pasquinelli, *C'LICKME: A netporn studies reader*. Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, p. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffreys, Sheila. 1997. *The Idea of Prostitution*. Queensland: Spinfex Press, p. 3.

authors,<sup>3</sup> also includes striptease, erotic dance, sex hot lines and even pornography. Others<sup>4</sup> insist that these various forms should be treated separately, particularly so prostitution and pornography. One frequently voiced dilemma is whether the considerations of human trafficking should limit themselves solely to trafficking for sexual exploitation, or other types of forced labor should be included as well.<sup>5</sup> While some<sup>6</sup> urge for a limited approach, meaning concentrating on trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation only, others<sup>7</sup> argue that human trafficking includes forced labor in other fields as well, such as agriculture and construction, or domestic work, and that these types of coercion should be considered along with sexual exploitation rather than separately. As regards human trafficking, there are also disagreements on whether or not it should be treated together with human smuggling. There are some qualms that by viewing human trafficking exclusively as a form of (socially and legally constructed) "illegal" migration we are at the risk of overlooking violence, abuse and discrimination, all of which define human trafficking as an exploitation practice that places people in master-slave relationships. At the same time, such limited discussions reproduce the image of human trafficking involving coercion as opposed to human smuggling involving a voluntary act.

Exploring the on-line environment we wanted to analyse the general controversy on the topics of prostitution/human trafficking by way of analyzing non-commercial websites. Previous research has shown that general public, media and also theoretical discussions tend to dichotomize the two phenomena, reconfirming the dividing lines between them. Our previous research<sup>8</sup> has found that realities are much more complex, pointing to the

---

<sup>3</sup> Weitzer, Ronald. 2003. Why we need more Research on Sex Work. In *Sex for Sale: Prostitution, Pornography, and the Sex Industry*, ed. R. Weitzer, 1–13. New York: Routledge.

<sup>4</sup> Kuo, Lenore. 2002. *Prostitution Policy: Revolutionizing Practice Through a Gendered Perspective*. New York: New York University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, Liz. 2005. "'You Can Find Anything You Want': A Critical Reflection on Research on Trafficking in Persons within and into Europe," *International Migration* 43(1–2): 235–265.

Freedman, Jane. 2003. Selling Sex: Trafficking, Prostitution and Sex Work amongst Migrant Women in Europe. In *Gender and Insecurity: Migrant Women in Europe*, ed. J. Freedman, 120–136. Aldershot: Ashgate.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffreys, Sheila. 2006. The Traffic in Women: Human Rights Violation or Migration for Work? In *Migrant Women and Work*, ed. A. Agrawal, 195–217. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

<sup>7</sup> The ILO report *A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour* from 2005 (pp. 12–15) states that human trafficking for sexual exploitation accounts for 11 percent of all forms of forced labor. ILO defines trafficking in humans as one form of forced labor, where trafficking for sexual exploitation accounts for 43 percent of forced labor; in 98 percent of examples, this involves trafficking in women or children; trafficking for economic exploitation accounts for 32 percent of all cases.

<sup>8</sup> Pajnik, Mojca. 2008. *Prostitution and Human Trafficking: Gender, Labour and Migration Aspects*. Ljubljana: Mirovni inštitut; Pajnik, Mojca. 2010. Media Framing of Trafficking. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12(1): 45–64; Pajnik, Mojca. 2009. Mnenja moških o prostituciji in trgovanju z ljudmi (Opinions of males on prostitution and human trafficking). *Revija za kriminalistiko in kriminologijo* 60(4): 309–319; Pajnik, Mojca and Urša Kavčič. 2008. Sodne prakse, povezane s trgovanjem z ljudmi in prostitucijo v Sloveniji (Case law related to prostitution and trafficking in human beings in Slovenia). *Revija za kriminalistiko in kriminologijo* 59(2): 141–154.

inadequacy of the division and to the interchangeable relations between the phenomena.

The definition of prostitution as violence or sex work, and of prostitutes as victims or sex workers, is often the principal point of departure in considerations of prostitution. Similarly polarized are polemics on human trafficking. Those supporting the abolition of prostitution define trafficking in human beings as violence and argue for the policies of victim protection and criminalization of perpetrators. Advocates of sex work, on the other hand, argue for the de-victimization of women involved in trafficking and plea for the recognition of human rights.

Our point of departure is the argument that discussing prostitution and human trafficking requires confronting the dominant perceptions. In western societies striving to enhance economic efficiency, these either perpetuate the neo-capitalist idea of free choice, or take over the victimization argument which presumably makes obvious the need for "fight and prevention policies" in prostitution or human trafficking.<sup>9</sup>

We start from the thesis that one-sided definitions of prostitution, either as the selling of a body identical to any other service provided for money or as a priori violence against women, are inappropriate and inadequate. On the other hand, trafficking in human beings is commonly equated with the sexual exploitation and victimization of women, while other types of forced labor are often excluded from debates, and also are migration aspects of both sex work and trafficking neglected.<sup>10</sup>

Prostitution is related to various types of work, such as escort, dance, strip, porn, phone or TV-sex etc. that are prone to be dependent on particular gender, ethnic, class etc. hierarchies. We want to explore whether on-line discourses and debates reinforce the sex work/violence dichotomy or are, alternatively, providing novelties in the approach to treat prostitution and trafficking as interrelated phenomena that are becoming increasingly also migration and larger labour (economic and social) issues. We want to explore the kinds of on-line environments, the kind of sites there are, what information they provide, how they frame discourses on prostitution, trafficking and migration. Thus, we're interested to explore if and to what an extent the on-line environments challenge the controversy prostitution/trafficking by acknowledging interrelations between them, also with reference to wider migration and labour market trends.

---

<sup>9</sup> Pajnik, Mojca. 2008. *Prostitution and Human Trafficking: Gender, Labour and Migration Aspects*. Ljubljana: Mirovni inštitut.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



## 1.2. Legal Framework

Policy making and legislation on gender and migration have been focused on trafficking, a tendency that can be attributed to the privileging of trafficking in the EU policy agenda on gender and migration.<sup>11</sup> It seems that the EU policies in the area of both trafficking and prostitution are primarily oriented towards anti-trafficking activities, i.e. activities that perpetrate the criminal networks and aim at saving the victims. A proof of the point is that the EU legal framework and the national transpositions across Europe make collaboration of trafficking victims with the police and legal authorities a prerequisite for granting any state assistance, protection and support, as well as a residence permit that allows victims a legal stay. The common EU platforms leave many European states to adopt own, specific legal orders that may or may not resemble to the situation in other member states. Prostitution in Slovenia was decriminalized in 2003, yet prohibited in public places to eliminate the threat to public order.<sup>12</sup> The zero-tolerance measures are not only a part of the laws regulating prostitution, but also of the policies aimed at preventing human trafficking and of anti-migration laws. Slovenia abolished the article in the law on public order which had stipulated that prostitution was an offense, but decriminalization also brought a regulation that defines the framework of morality – “indecent behaviour,” meaning that “offering sex services in public places” is penalized. The activity of pimping and mediation of prostitution are criminal offenses, while clients in prostitution are not the subject of legislation. Prostitution in Slovenia is mainly organized in apartments and night clubs, whereby the share of migrant women is especially high in the last case. Most of them are officially employed as “artistic dancers” based on issued work permits, a fact that puts the state in control over the number of migrant women working in prostitution.<sup>13</sup>

In France, prostitution is legal (except for minors and vulnerable persons such as pregnant women and disabled persons), but soliciting and procuring are forbidden, including passive soliciting (since the law of 2003), “hotel procuring” (allowing one or several persons to prostitute themselves on a regular basis in a place opened to the public or used by the public) and “support procuring” (providing help, assistance or protection to the

---

<sup>11</sup> Kambouri, Nelli. 2010. Thematic Study on Intercultural Violence. GeMIC Project <http://www.gemic.eu/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Wp8-Violence-Greece.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> The first proposal to decriminalize prostitution was put forward in 1996. Until then, prostitution was treated as an offense in accordance with the law from 1974. Owing to unfavorable public opinion the proposal was not submitted to the National Assembly until 2001, when a group of MPs submitted the amendments to the law on offenses against public order and peace, proposing the decriminalization of prostitution, i.e. the removal of the article stipulating that involvement in prostitution was an offense. Although work in prostitution has not been a criminal offense in Slovenia since 2003, prostitution is mentioned only in laws concerned with prevention policies, meaning that legislation still defines prostitution as an activity that threatens public order.

<sup>13</sup> Recently Slovenia has been warned by several international actors that migration of women from Dominican Republic working in night clubs has signs of trafficking in persons.

prostitution of others). This latter ban is particularly criticized, because it can lead to the incrimination of anyone in the circle of a prostitute: boyfriend or mate, young adults, friends, colleagues, etc. In addition, prostitutes' incomes are liable to tax. In this respect, the French government is sometimes called the "main procurer in France". Since the "Marthe Richard" law of 1946 (which banned prostitution in "houses of ill repute" - or brothels - within the borders of Metropolitan France), abolitionism does not only struggle against the abolition of the regulation of prostitution, but also for the abolition of prostitution as such. In short, prostitution is in an "in-between" situation. On the one hand, it is not punished by the penal law; but, on the other hand, it is considered as the preliminary condition of various offenses of procuring and (active and passive) soliciting.

Also in Greece, prostitution is officially recognized as a "legal activity" but not as a profession since the 1999 law which penalizes street prostitution and transfers the responsibility for issuing of permits for legal brothels from the police to the municipalities. It applies to any person who wants to work in the sex industry (nationals, EU citizens, migrants) with the exception of minors (under 18) and married women. Sex work is therefore only legal in brothels. The conditions under which brothels are licensed are very prohibitive; consequently, only three brothels throughout Athens operate legally. Although sexual services are exchanged in Athens mostly illegally, according to key informants, the police issues some work permits to female sex workers, including immigrants, who usually have all the necessary documents to stay legally in the country. Overall, the legal regime produces a grey area, which feeds on illegality and the precarious status of sex workers working in unlicensed brothels. In this grey area, the discrimination against women sex workers is pronounced and it is estimated by the Greek Union of Sex Workers (Somateio Ekdidomenon Proston) that only 10% of the women employed in the brothels hold a work permit and health certificate, while 90% are forced to work illegally. Although, according to the law, the owners are legally responsible for the brothels, it is usually the sex workers and the cleaning staff who are arrested and taken to trial during police checks, even when they hold the necessary work permits and health certificates.<sup>14</sup> The female owners of brothels are also the usual targets of the police, while pimps are very rarely arrested or persecuted, and clients are not penalized at all. Since a 2010 amendment to the law, illegal prostitution no longer constitutes a criminal offense in Greece: the arrest and imprisonment of illegal prostitutes and owners of illegal brothels is penalized with insignificant fines. This form of illegalization, however, generates significant profits for those who act as "protectors".

---

<sup>14</sup> This information is published on the website of the legal representative of the Union. <http://moraitislaw.gr/%CE%86%CF%81%CE%B8%CF%81%CE%B1>

## **2. Mapping the Controversy: Analysis of the Prostitution versus Human Trafficking Debate On-line**

### **2.1. Methodology and Sample**

Our research examines 351 non-commercial websites on the topic of prostitution and human trafficking. Websites of the kind mentioned were thus our sampling unit and the goal was to build a representative (if not exhaustive) corpus of the actors engaged in the prostitution/human trafficking debate on the web. We've retrieved a list of relevant websites using an exhaustive list of 60 search terms in English language with the help of the top search engine Google.

For similar research purposes often a very limited number of search terms is used. Deciding for only a couple of queries was not an option in our case because our goal was to look in depth into the debates and see the relations between the phenomenon of prostitution and human trafficking, including their potential framing as migration and/or labour related issues. The decision for search terms was done on the basis of literature review and by mirroring the existing off-line debates. Therefore, we included a range of search terms that define prostitution in various ways, for example in the context of the sex trade ("sex work", "sex service", "sex industry"), as violence ("prostitution and violence", "exploitation of prostitutes"), including reference to various kinds of prostitution ("sex on-line", "brothel prostitution", "LGBT prostitution", "migrant prostitution"). Similarly, we searched for various explanations of trafficking and thereby used terms explaining various understandings/kinds of trafficking ("trafficking in human beings", "trafficking in women", "migrant trafficking"), or reflecting various framings of the phenomenon ("trafficking and slavery", "organized crime", "forced prostitution").

As noticed, in defining search terms a special effort was made to capture the potential inter-relation between prostitution and trafficking and to explore links to issues of migration, gender and economy/labour. To undertake such an in-depth exploration we used the "Lippmannian Device" ("Google Scraper") developed by the Digital Methods Initiative<sup>15</sup> in order to retrieve the first 100 websites for each query. Finally, we ranked the retrieved websites according to their occurrences (for how many queries they appear in the first 100 results) and came to the number of 421 websites.

Then, among the ranked retrieved websites the relevant sites were selected; by relevant we meant the websites specifically dedicated to human trafficking and/or prostitution issues from a non-commercial perspective. Consequently, we came to a database comprising 374 websites. 47 websites that were not recognized as relevant were excluded: they were recognized as sites that only occasionally or randomly report about the issues and are not specifically

---

<sup>15</sup> <https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/ToolDatabase>

dedicated to them, like too general media sites. Also, some governmental or NGO websites with, for our purposes, too large a scope<sup>16</sup> were excluded, like websites dedicated to gender inequality, violence, HIV/AIDS, suicide, racism, domestic work, migration/development issues (with no reference to prostitution and/or trafficking). The database captured some commercial sites that were excluded. In addition, we excluded a small number of websites on account of their main language being beyond our own language skills. It should be emphasized that we assured that our research team “covered” several languages, since we wanted to keep the criteria of language as an excluding criteria negligible. While the vast majority of sites are in English, we also analyzed sites in French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Slovenian, BHS, Greek, Czech, and Russian. Also, we kept in the database sites that exist in languages not understood by the research team, like Danish or Dutch, but are multilingual sites and/or have extensive English or other above mentioned language sections. These circumstances allowed us to exclude only about 2% of the websites for reasons of language barriers.<sup>17</sup>

Our next step was to explore the controversy’s “web territory” which meant expanding the corpus: the selected websites were defined as the starting points (or “seed”) of the automatic web exploration process (or “crawl”). Starting from these websites, the crawler followed the hypertext links (at distance 1 = exploration of the websites of the seed + exploration of the websites quoted by the websites of the seed) and retrieved thousands of new websites. Then we ranked the websites according to two parameters: first by seed\_out\_degree or the number of websites of the seed quoted by the new website; second, by seed\_in\_degree which meant the number of websites of the seed that quote the new website. We selected 418 best ranked websites.

Next, we selected the relevant sites from the list, again, by deciding whether or not each individual website is to be included in the database. Adding the selected websites to the previous list/seed, we launched a new crawl and retrieved new websites (excluding the websites already refused in the previous step) – this method is “recursive” inasmuch as the selection/crawling process can be repeated as many times as necessary. The aim was to do a final “check” in order to be sure not to have missed important websites, and this process resulted in the database of 375 websites. We then selected the remaining websites and finally we generated a database of 421 websites. Finally we ended up with an exhaustive and representative database of 351 websites on trafficking/prostitution debates on the web that was used for analysis: these excluded sites that were found not to be relevant for the analysis, because in the list there were still websites that were too wide in their scope; some were inaccessible (under

---

<sup>16</sup> Initially, we labelled these sites as frontier sites but in the further steps of the research process we kept them in the database only if they had a significant number of hyperlink connections to the main corpus.

<sup>17</sup> We excluded sites in languages such as Armenian, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and Belorussian. Mostly it was only one or two sites in languages we didn’t master that appeared in the database and were therefore consequently excluded from the analysis.

maintenance for a long period, server not found, or access only to the invited); there were also some doubles (identical websites with different urls).

In parallel, the WP8 coordinating team held several lengthy and deep discussions of the concepts to use and the issues we needed to address in order to bring in the main project research questions, as well as hypotheses about the on-line environment that were based on our theoretical knowledge and previous empirical work. Based on these discussions, a draft coding sheet was composed and more discussion followed. Then, several versions of the coding sheet were tested. Initially, each member of the team coded a number of different websites and comparison of the results stimulated further discussion and work on the coding sheet and instructions for coding. In the final analysis, the coding sheet and the detailed coding instructions were shared with the partner teams, who also coded the same websites in order for us to be able to verify how clear are the coding instructions and whether or not the coding matched the already tested coding of the Slovene team, this pushed further discussion on the sheet that was given further modifications. We also prepared additional notes on coding, explaining some of the more difficult categories with practical examples. It was our utmost concern to ensure that the actual coding would be synchronized as much as possible, thus providing us with a solid data base.

The data collection or the coding sheet (see Annex) contains two parts: the first part – “Website sampled” – explores general information about the site, such as its location, languages, the quality of the set-up, it identifies its actors, forms of connections available, the target groups the site wants to attract etc. The second part – “Text sampled” – explores characteristics of topics of research (prostitution, trafficking, migration) in written text and in video material where we wanted to identify the patterns of approaches to the topics.

## **2.2. Data Analysis**

The data analysis combined two methods: quantitative statistical using *SPSS* software<sup>18</sup> (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and web cartography using *Gephi* software<sup>19</sup>.

### **2.3.1. First overview: the graph structure**

The first step is to interpret the *general* hyperlink structure of the graph of websites composing the corpus, regardless of the coding. Before this, few

---

<sup>18</sup> <http://spss.softonic.fr/>.

<sup>19</sup> <http://gephi.org/>. *Gephi* is a tool for visualising and working with networks of all sorts, especially with graphs of the web. It was developed by Matthieu Bastian, Matthieu Jacomy and Sébastien Heymann.

explanations about graph layout with *Gephi* have to be provided.

Algorithms of graph spatialization are manifold, but all of them follow a basic rule: two nodes that are connected *attract* each other; two nodes that are disconnected *repulse* each other. The position of a node in the graph is therefore depending on all its relations with the other nodes: it is a relative position and there is no external referential. In that sense, "north/south" and "east/west" references have no meaning: one can rotate the graph without altering its structure. As regards the *size* of the nodes, many criteria can be used. In the following analysis, the size depends on the number of inbound links<sup>20</sup>: the size of the node/website "A" depends on the number of other nodes/websites that cite A (have a link towards "A"). Finally, concerning the links (or in graph terminology, *edges*), their colours are in our analysis defined as follows: if the link is unidirectional ("A" cites "B", but "B" does not cite "A"), the colour of the link is grey; if the link is bidirectional, its colour is a mixing of the colours of both nodes.

Map 1 shows the hypertext graph of the corpus.<sup>21</sup> The density of the graph is 2.9%.<sup>22</sup> However, one can immediately observe that edges are differentially distributed in the graph. Indeed, the graph is composed of two clusters, which means groups of websites that are much more connected between each other than to the rest of the graph. These two clusters are not totally disconnected; but there is nonetheless an almost empty zone between them, or more precisely a *structural hole* that immediately reveals the scarcity of relations/links between the two clusters (the graphical representation manifesting the very structure of the graph).

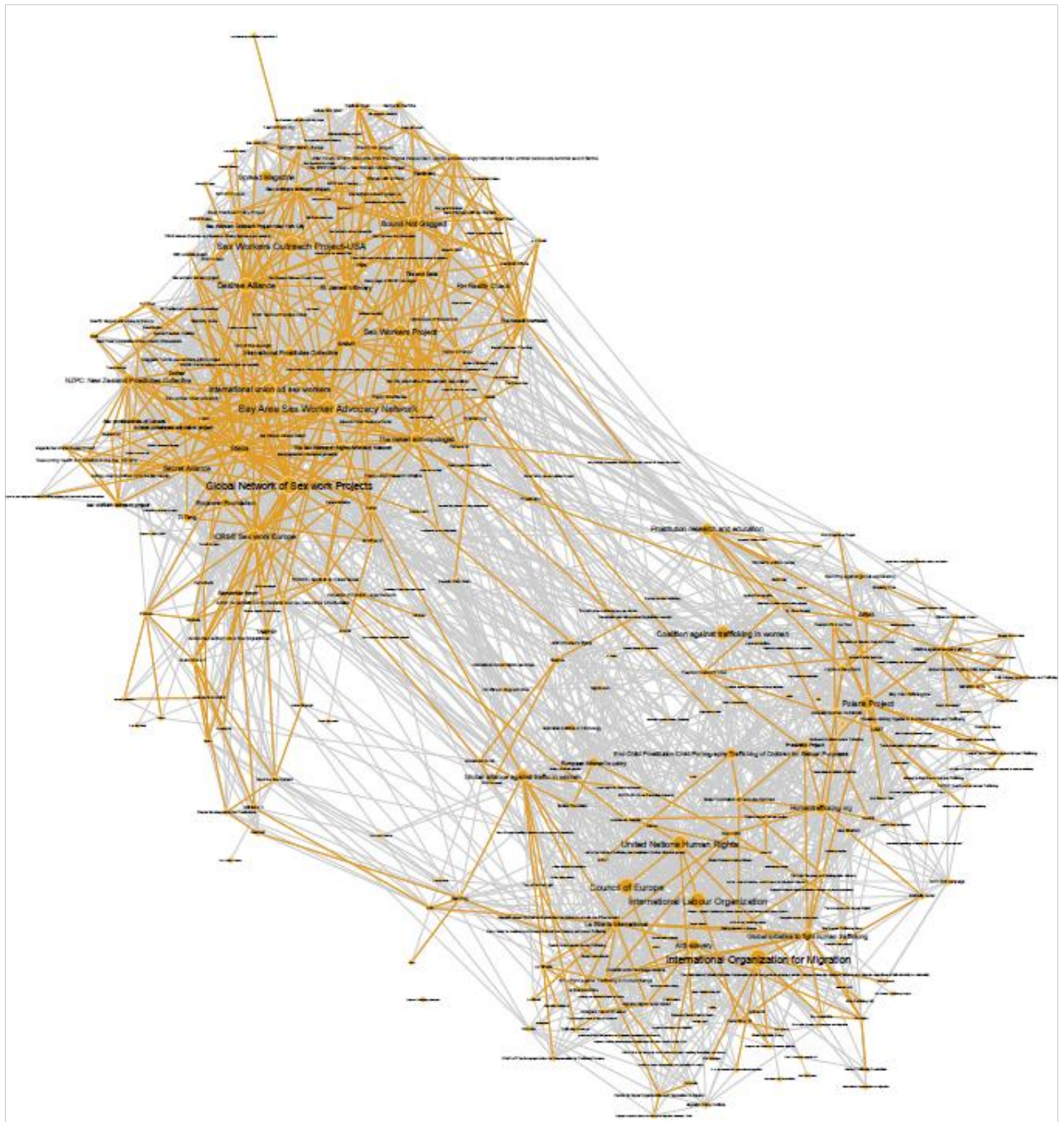
---

<sup>20</sup> For a given website A, an *inbound link* is a link coming from another website and going to A; an *outbound link* is a link coming from A and going to another website.

<sup>21</sup> All the maps used in the present controversy analysis are available on-line, at the following address: <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=map&map=93&section=41>

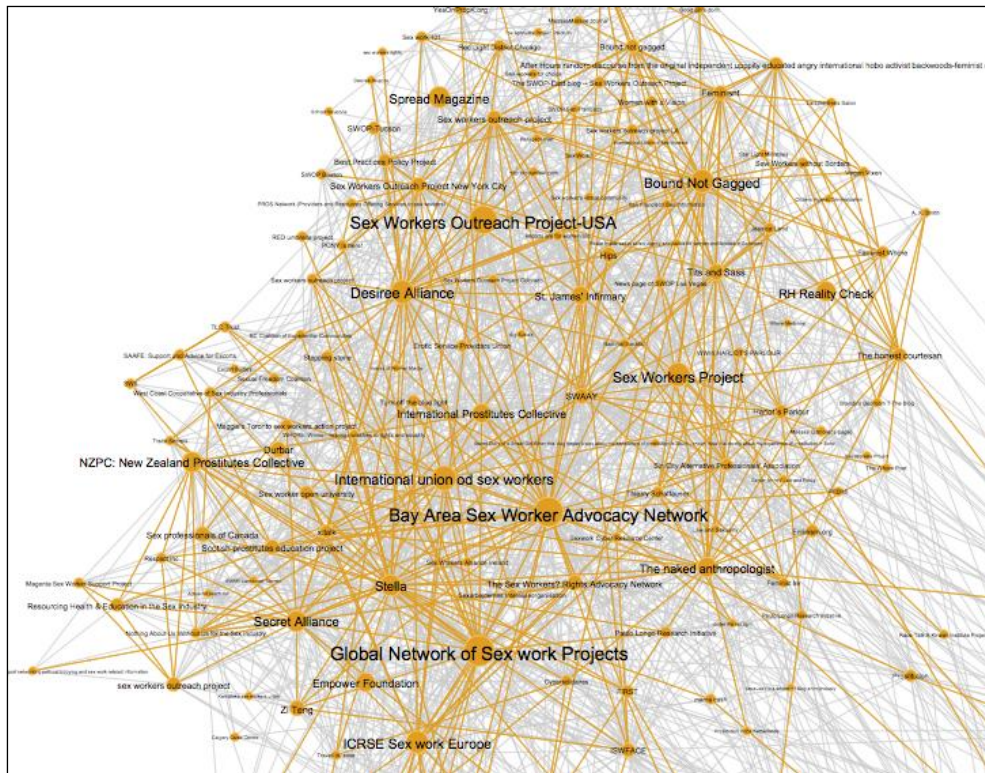
<sup>22</sup> *Density* refers to the actual number of edges (links) divided by the number of possible edges: min is 0 and max is 1.

Map 1: General map of the sex work versus human trafficking controversy on-

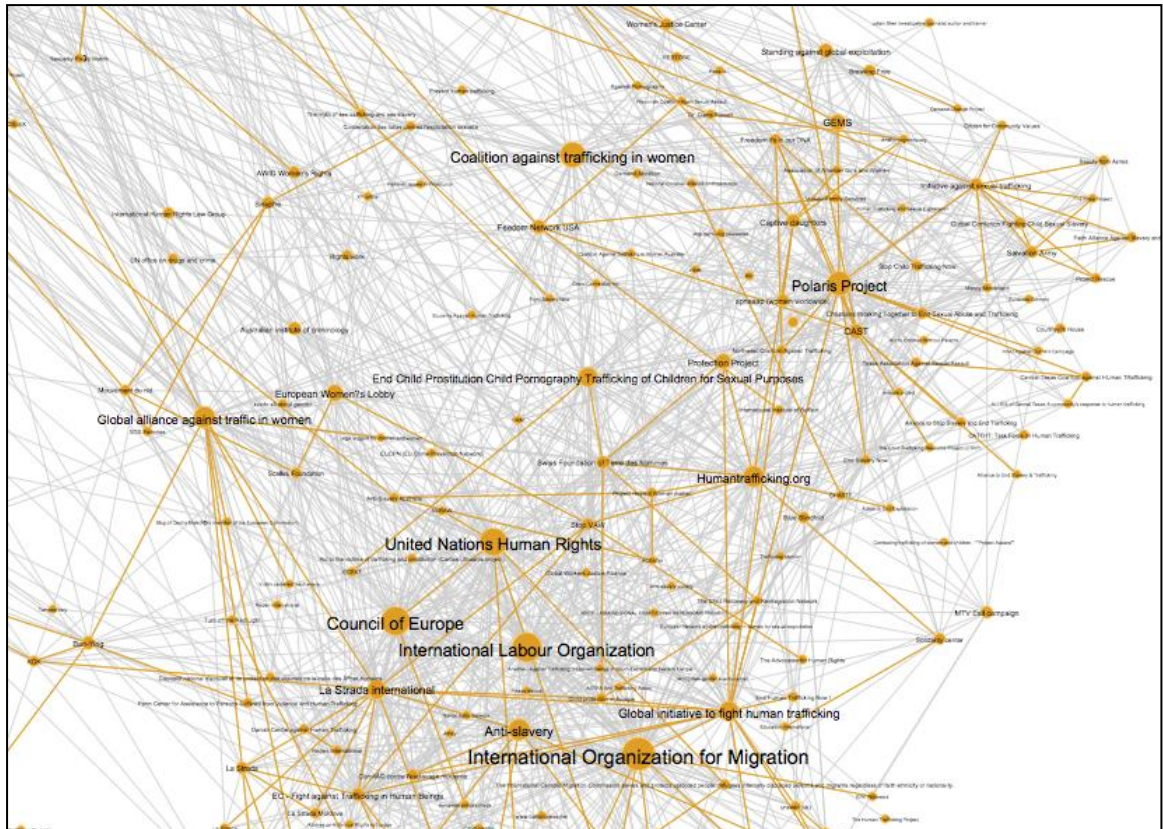


line





Map 2: General Map - zoom on the left cluster



Map 3: General Map - zoom on the right cluster



### 2.3.2. Description of websites: Geographic location, categories and set-up

Let us now look at the distribution of *geographical locations* in the corpus. Figures show that 39.3% of websites are US based, 32.2% are Europe based, while 16.2% of websites point reference to other locations (see Table 1). Also, 9.1% of websites show reference to wider locations, 5.4% worldwide and 3.7% Europe wide.<sup>23</sup> Of 35.9% (126 out of 351) Europe and Europe-wide websites, most refer to the UK (8.5%), Germany (3.4%), The Netherlands (2.8%), France, Belgium, and Switzerland (each 2.3%); of non-European sites, the majority give reference to Canada and Australia, while generally the sample shows a reference to more than 45 different states across the globe.

	Frequency	Percent
US	138	39.3
Europe	113	32.2
Other	57	16.2
Europe wide	13	3.7
Worldwide	19	5.4
Not found	11	3.1
Total	351	100.0

Table 1: Geographic location of websites

In terms of graph visualization (see Map 4), both clusters are polarized according to the geographical location of the owners/managers of the websites. There is a parallel divide by area/continent in both clusters. In both of them, the top part is composed of US websites<sup>24</sup>, whereas the bottom part is composed of European<sup>25</sup> and "Other"<sup>26</sup> websites. For example, the US websites are preferentially linked to US websites: their internal density is 5.2% (links between US websites), whereas their inbound density (links from

<sup>23</sup> "Europe" refers to specifically based in one of the European countries, while "Europe wide" relates to sites that span more than one European country.

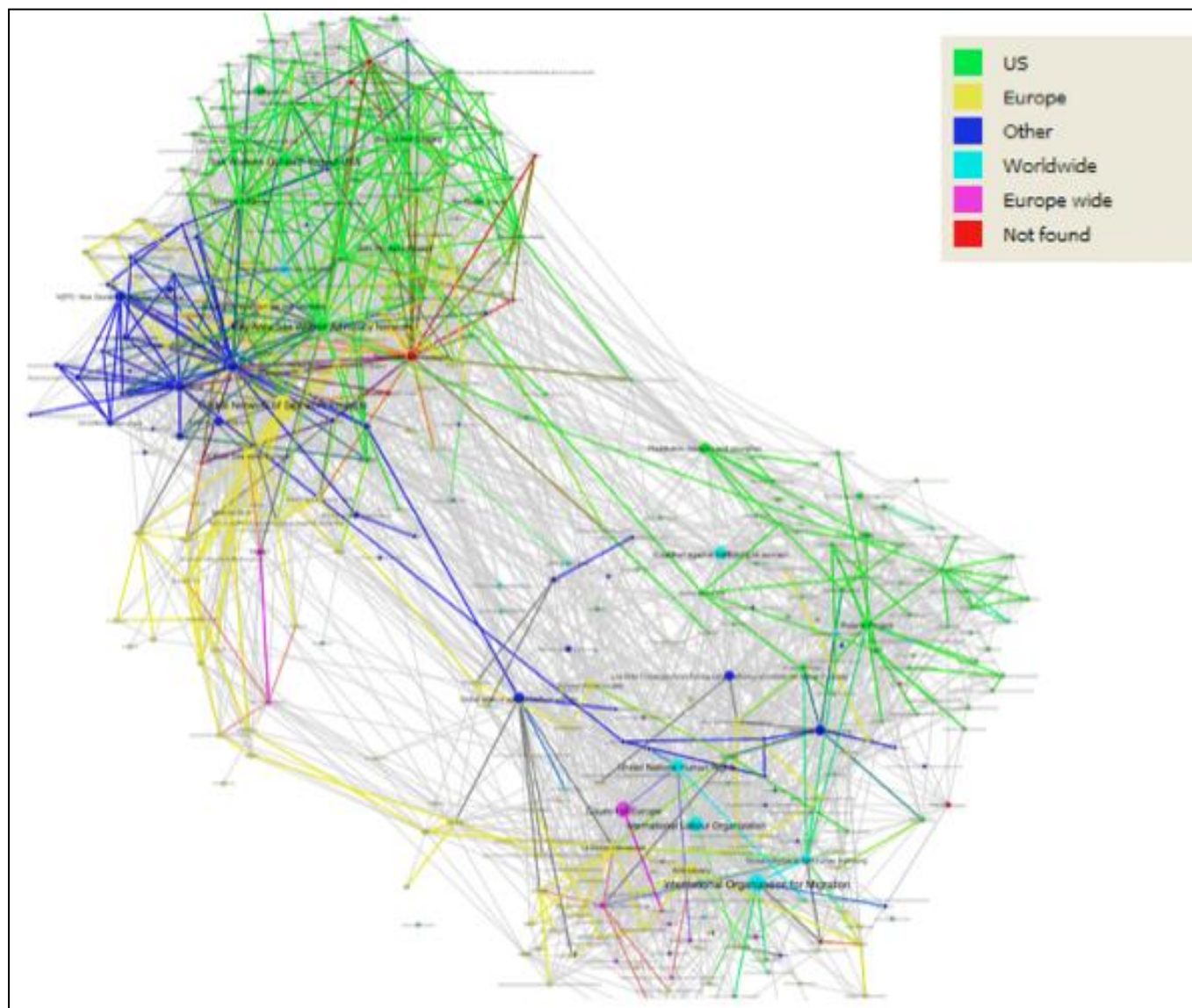
<sup>24</sup> This dominance of US websites might be a specific peculiar to the sex work *versus* human trafficking controversy, but this observation has to be "relativized" inasmuch as the web is in general dominated by US resources and our search terms were in English language.

<sup>25</sup> Among European websites, the most represented countries are the UK, Germany and France. Looking more in details to the country graph, one can notice that the thread in the left cluster is composed of German and Swiss websites.

(<http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=5&section=41>)

<sup>26</sup> Among "Other" websites, the most represented countries are Australia and Canada.

non US-websites to US websites) and outbound density (links from US websites to non-US websites) are respectively 1.4% and 2%. Moreover, the few relations between the two clusters are *geographically determined*. Geographical location is therefore a crucial *criterion of transversal relations between clusters*. We also observe that Europe wide and worldwide websites are highly cited by websites of specific locations. For example, worldwide websites have an inbound density of 6.1% (in comparison, websites from European countries have a density of 1.7% and US websites have a density of 1.4%). Moreover, the few relations between the two clusters are *geographically determined*, an observation that challenges the common representation of *web/virtual geography* as independent from physical geography and freed from the material constraints of places, distance, borders, etc.



*Map 4: Area/Continent Map*

The distribution by *languages*<sup>27</sup> mirrors these observations. We were interested to identify main languages, combination of main and other language and multilingual websites. 71.8% of websites appear to be monolingual, 14.2% identify another language apart from the main and 12.8% are multilingual websites.<sup>28</sup> Multilingual websites are distributed in both clusters and are often *authorities* (websites that are much-cited, i.e. big nodes). This is the case for *Global Network of Sex Work Project*, *ICRSE Sex Work Europe*, *Coalition Against Trafficking in Women*, *Council of Europe*. English is predominant as the main language (85.2%), followed by French (4.3%), German (4.3%), and Danish (1.3%). Among other languages, English, French, Russian, Chinese, and Thai are prevalent, multilingual most frequently include English, French, Spanish, Russian, and German. In terms of the maps visualization, one can observe polarizations according to second languages, German and French in particular<sup>29</sup>.

The sample shows various categories of websites, namely 46.7% are NGO websites, 8% governmental and intergovernmental (GOV, IGOV) and 45.3% show a combination of coalition, blog, community and research related websites (see Table 2 and Table 3)<sup>30</sup>.

	Frequency	Percent
NGO-Association	164	46.7
Coalition	64	18.2
IGOV-Association	18	5.1
Government	10	2.8
Community	27	7.7
Research	8	2.3
Blog	60	17.1
Total	351	100.0

*Table 2: Category of websites*

	Frequency	Percent
GOV+IGOV	28	8.0
NGO	164	46.7
"COALITION"	159	45.3
Total	351	100.0

*Table 3: Joint Category of websites*

<sup>27</sup> [http://maps.e-](http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=8&section=41)

[diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=8&section=41](http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=8&section=41)

<sup>28</sup> Missing value was 1.2%.

<sup>29</sup> German-speaking websites have an internal density of 28.2%, an inbound density of 1.3%, and an outbound density of 1.2%. French-speaking websites have an internal density of 23.7%, an inbound density of 1.3%, and an outbound density of 2.3%.

<sup>30</sup> We formed a joint category "Coalition" that includes the mentioned categories of websites, i.e. coalition, blog, community and research.

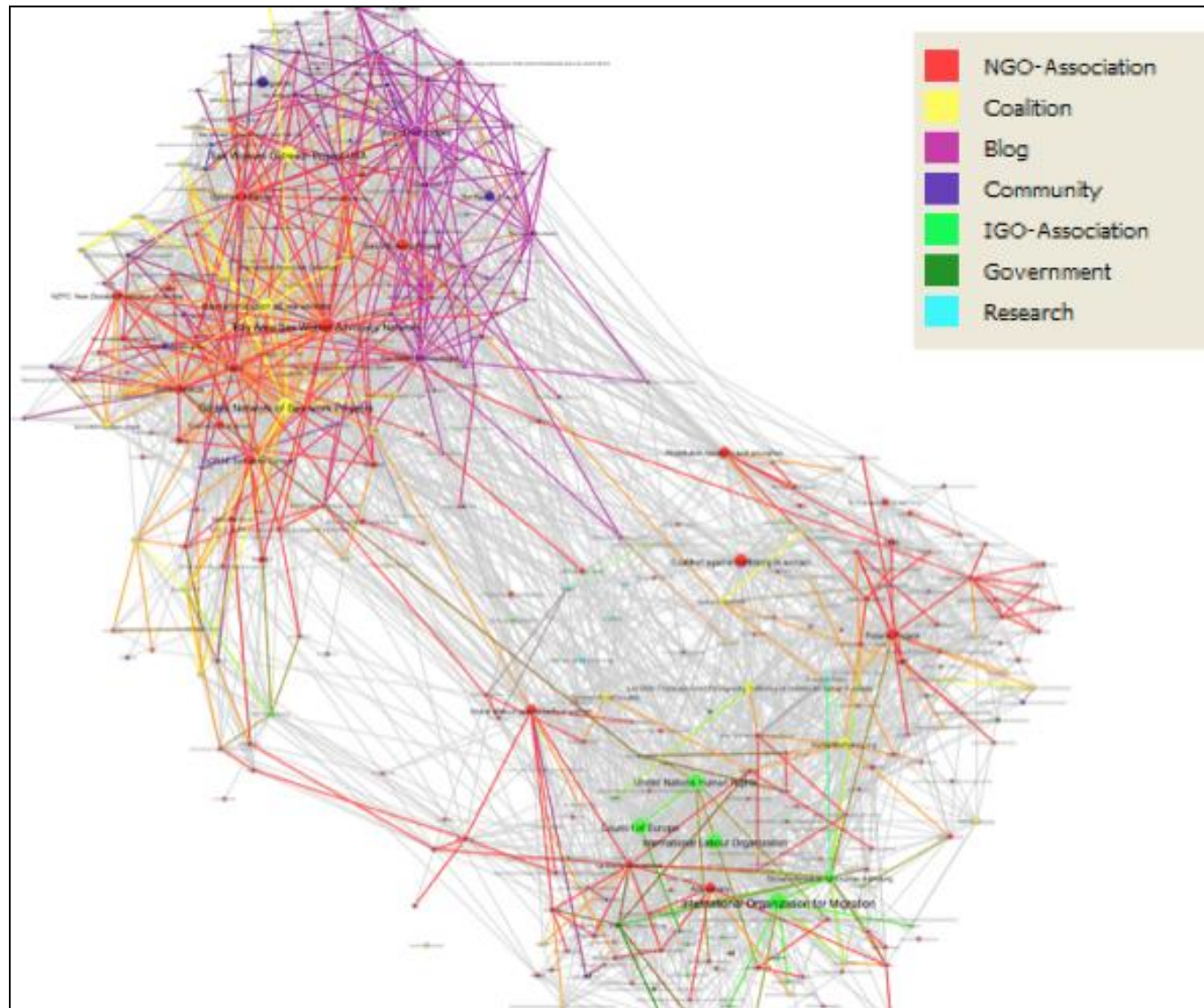
Map 5 shows distribution by category, we observe that the right cluster is mainly composed of NGO websites and also contains GOV+IGOV websites (see the zoom on Map 6), whereas the left cluster is made of NGO websites and “Coalition” websites (see the zoom on Map 7). Among the latter, there are many blogs which are forming a *pole* (sub-cluster) at the top of the cluster. The blogs’ internal density is 9%, whereas their inbound density and outbound density are respectively 1% and 3.4%. In other words, blogs cite much more websites of other categories than they are cited by them, whereas, on the contrary, GOV+IGOV websites are much more cited by websites of other categories than they cite them. This reveals a *top-down distribution of links*: the more institutionalized/global you are, the more links you will receive.

As for the website set-up<sup>31</sup>, 61% are defined as high quality, among which 35.6% are NGO, 19.1% Coalition and 6.3% are GOV+IGOV websites. On average, more governmental and intergovernmental websites (78.6%) are high quality than NGO (76.2%) (see Table 4), Coalition websites show a percentage slightly above 60. Blogs and community sites show an opposite trend with the majority of websites being of low quality. The number of these kinds of sites is small, thus the results should be treated as indicative. Still, the fact that only 37% of community websites and 18.3% of blogs are high quality implies that these sites are managed by engaged individuals or groups, most probably with limited resources to spare. Regrouped category of Coalition also shows a lower percentage of high quality websites (42.1% compared to the above mentioned percentages of NGO and GOV+IGOV websites), while GOV+IGOV websites show the smallest percentage of low quality websites (1.7%), followed by NGO (11.1%) and Coalition (26.2%).

		Website category				Total
			1 GOV+IGOV	2 NGO	3 “Coalition”	
Website set-up	High quality	Count	22	125	67	214
		% within Website category	78.6%	76.2%	42.1%	61.0%
		% of Total	6.3%	35.6%	19.1%	61.0%
	Low quality	Count	6	39	92	137
		% within Website category	21.4%	23.8%	57.9%	39.0%
		% of Total	1.7%	11.1%	26.2%	39.0%

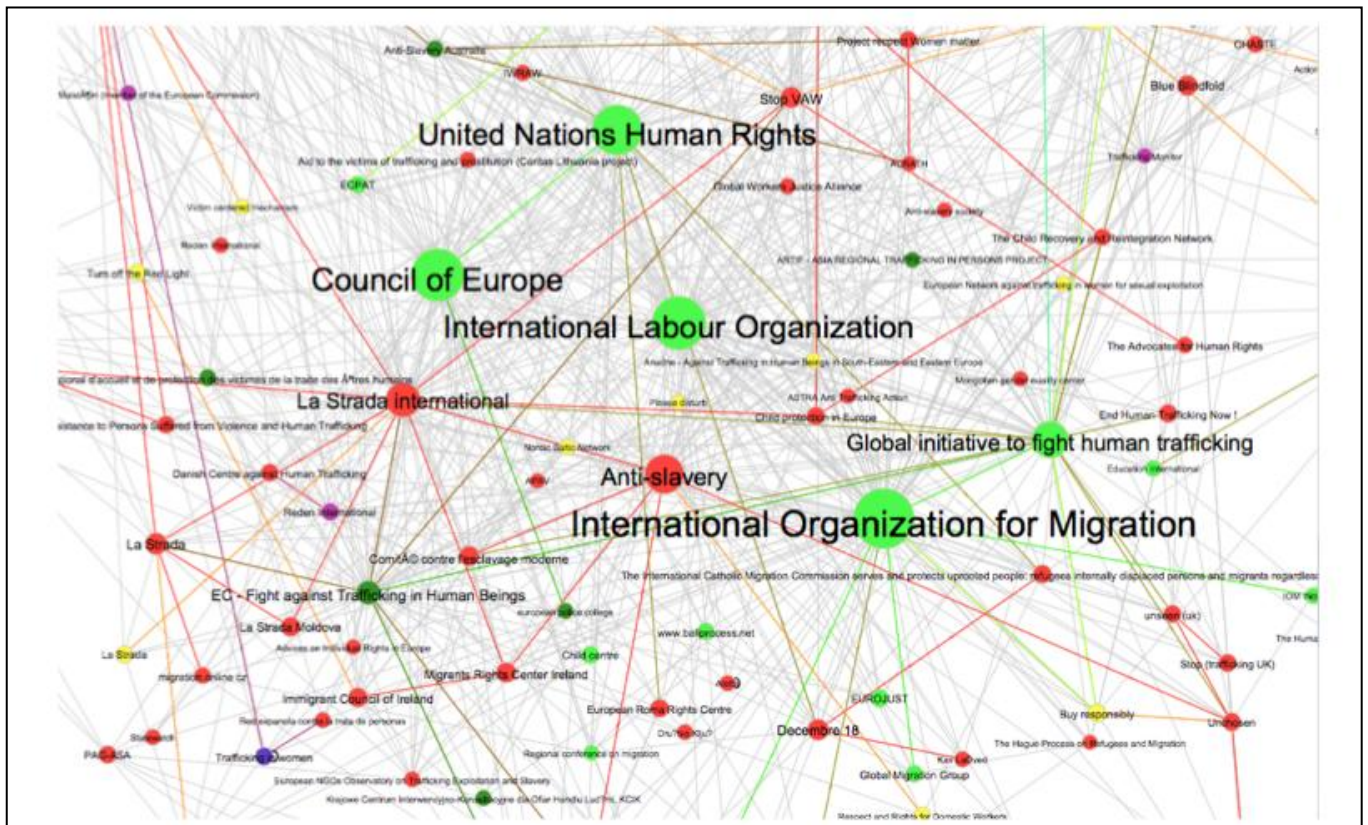
Table 4: Websites set-up according to category

<sup>31</sup> Here we define the “usability” of a site, its navigation and information architecture. High-quality: clear organization of a site that is easy to scan, is user-friendly in the sense that you easily get information that you’re looking for. Low-quality: “messy” organization of a site where it’s difficult to orientate and find content, also very basic sites (e.g. amateur). For more see instruction on coding in the Annex.

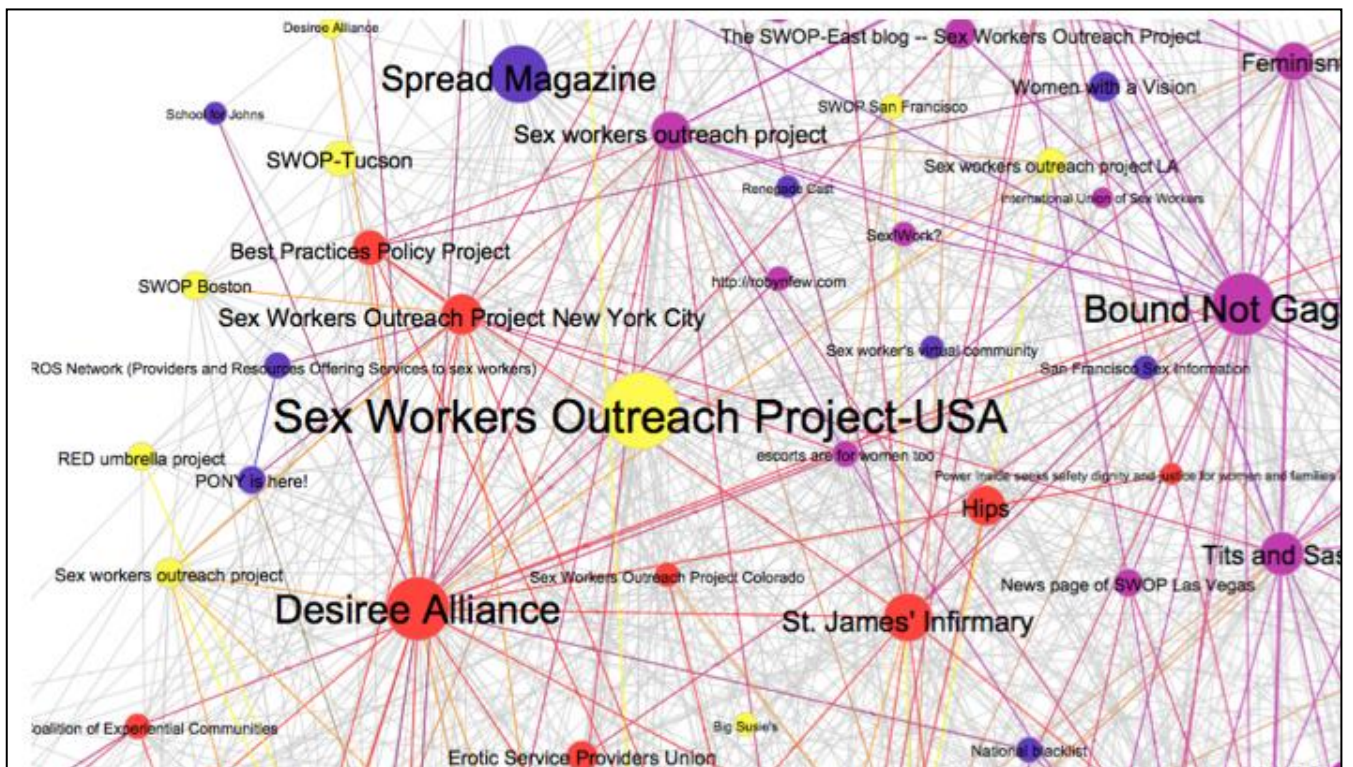


Map 5:  
Category Map





Map 6: Category Map – zoom on a part of the right cluster



*Map7: Category map – zoom on a part of the left cluster*

### 2.3.3. Forms of connection

We explored the forms of connection websites use (see Table 5) where we were interested to know whether they provide their mailing address, phone number, if they enable connection via contact form, if they receive donations on-line and whether they offer social media connection; we were interested to see how “wired” websites are and how they connect to their users. We noticed that 59% of websites use phone as a form of contact. It didn’t come as a surprise to see that of Coalition websites, which make 45.3% of all websites, 30.8% published their phone number in comparison to higher numbers when it comes to NGO or GOV and IGOV websites: 82.9% of NGO sites and 78.6% of GOV+IGOV sites.

Websites that are more loose, i.e. are not run by established NGOs or government but by individuals and groups, who form coalitions, produce blogs or gather on-line around community websites, envision “traditional” contacts like phone to a lesser degree if compared to NGO or GOV and IGOV websites.

	Frequency	Percent
Mailing address	206	58.7
Phone	207	59
Email	271	77.2
Forum	19	5.4
Newsletter/mailling list	94	26.8
Contact form	101	28.8
Donation	135	38.5
Social media	170	48.4

*Table 5: Form of connection*

Of other forms of connection, 58.7% of websites publish mailing address, while more enable contact as email communication, i.e. 77.2%. Less than 30% of websites enable newsletter/mailling list as communication possibility and the percentage is similar for contact form as communication option, while forum is only used in 5.4% of cases.

As for the social media, 51.6% of websites envision them as a form of connection, 33.3% of websites produce own social media, 38.7% are produced by NGO websites, 30.8% by Coalition and 17.9% by GOV+IGOV websites. We were interested to see to what extent websites use social media as share options and how frequently they produce their own social media. Facebook as own product appears with 30.4% of websites, and is followed by Twitter (28.4%) and YouTube (15.6%). Several websites produce various social media, most frequently they have Twitter together with Facebook accounts (7.7%). As for using the option “share” in relation to social media, Facebook again dominates (26.2%) and is followed by Twitter (22.6%). Other options like Stumble Upon, Reddit, LinkedIn, YouTube, Delicious and Blogger



follow behind (from 3% to 5%).

We wanted to explore to what an extent variously run websites use on-line donation as contact form, i.e. if and how internet is used for fundraising. Data show that NGOs envision on-line donation possibility to a greater extent than Coalition websites: 38.5% of all offer this possibility - 58.5% NGOs, 21.4% Coalition websites. This implies that NGOs explore on-line fundraising most of all, which can also be explained by the assumption that they are more dependent on financial sources to operate if compared to Coalition websites that may be designed more as personal/groups expressions not depending on the financial resources.

Of the total corpus, 12.3% of websites show their commercial orientation by selling own products<sup>32</sup> (8.8% are NGO websites), while 3.7% adopt advertising (1.7% of websites include both options). Selling own product is a most frequent attitude of NGO websites (19% of NGO websites sell own products) and is followed by Coalition websites (mostly blogs) with 6.5%. Of websites that only offer advertising, Coalition websites dominate, i.e. 22% of coalition websites offer advertising. Commercial orientation of GOV and IGOV websites is nearly non-existent (only 2 websites sell own product). We can see that the web is used by prostitution/trafficking websites as a resource of earning but only to a small extent - also if we keep in mind the small percentage of websites that have donation as a contact option - and NGO categories of websites prevail.

#### **2.3.4. Website's aims, main topics and target groups**

The orientation of websites that aim at informing various publics is present in as much as 86% of cases, advocacy as an aim is identified in 59% of cases, support (with information, legal, socializing possibilities, safe house) is offered by 44.7% of websites<sup>33</sup>, and counselling in 26.8% of cases. Analysing various combinations we can see that information only is the aim of 25.6% of websites, 21.4% aim at information and advocacy, 12.8% also include support. We can see here that the web is most often used for purposes of information and is followed by the advocacy aim usually targeting policies and support, but also counselling that targets sex workers. Only 15% of NGO websites don't include information as their aim, while the percentage is even lower with GOV websites (5.6%). Despite the fact that GOV and IGOV websites are not many, it is interesting to observe several not only aim at

---

<sup>32</sup> Selling own products refers to some sort of commercial activity, for instance, offering merchandize such as T-shirts, badges, etc.

<sup>33</sup>In terms of graph visualization, websites that aim at support are quite equally distributed in both clusters. It is interesting to look at the sub-graph of "support" websites.

([http://maps.e-](http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=34&section=41)

[diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=34&section=41](http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=34&section=41)).

Indeed, we see that these websites are mainly located in the "outside" parts of the left cluster (e.g. in the part that share almost no relation with the right cluster).

Maps showing the distribution of the other aims are available here:

<http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=map&map=93&section=41>.

information but also advocacy, support and even counselling.

Our corpus includes 51.6% of websites with prostitution as main topic, 39.3% of websites have trafficking and 9.1% have migration as main topic (see Table 6).

	Frequency	Percent
Prostitution	181	51.6
Trafficking	138	39.3
Migration	32	9.1
Total	351	100.0

*Table 6: Main topic*

GOV+IGOV websites predominately orient to trafficking issues since trafficking is the main topic for 75% of GOV+IGOV websites, while proportionally the attention of NGO (48.2%) and Coalition (23.9%) websites to this topic is lower. This points to an observation that policy strategies are generally more inclined to address trafficking issues than the topic of prostitution; also, it seems that generally the policy efforts and public discussions on anti-trafficking are more frequent than those that relate to prostitution/sex work. Furthermore, trafficking (48.2%) is a more frequent topic for NGOs if compared to prostitution (37.8%) and migration (14%), while Coalition websites show an opposite trend, i.e. 73.6% have prostitution as their main topic (see Table 7).

		Prostitution	Trafficking	Migration	
1 GOV+IGOV	Count	2	21	5	28
	% within Website Category	7.1%	75.0%	17.9%	100.0 %
	% of Total	.6%	6.0%	1.4%	8.0%
2 NGO	Count	62	79	23	164
	% within Website category	37.8%	48.2%	14.0%	100.0 %
	% of Total	17.7%	22.5%	6.6%	46.7%
3 COALITION	Count	117	38	4	159
	% within Website category	73.6%	23.9%	2.5%	100.0 %
	% of Total	33.3%	10.8%	1.1%	45.3%

*Table 7: Website category according to main topic*

When looking at the Main Topic Map (Map 8), one immediately observes that almost all the websites that belong to the left cluster chiefly deal with prostitution. The left cluster could therefore be called the prostitution cluster. The right cluster is more heterogeneous: it is mainly composed of "human trafficking" websites, but also contains (in the bottom component) the majority of "migration" websites. The right

cluster could therefore be called the human trafficking and migration cluster<sup>34</sup> (see Map 9).

Such a high clustering according to the main topic is confirmed by the figures. The internal density of “prostitution” websites is 6.2%, whereas their inbound density and outbound density are respectively 0.4% and 1%. As regards “human trafficking” websites, their internal density is 4.2%, whereas their inbound density and outbound density are both 1%. These figures explain the *bipartitioning* of the graph. In addition, the internal density of migration websites is 5.3%, their inbound density is 2.3% and their outbound density is 0,7%. Looking in detail, we observe that migration websites share much more links with human trafficking websites than with the prostitution ones. This explains why “human trafficking” and “migration” topics are addressed in the same cluster.

The majority of websites have sex workers as a target group, followed by activists and trafficking victims, while specific groups of migrants or LGBT sex workers are targeted by around 18% of websites (see Table 8).

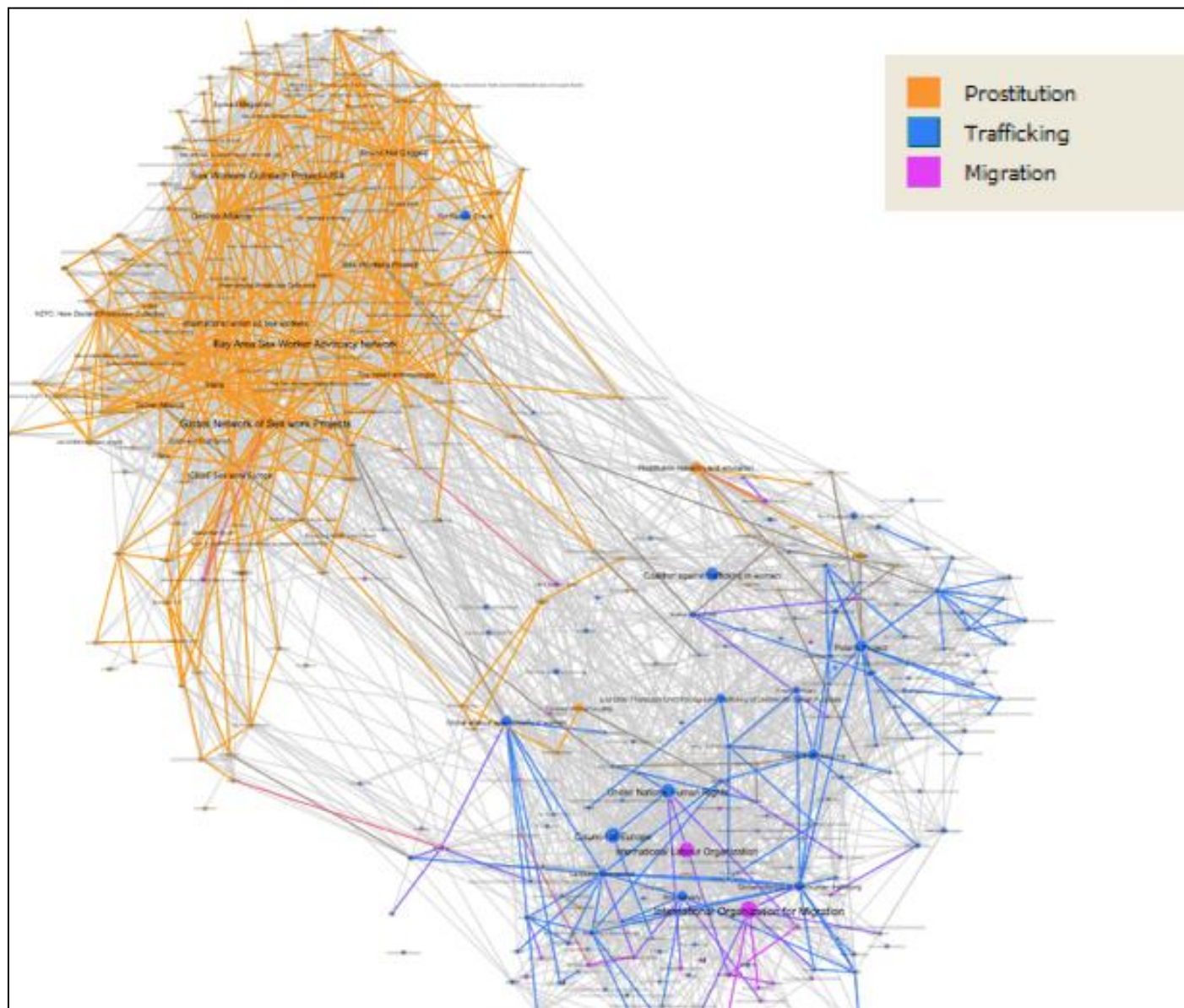
Sex workers	Activists	Victims of trafficking	General public	Researchers	Migrants	LGBT sex workers	Clients	Children
45.9%	44.7%	31.3	26.8%	27.1%	18.8%	17.9%	12.8%	10%

*Table 8: Target Groups*

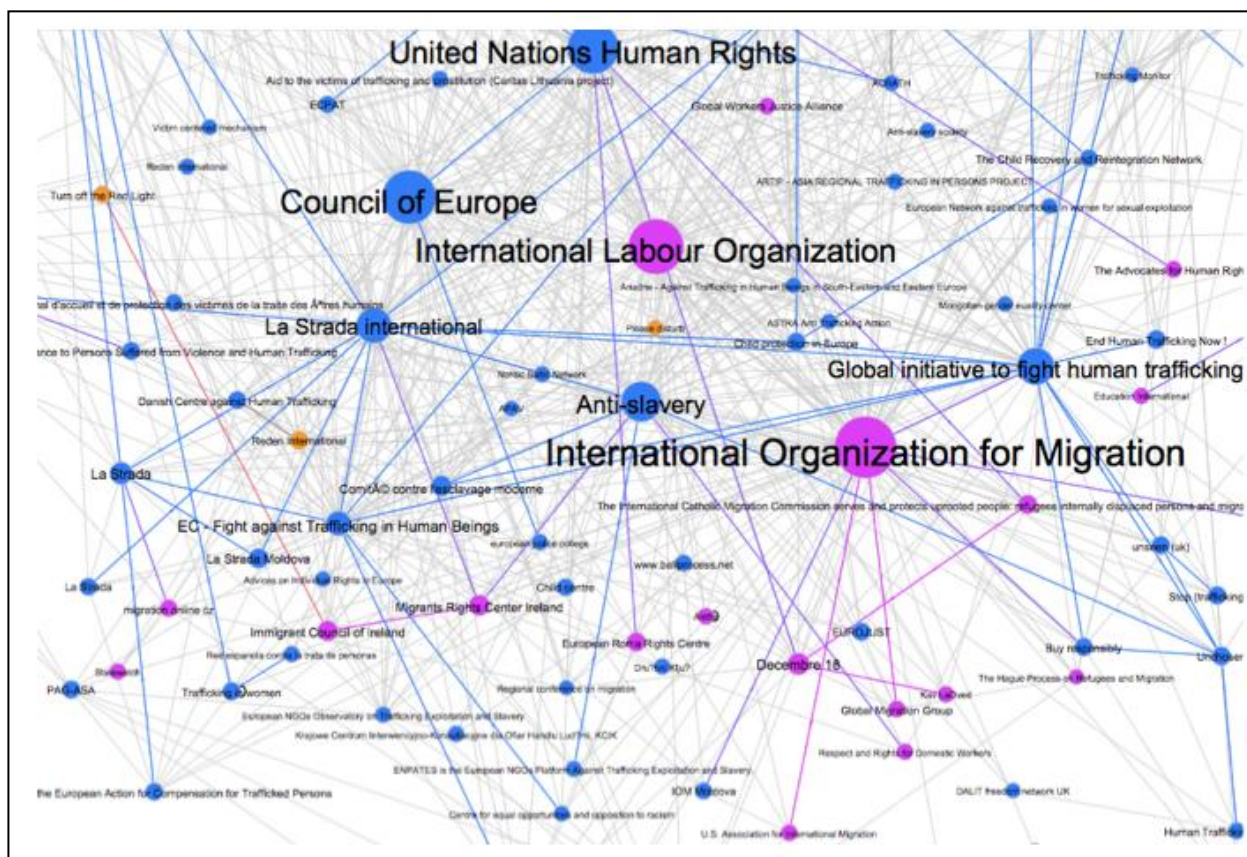
Community websites and blogs are among those who target sex workers in more than 60% of cases (65% for blogs and 63% for community), followed by coalition (50%) and NGO (42.1%) websites. GOV and IGOV websites don’t target sex workers, a fact that reflects the non-recognition of the category of sex worker for official policy discourse. In contrast, the majority of GOV and IGOV websites target victims of trafficking (80% of GOV and 61.1% of IGOV websites), which reflects the ambivalent attitude on the topics of prostitution/trafficking debates off-line, where it seems that anti-trafficking policies enjoy an agreement, while prostitution related policies appear much more controversial and therefore also absent from the official discourse.

---

<sup>34</sup> A few “prostitution” websites are located in this cluster. They are what we call “intruder” websites, whose situation in the graph would have to be explained through a more in-depth content analysis.



Map 8: Main Topic



Map 9: Main Topic Map – zoom in the human trafficking and migration cluster

It is also interesting to note that Coalition (81.1%) and GOV+IGOV (75%) websites to a greater degree than NGO (65.2%) websites target the general public, which can imply the NGO websites are more inclined to target specific groups. The LGBT sex workers are mostly targeted by Coalition websites, i.e. 24.5% (interestingly 33.3% of all blogs target this group) and are not apparent in GOV+IGOV websites. Blogs appear as a website category that frequently targets clients - 44.4% of all websites that target clients are blogs, followed by NGO and community websites, while blogs rarely target other groups, like trafficking victims. This implies that blogs are probably more active also in discussing issues of sex work in general, if compared to trafficking. Of all the groups, GOV+IGOV websites mostly target trafficking victims and migrants, while some of the other groups are non-existent in GOV discourse, like clients, sex workers, LGBT sex workers.

In terms of graph visualization, the websites that target sex workers are non-surprisingly mainly located in the prostitution cluster<sup>35</sup>. Websites that target LGBTs as well as clients are also almost exclusively located in the prostitution cluster<sup>36</sup>. Conversely, websites that target victims of trafficking are mainly located in the human trafficking and migration cluster<sup>37</sup>. Finally, websites that target migrants are

<sup>35</sup><http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=37&section=41>

<sup>36</sup><http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=38&section=41> and <http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=39&section=41>

<sup>37</sup><http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=40&section=41>

most of all located in the bottom component of the human trafficking and migration cluster<sup>38</sup>.

### 2.3.5. Interactions between prostitution, human trafficking and migration

We were interested to explore to what an extent the web recognizes interrelations among the phenomena of prostitution, trafficking and migration (see Tables 9, 10 and 11). Websites that refer to trafficking as the main topic also recognize most the interrelations to other phenomena, if compared to websites that have prostitution or migration as the main topic. 29.7% of trafficking websites recognize interrelations, among which 12% relate to both issues of prostitution and migration, and 9.7% relate to issues of prostitution. Prostitution websites relate to other subtopics in 18.5% of cases; 8.8% recognize trafficking as a subtopic and 5.1% trafficking together with migration. Websites that have migration as the main topic are among the websites that recognize interrelations the least of all, i.e. 6%, of which 4.6% relate to trafficking and only 0.3% to prostitution. Our fieldwork data from interviews show that migrant sex work is hardly visible on the web and our previous research<sup>39</sup> confirms low relations in policies and public discourses in general. Prostitution is thus hardly visible on migration websites and migration as a subtopic also shows weakest links to prostitution (4.6%) and trafficking (8%).

	Frequency	Percent
Trafficking subtopic (only)	31	8.8
Trafficking & Migration	18	5.1
Migration subtopic (only)	16	4.6
Total	65	18.5
99	286	81.5
351	100.0	

Table 9: Prostitution websites' subtopic(s)

		Frequency	Percent
	Prostitution + Migration	42	12.0
	Prostitution	34	9.7
	Migration	28	8.0
	Total	110	29.3
NA	99	247	70.4

<sup>38</sup><http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=41&section=41>

<sup>39</sup> Pajnik, Mojca. 2008. *Prostitution and Human Trafficking: Gender, Labour and Migration Aspects*. Ljubljana: Mirovni inštitut.



		Frequency	Percent
	Prostitution + Migration	42	12.0
	Prostitution	34	9.7
	Migration	28	8.0
	Total	110	29.3
NA	99	247	70.4
Total		351	100.0

*Table 10: Trafficking website's subtopic(s)*

		Frequency	Percent
	Trafficking	16	4.6
	Prostitution + Trafficking	4	1.1
	Prostitution	1	.3
	Total	21	6
NA	99	330	94
Total		351	100.0

*Table 11: Migration website's subtopic(s)*

### **2.3.6. Framing prostitution and human trafficking**

Using the phenomenon of prostitution as a wider topic, we were interested to learn how this is framed on the web. 40.7% of websites speak of sex work and 20.3% of websites relate prostitution to violence, not recognizing it as sex work, while the minority of 6.6% of websites acknowledge both the sex work and the violence paradigm, and in 31.9% of cases frames didn't appear, while 6.6% of websites recognize both frames (see Table 12).

		Frequency	Percent
	Sex work paradigm (only)	143	41.0
	NA	112	32.1
	Violence paradigm (only)	71	20.3
	Sex paradigm + Violence paradigm	23	6.6
	Total	349	100.0
Missing	System	2	
Total		351	

*Table 12: Website's framing of prostitution*

It is interesting to observe the distribution of paradigms according to the website category, where we can see that GOV+IGOV websites don't mention sex work at all and none of this kind of websites frames prostitution as sex work; 25% of websites

framed it as violence while the majority don't apply the frames. Non applicability of frames is much lower with NGO (40.9%) and Community (20.1%) websites, which can also be related to the "vagueness" of attitudes/policies of official standpoints on prostitution/sex work. Interesting is also the difference between NGO and Community websites in their application of the sex work paradigm that amounts to 33.6% in the first case and 62.4% in the latter<sup>40</sup>. This goes together with the finding that Community websites recognize prostitution predominately as sex work and are among the websites that explain it in relation to violence in the least amount of cases, i.e. 17.4% if compared to the 25.5% for NGOs (see Table 13). We can also observe that blogs are among the websites with the highest percentage of recognisability of sex work (85% of all blogs), followed by community (59.3%) and coalition (41.3%) websites. Maps 10 and 11 respectively show the topological distribution of websites that relate prostitution to sex work and violence.

		1 sex work paradigm (only)	2 violence paradigm (only)	3 NA	Total
1 GOV+IGOV	Count	0	7	21	28
	% within Website category	.0%	25.0%	75.0%	100.0 %
	% of Total	.0%	2.1%	6.4%	8.6%
2 NGO	Count	50	38	61	149
	% within Website category	33.6%	25.5%	40.9%	100.0 %
	% of Total	15.3%	11.7%	18.7%	45.7%
3 COALITION+BLO G+COMMUNITY +RESEARCH	Count	93	26	30	149
	% within Website category	62.4%	17.4%	20.1%	100.0 %
	% of Total	28.5%	8.0%	9.2%	45.7%

*Table 13: Website's framing of prostitution*

Research shows human trafficking is predominately related to victim abuse for purposes of sexual exploitation, often bypassing other forms of exploitation that occur for other types of labour. Also, it has to be noted that recently some organizations, such as the International Labour Organization, and research advocate for an expanded understanding of human trafficking, not narrowing it down to sexual exploitation. We can observe web discourses slowly follow this track and 16.6% of websites framed trafficking at the intersection of sexual exploitation, forced labour and migration. At the same time, the share of websites that relate trafficking (only)

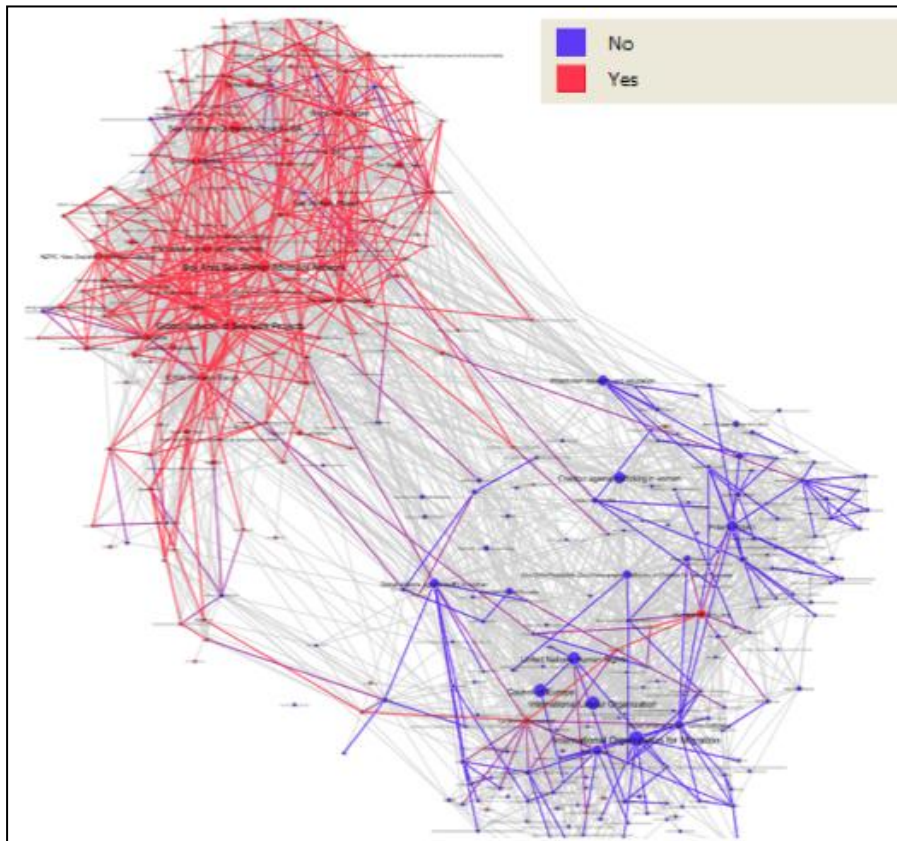
<sup>40</sup> Here the analysis considers counts for a single paradigm; several options were possible as an answer.



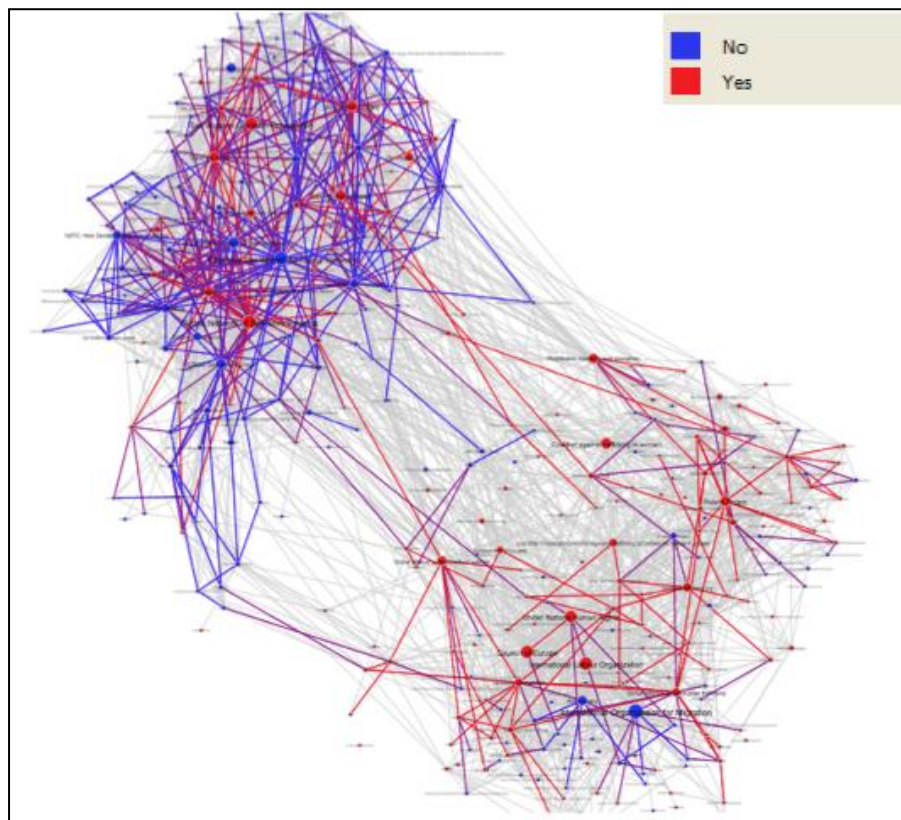
to sexual exploitation is similar (15.8%), while 5.2% of websites frame trafficking as sexual exploitation and migration issue (see Table 14).

		Frequency	Percent
	NA	142	40.7
	Sexual exploitation + Forced labour + Migration Issue	58	16.6
	Sexual exploitation	55	15.8
	Forced labour	30	8.6
	Sexual exploitation + Forced labour	24	6.9
	Sexual exploitation + Migration issue	18	5.2
	Migration issue	15	4.3
	Forced labour + Migration issue	7	2.0
	Total	349	100.0
Missing	System	2	

*Table 14: Websites' framing of trafficking*



*Map 10 : Prostitution related to sex work*



*Map 11 : Prostitution related to violence*

		Abuse for sexual exploitation	Abuse for any kind of forced labour	Migration issue
1 GOV+IGOV	Count	15	18	14
	% within web category	53.6%	64.3%	50.0%
2 NGO	Count	84	69	52
	% within web category	51.2%	42.1%	31.7%
3 COALITION	Count	57	32	33
	% within web category	35.8%	20.1%	20.8%

*Table 15: Framing trafficking according to website category*

Of 15.8% of websites that frame trafficking (only) as victim abuse for sexual exploitation, the majority are NGO sites (8.3%), followed by Coalition websites (7.2%). Relating trafficking to victim abuse for sexual exploitation, forced labour and migration issue (16.6% of websites) is most prevalent among NGO websites (9.2%).

### **2.3.7. Type and content of texts**

Among the kind of texts that are published at websites, information is the most prevalent, identified for 92.3% of websites. This is followed by press releases<sup>41</sup> (54.4%), reports/studies (52.7%) and conferences/events (49.9%) (see Table 16).

	Yes	Percent
Information	324	92,3%
Press release, media articles	191	54,4%

<sup>41</sup> Press releases are meant as texts produced by the website actors about their work; media articles are articles about the site, they can be authored by website producers or they appear as resources. Manuals are meant as training manuals, various instruction-related documents, "how to" guidelines, etc.

Reports/studies	185	52,7%
Conferences/events	175	49,9%
Manuals	98	27,9%
Personal stories	117	33,3%
Video/audio	133	37,9%

*Table 16: Website's texts*

We also observed if websites address gender equality - understood as equality among the sexes and as a human rights issue - and found out that this is addressed in 160 websites (45.6%)<sup>42</sup>. We notice that gender equality issue is most present with websites that have prostitution as the main topic (24.2%) and least with migration websites (6%), with trafficking websites in between (15.4%). Furthermore, we see that websites that frame prostitution as a sex work paradigm address gender issues to a greater degree if compared to websites that frame it as violence (18.6% / 8.9%) (see Table 17). Thus, a tentative conclusion is that prostitution websites that advocate the sex work perspective address gender equality to a higher extent than other websites.

			Yes	No	Total
Main topic	Prostitution	Count	85	96	181
		% within Main topic	47.0%	53.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	24.2%	27.4%	51.6%
	Trafficking	Count	54	84	138
		% within Main topic	39.1%	60.9%	100.0%
		% of Total	15.4%	23.9%	39.3%
	Migration	Count	21	11	32
		% within Main topic	65.6%	34.4%	100.0%
		% of Total	6.0%	3.1%	9.1%

*Table 17: Gender equality according to main topic*

### **3. Case Studies: Methodology and Analysis**

This second part of the report focuses on case study analysis of the relations between new digital media and migrant sexualities in Slovenia and Greece

<sup>42</sup> For a distribution of the websites that address gender equality in a graph, see:  
<http://maps.e-diasporas.fr/index.php?focus=nodeattribute&graph=123&map=93&nodeattribute=89&section=41>

and is based on semi-structured biographical narrative interview method.<sup>43</sup> Also, the study includes analyses of on-line commercial sexuality related discourses, in Greece in the example of one specific website and in France on a corpus of selected commercial websites.

The question of access to the field, meaning coming into contact with migrant men and women with sex work and/or trafficking experiences, played a central role, particularly since the issue of sexuality bears a significant additional hindrance to securing migrant interview participants. In addition, interviews with various key informants (e.g. representatives of NGOs, asylum centre, police, trade unions, policy officials, administrators of on-line forums on prostitution) were also conducted in Slovenia and Greece as a means of further accessing the field and gaining the insiders' perspective.

Between March and October 2011, a total of 13 interviews were conducted in Slovenia. The Slovene sample includes 6 (migrant) men and women with experiences of working in the sex work sector: a stripper, one former and one current erotic dancer, a gay porn actor, and two male gay escorts. We also interviewed organisers of prostitution and sex forums; one night club owner and one administrator of a forum for clients of prostitution. In addition, 5 expert interviews were conducted: 2 with representatives of NGOs active in anti-trafficking, and 3 with people whose work experience could offer valuable insights in terms of migrant sexualities and the new media (see Annex for further details). The most difficulties were experienced in accessing migrant sex workers, and because of difficulty of access, we could not reach many migrants in this sector of work. We nevertheless feel confident about our material providing a solid overview of differing experiences, especially considering the circumstances (e.g. small country, decreasing number of migrant population due to recession and immigration policy amendments, sex work stigma, invisibility of migrant prostitution).

The analysis included all the gathered fieldwork materials: fieldwork diaries, transcriptions and analyses of the 13 interviews. In order to enable a thorough and exact analysis of the off-line interview data, the verbatim transcripts were analysed in the process of thematic segmentation (the Slovene case). Each interview was analysed in order to allow a nuanced overview of the topics that emerged in individual life stories, reflecting the personal experiences of our interview partners, as well as showing a wider trend of the migrant positions and situations as these relate to their sexualities and the use of the new digital technologies (analyses of interviews in English are accessible in Delicious system at MIG@NET website).

---

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Pajnik, Mojca, Veronika Bajt. 2009. Biographical Narrative Interview: Application to Studies of Migration. *Dve domovini/Two Homelands* 30: 69-89; Pajnik, Mojca. 2011. *Conducting Structured Depth Biographical Interviews*, Research Manual for MIG@NET project (see Annex).

The regional dimension of fieldwork played a different role in each particular national case; while it was important that the material covers different regions of Slovenia, in Greece the interviews were conducted in the city of Athens. To further diversify the sample in Slovenia, we included participants from urban centres as well as migrants from smaller towns and more rural surroundings. We were particularly interested in the transnationality of migrants' lives, particularly in relation to their sex work or sexual practices and their use of new digital media, and were thus able to conduct one interview in Budapest (Hungary), and two with sex workers who migrate to other European countries for work (e.g. Italy, CEE countries).

The Greek fieldwork took place from March to October 2011 and consisted of 11 interviews. Five of those were conducted with migrant sex workers (one female street sex worker of Romanian origin, three female sex workers working in a strip club of Russian and Ukrainian origin and one male escort of Albanian origin). With the exception of the male escort, the interviews were short and the interviewees refused to provide the researchers with details about their personal and/or professional life. In addition, most migrant sex workers responded mostly to question about non commercial internet use and gave vague answers about the usage of ICTs in the profession. The team also conducted two interviews with a bisexual brothel owner, who employed migrant sex workers, and the web-designer of the website of this brothel. In addition, three interviews were conducted with NGO representatives working in the field of protection of trafficking victims and one with the spokesperson of the Greek Union of Sex Workers. Apart from conducting the interviews, the Greek fieldwork consisted also of observation in spots where street prostitution takes place and where many brothels are gathered, as well as participant observation in one strip club. Diaries and notes were gathered after each

Because the Greek team did not consider that this sample was representative nor that it could give an adequate picture of migrant sex work in Greece, its fieldwork focused mostly on the digital aspects of sex work and the ways in which sex workers participate in the production of their own online representations. More specifically, the Greek research focused on the web site "Bourdela.com. The absolute sex portal", which is a multi-purpose commercial website for sex services in Greece; the largest and most used of its kind, launched in 2005.<sup>44</sup> The website is of high visual quality with a very well organized layout that includes photos of sex workers, studios and brothels, also located on city maps. Because of its centralized character, the Greek team attempted to analyse the power relations around this web-site.

---

<sup>44</sup> The website does not publish ownership information. The IP address, 92.240.234.100, is hosted under the name 'matakias.tv' for the organization 'BOUMEDIA Ltd.' and is registered in Slovakia. The language of the website is Greek. Contact with the website is through a pre-set on-line contact form. There are no other contact details published.

In relation to the Greek focus on the one selected commercial website, the French case study examined 52 commercial websites on the topic of sex/erotic services. These websites have been selected through a process composed of two stages. Firstly, 10 websites were retrieved by selecting the first two results on Google (France) for the following queries: "massage", "escort", "club érotique", "call-girl", "bar échangiste". Secondly, an automatic web exploration (crawl) starting from these websites<sup>45</sup> was launched. The 42 websites which displayed the most connections (hypertextual links) with the initial list ("seed") were selected. In this respect, the corpus does not pretend to be either exhaustive or representative. The aim was, however, to explore and analyze a fragment of the sex market cyberspace.

The lack of adequate data from the interviews with the migrant sex workers led the Greek team to use mostly the findings of discourse analysis and participant observation as methods of analysis. The analysis in the French case combined two methods: web cartography and websites' content (images and text) analysis. The aim was to provide an overview of the web ecosystem of the on-line sex market. In this respect, the hypertextual structure of the corpus (links between) was analyzed (see chapter 2).

### **3.1. Peculiarities of the Digital Sphere in the Sex Economy: Between Opportunities and Instruments for the Market**

All interview partners in the Slovenian sample more or less agree the work they do or the way they do it wouldn't be possible without the new technologies. Peter, who started to work in prostitution when he was 18, remembers placing ads in a paper, advertising his mobile phone which he still uses to arrange meetings with clients. Nowadays, his clients get in touch with him after looking at his on-line profiles. Peter reasons that it's indeed easier today with the internet to succeed in the business and adds that if it wasn't for the new technologies he would have to do something else. He says he could somehow bear it with no internet but certainly not without a mobile phone.

At that time *Salomonov Oglasnik* was the most relevant [magazine]. But nowadays it's not quite like it was eleven years ago because there was no internet, only the multinational companies had internet, but not ordinary people. [...] This functioned quite normally, you see. The mobile phones came to Slovenia in 1997 and I already bought one in 1998. That was luxury then. [...] And then normally people called me, I don't know, from home landline, from office phone, because not everybody had a mobile, and that was that. That was, it was great. This [business] cannot exist, I don't know how it would exist without the technologies. Then I would've needed to do something else... How can you, how would you, it's not possible. I think nobody could do without it. OK, maybe without the internet easier than without the phone. The phone is no. 1 in these things. Then the internet... This is what I think, nobody could work without a phone. (Peter, early 30s, works as a gay escort)

---

<sup>45</sup> For more details on web crawling, see the first part of this report, in particular section 2.2.

Similarly, Rok, a gay porn actor, is dependent on various technologies and for business purposes uses mainly Messenger, Gay Romeo, e-mail and telephone: "You can't do without this. The mobile phone is the easiest and the main [means to attract clients]". He sends at least 300 SMSs a month, and ICTs became, as he says, an addiction for him. He has to have his mobile phone always with him: "even if I would have to keep it in my socks".

Research shows that in certain countries migrant women are involved in about half of all the prostitution. Observing various websites, the number of women who could be described as migrants is on the rise and migrant women are in majority, particularly those coming from eastern and south-eastern Europe, south-eastern Asia and Africa. The stereotypes related to these processes result in perceptions of migrants as less worthy, as second-grade citizens. Moreover, by using the ICTs, sexualities are marketed faster than by any other means, and through marketing of sexuality also other intersectional "traits" of women are included in "the offer" (e.g. emphasis on women's ethnicity).

Unlike Peter and Rok, who enjoy the benefits of ICTs, living in the Ljubljana Asylum Centre Maša, who used to work as a dancer in a night club, uses internet only occasionally; only if she finds a web-cam somewhere she talks with her mother via Skype. Most often she uses her mobile phone that was given to her by her husband who once, angry at her, took it away, reasoning that it was his anyway. Having a status of an asylum seeker, Maša is banned from working and having no means of her own she is dependent on the often abusive husband who controls her communication. She uses her mobile phone to communicate with her mother in Ukraine and she notes how expensive this is and that at least on a weekly basis she would spend a 5-euro card for such phone calls, which is a large sum for her. Maša's narrative points to the reality of how gendered roles, migrant statuses and their limited job opportunities determine their possibilities to connect with their families and others.

Yet, similarly to Peter and Rok, Anna, who at the time of the interview worked in a night club, also has the experience of ICT use that increases, as she says, her opportunities to earn money. Sex work in chat rooms is a new form that emerged as a consequence of ICT development and it presents a distinct type of sex work organizing that only happens virtually in a virtual interaction between a sex worker and a client. Anna explains how her job in video chat rooms was to attract a client to decide for a private chat that was payable and provided a more intimate interaction. She first communicated with potential clients in free and open chats and then attracted them to decide for a payable one-to-one video interaction.

The private virtual video chat room – the client had to pay for this – they paid in order to plug into the level of the private chat room. Basically, I communicated in on-line free chats with a big number of foreigners, but in private chat rooms I communicated *tête-à-tête*,



individually, with one client, and the client had to pay for that. The client could switch on the camera and I would switch on the camera, he saw me and I saw him, it was all on-line. If the client in the private chat room wished for something special we made an effort to fulfil his wishes, of course, in erotic sense. We were paid by the minute, of course, the longer we made him stay, the better we were paid. (Anna, early 20s, works as an erotic dancer)

In Anna's country of birth (Ukraine) this was an illegal activity and the majority of clients were foreigners who could afford it. Her on-line activity, albeit illegal and therefore exposing Anna to the risk of disclosure, provided her pay, while she also was able to use the opportunity to meet clients off-line and earn some extra money. She wasn't allowed to do this by her employer, which again posed some risk for her, but still, she says, she could use the opportunity of anonymity in chats to meet potential clients and earn additional money.

ICTs are not only used by those who earn their living in the sex-related work sphere, but also by the organizers of prostitution or owners of clubs and administrators of on-line sex related forums, like the example of the *bourdela.com* operating in Greece. Beno, a night club owner from Slovenia, explains how ICTs help him increase the number of visitors and to organize his business more smoothly. The club has a home page and Beno is keen to report about the number as well as origin countries of visitors. He is also excited about the business opportunities ICTs bring by introducing new services, which were not possible before, such as internet sex chat rooms, and he plans to explore his business opportunities in this area further. Seeing the night club's website, people contact Beno and many inquire if sex is possible in the club. Beno, however, never answers clearly, but invites them to come by and see for themselves. We see how Beno keeps the off- and the on-line divide to protect himself and his business (organizing prostitution is illegal in Slovenia); ICTs are used to attract clients who then come to his place and "see things for themselves".

Apart from attracting clients, Beno uses the internet for recruitment of women to work in his night club, specifically on Ukrainian/Russian social networks, where he publishes profiles with the introduction of the club. In this way, he does not rely on middle men who would bring women to Slovenia, but gets in contact with the women directly, organises the trip and provides the necessary documents. In so doing, he avoids costs, as he explains, for the middle men agencies and the possible involvement in international trafficking networks.

While Beno still thinks about possibilities how to earn cash on-line, Janez already successfully takes profits from a forum for clients of prostitution which he administrates. Recently, he began to charge for advertisements that women (and men) publish on the forum, he introduced a membership fee and attracted several sponsors. The forum, which once started as a self-organization of clients on the internet, has thus been hijacked and commercialized.

How did I start? Hm, I registered the domain (laughs) and set up a forum. Ehm, I did, I wanted to do a sort of an upgrade of the previous forum. And I wrote, at the time I was in contact with that owner, ahm, that I can make the whole thing more clear because the forum before didn't, wasn't... the previous forum was not very clear, it was very poor in terms of transparency. [...] I gave him a suggestion but he wasn't interested. So I tried to do my own thing and the users came here... why they did, I don't know. I guess you have to do a bit extra if you wish to be a competition to somebody who's already in their set ways. (Janez, early 30s, sex forum administrator)

It is significant that both Beno and Janez are males, have higher positions in the hierarchy of the sex business if compared to those who provide sexual services, and they earn good money relatively easily. Their situation is very different from the one of migrant women who are often dependent on their employer and who hardly make ends meet. Reflecting the different positions, earnings and relations in the work environment, the part of sex industry that goes to organizers of the business demonstrates a clear gender division, which is also perpetuated through the use of ICTs.

This means that she [the victim] has been deceived. Because trafficking in human beings is precisely this, being deceived, either about work conditions or about the type of work or... And basically she follows certain information that she's gonna get something out of it, when in fact she gets nothing. (Katjuša Popovič, Ključ – Centre for Fight against THB)

But there's [on-line] such an abundance of naked girls, right, these pictures that are being offered for small amounts of money, which is some sort of sexuality already, right. This is internet abuse, the person whose picture was taken probably gets the least out of the whole thing. Isn't it so? (Jurij Popov, journalist researcher of prostitution)

Because of the *de facto* illegal character of sex work in Athens,<sup>46</sup> the internet constitutes a privileged site for the dissemination of information, promotion and advertising of sex work of different types. Press advertising of strip clubs, studios and escort agencies is common. Nonetheless, since in newspapers and magazine advertisements brothels usually appear in a "covered form", advertising of brothels takes place primarily on-line. Advertising constitutes one of the main functions of relevant websites. Since sex work related websites that are based on user-generated content are more popular, independent advertising of brothels is not common. Instead, most brothel related information tends to be concentrated and standardized in certain umbrella websites organized around the commercial and social needs of clients. Although they have a commercial orientation, they usually function as communities of male clients, who interact in forums. We made this observation in Slovenia as well, what is more, the story of bourdela.com is to a high extend similar to the one of the forum Janez administrates.

The founder of the portal bourdela.com is indeed a client who created the website in order to connect and exchange information with other users.

---

<sup>46</sup> As explained above, sex work is legal only in licensed brothels. The restrictions for the issuing of licences are so strict because they impose a ban on all brothels located in a short distance from school, cultural centres, churches, etc. That it is almost impossible to find brothels that are actually licensed.

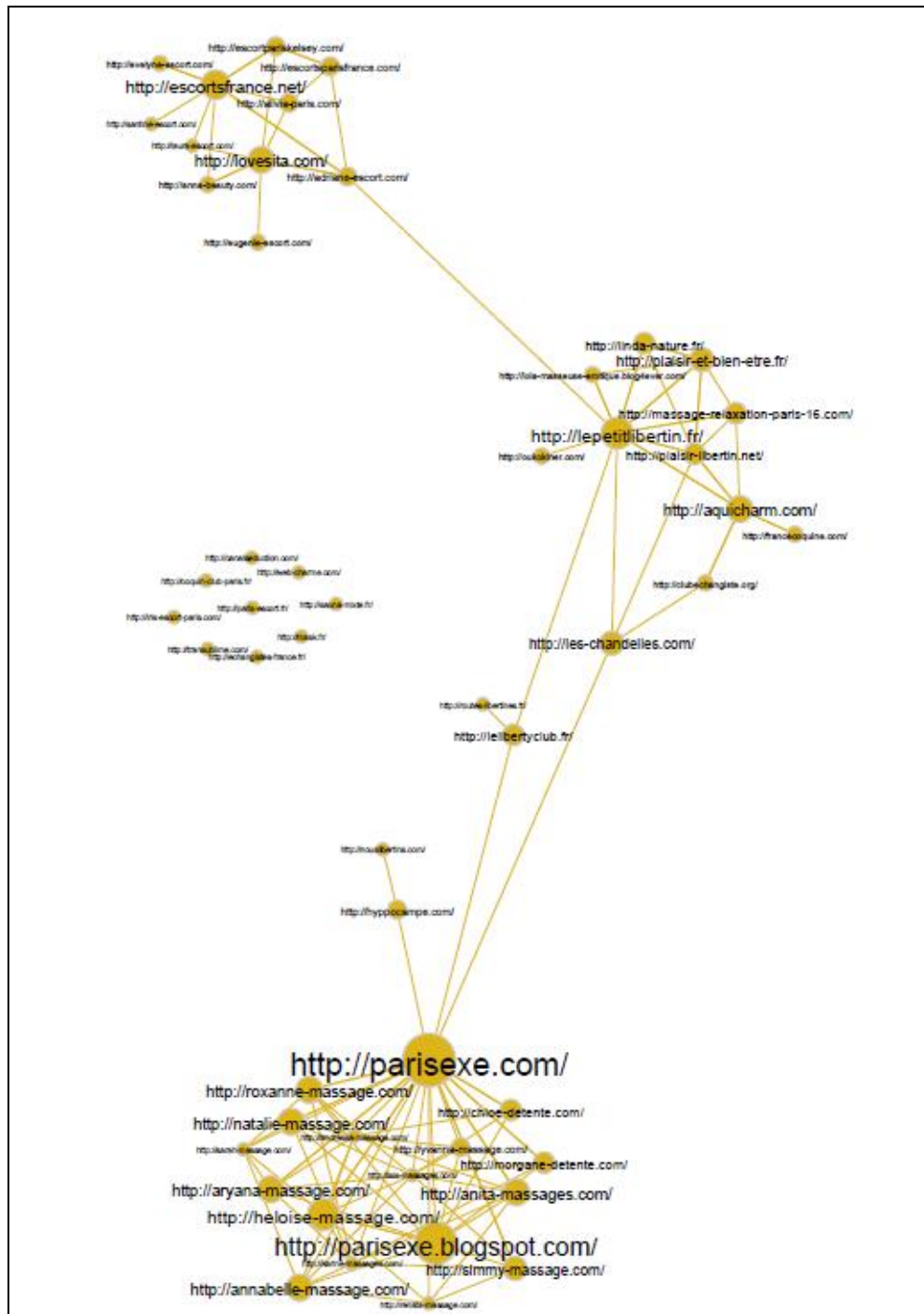
Gradually, the portal the contains information about a large variety of sex services, as well as a searchable “list”, and include “photos” and “evaluations”, as well as the latest “forum”, “popular” and “news” postings etc. itself became a means of exercising control over brothel owners and sex workers themselves:

The guy who started it was a very frequent customer of such businesses, [...] he knew everything, knew all the girls who worked at the time, and knew many, many others who also were very frequent visitors. [...] Consequently, this site became of great power in the field, because everybody worked callously, in order to update this story. In this way, the website gained all its power by the large amount of information and the constant updating. He then started blackmailing the brothels, since the website gained all this power and all visitors were passing by to see which girl is good etc. After that, he started forcing the shops to give a large sum of money, in order to have each month a place on the site. In order for someone to comment on a studio or a brothel, it must be enlisted in this site. One cannot comment on a shop that is not there that does not pay for that. So [the information] is directed, it is not objective.<sup>47</sup>

As regards the French case we were interested to explore how is the French sex market made digital and how does the on-line sex work economy work. (see the hypertextual structure of the corpus, Figure 1).

---

<sup>47</sup> Interview with web-developer of commercial web-site for independent brothel March 2011. The interviewee wished to remain anonymous.



*Figure 1: Map of the French corpus*

The graph is composed of 3 clusters (plus some disconnected websites):  
 1) The first cluster (at the bottom) is “polarized” by the website <http://parissexex.com> (and its related blog <http://parissexex.blogspot>) that have a role of *authority* (which means that it is much cited by the other websites).

This cluster also contains some “small” websites which, according to their names, seem to be individual massage services websites.

2) The second cluster (in the middle) is structured around the website <http://lepetitlibertin.fr> (and in a lesser measure <http://aquicharm.com>). It is related to the first cluster by two *bridge* websites: <http://les-chandelles.com> and <http://lelibertyclub.fr> (night clubs).

3) The last cluster (at the top) is organized around two main websites: <http://escortsfrance.net> and <http://lovesita.com>. It also contains “small” websites that, according to their names, seem to be individual escort websites.

Figures 2 and 3 show the relationships (in terms of links) between the websites of the corpus and their neighbours on the web. They reveal that the French corpus analyzed here only presents a very small section of a huge on-line sex market.

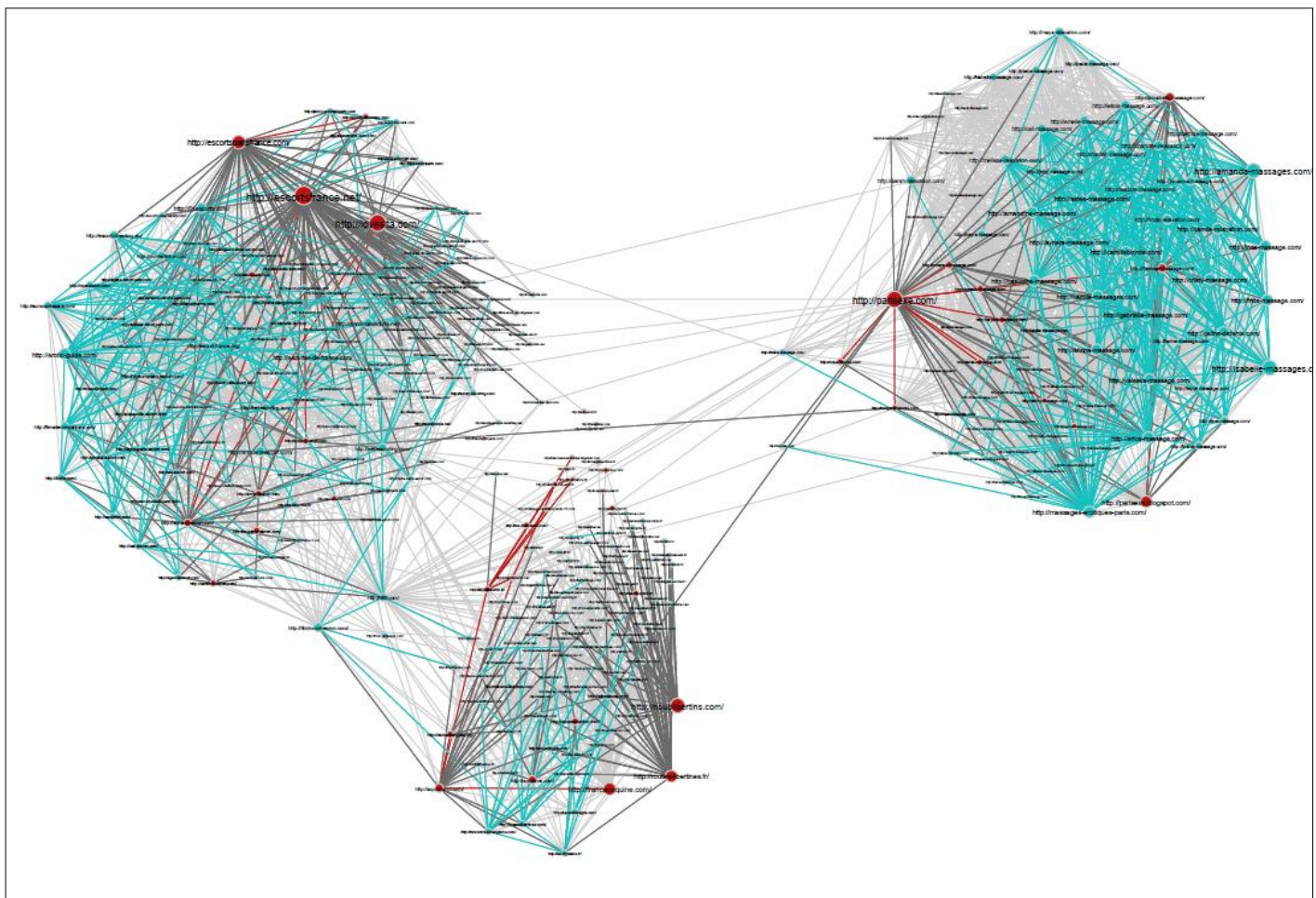
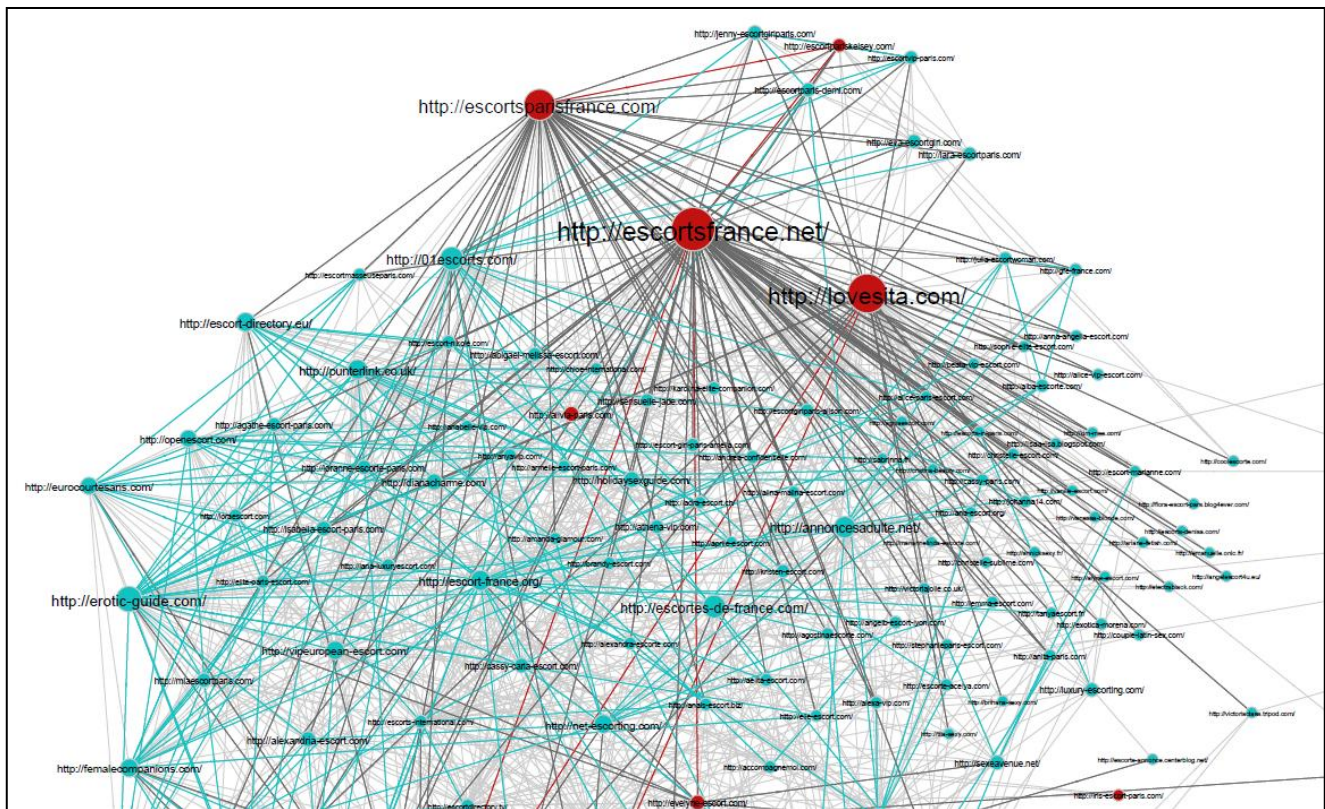


Figure 2: The web environment (blue) of the websites of the corpus (red)





*Figure 3: The web environment (blue) of the websites of the French corpus (red)*

The coding data shows that among the websites of the French corpus, 38.5% are massage parlour websites, 25% are escort websites, 11.6% are bar/hotel or night club, 11.5% are multifunctional sex hub, 5.8% are dating websites, and 7.6% are classified as “others”.

The website <http://parisexe.com> (main authority in the bottom cluster) is a *web portal* offering links to sexual services divided into eight main categories: dating, private clubs, fetishism/sado-maso, gay/lesbian/trans, erotic massages, photos/videos, shopping, and erotic chat-line/webcam. It is in that sense a “multifunctional sex hub”. The website’s set-up is of very low quality and the website does not include any social media functionality. The website <http://lepetitlibertin.fr> (main authority of the cluster in the middle) is also a web portal providing links towards websites of partner-swapping club, libertine sauna, striptease club, massage parlour, sex shop. If not of law quality, the set-up of the website is very basic and does not include any on-line communication functionality. Similarly, the website <http://aquicharm.com> (cluster in the middle) is a portal structured around the categories of dating, forums, sex exposure, sex shop. Again the set-up is of very low quality and the website does not include web 2.0 functionalities. Finally, <http://escortsfrance.com> and <http://lovesita.com> (authorities of the top cluster)

are two *directories* of escorts presenting the same characteristics than the previous websites<sup>48</sup>.

In this respect, the main *authorities* of the French corpus are web portal/directories operating as multifunctional sexual hubs. This has to be highlighted because generally portals are *hubs* (websites that have many links *to* other websites), but not authorities (websites that have many links *from* other websites). That means that in this case the websites referenced by those portals have "*backlinks*" towards them. As mentioned before, these websites appear to be *individual* websites: their urls often contain first names: <http://laura-escort.com/>, <http://adriane-escort.com/>, <http://lola-masseuse-erotique.blog4ever.com/>, <http://yvanna-massage.com/>, <http://annabelle-massage.com/>. However, these urls follow common patterns: "-escort.com", "-massage.com".

Looking more in detail to these so-called "individual" websites, they have very *stereotyped* structures. They are extremely standardized both in terms of form and content. In fact, they are developed by a very limited number of actors/companies. For example, using a whois tool (which allows to retrieve the information associated to a domain name or IP address), one can observe that websites like "surname.massage.com" are all located either in Texas or in Florida (which corresponds to the two types of websites provided under this name). In that sense, few actors are providing very standard tools for the creation and management of websites offering erotic/sex services. The digital infrastructure of erotic/sex services, far from being appropriated by sex workers themselves, seems on the contrary controlled by few companies whose affinities with "traditional" off-line procurers would need to be further examined in order to have the opportunity to analyze the actual "material" economy of this market. The nature of the actual/off-line relationships between the main web portals and these "individual" websites would have to be investigated more-in-depth.

There is a last group of websites that do not appear on the graph of the corpus, but are nonetheless crucial to understand this digitalization of the sex market. These are sexual dating "web 2.0" platforms such as <http://adultfriendfinder.com> or <http://easyflirt.fr>. They have to be mentioned here because they are present in the French corpus in a singular manner. Indeed, many websites of the corpus include "ads" (clickable profile pictures) from these websites. These ads allow the user to directly access to given profiles on these web 2.0 platforms (considered as advertisements by the crawler, these links are automatically skipped and that is why these websites do not appear in our corpus). It is important to highlight the fact that even if these websites present themselves as providing spaces for free sex dating, there are actually many paying sex services proposed on these websites. This reveals the blurred boundary between sex dating and prostitution on the web.

---

<sup>48</sup> More generally, in the corpus, 65.4% of the websites have a low quality set-up and only 23.1% of the websites provide social media contents.

More generally, the websites of the French corpus show that the boundary between services as massage and escort on the one hand, and prostitution on the other hand, is often very thin. As we will see further, such blurred lines were identified also during the off-line research work in Greece and Slovenia.

### **3.1.1. Relations in Sex Economy: Gendered, Ethnicised and Racialised**

Some of the interviews in Slovenia and Greece show that when ICTs are a vital component of sexual exchange work relations become more “fluid” in the sense that they’re not only about work, but also about socializing, getting to know new people, or “having fun” and “meeting other people”. Such accounts need to be analysed carefully since the social and economic position, gender, ethnicity, and work experiences of our interview partners differ greatly, therefore praising ICTs as a means of introducing “fun” into the sex business might obscure unequal relations in cases where, for example, migrant women’s work is heavily controlled by their employers. On the other hand, one needs to recognize the accounts where ICTs “truly” can bring a more social or “leisure” dimension to the jobs that are performed in the sex industry. If this holds in general then another peculiarity should be mentioned and that is gay escorting which seems to reflect the complex relationships that are hardly ever just work related. Peter, for example, stresses that he never only works for money but “for pleasure” and when he doesn’t feel “lust” he prefers not to work. These situations point to a probable pattern that commercial sexual relationships, which evolve as a consequence of the use of ICTs, represent an additional and not the main or the only income for a person. Rok, for example, is a school teacher with regular income who works as an escort and porn film actor “for fun” and earns extra money in this venture.

On the other hand, Anna, Maša and Agnes never speak of their work as being fun or pleasure. They also never state that everything they do is their free will or that they have control over their work, something that is being emphasized by Rok and Peter, but also Akos (to a lesser extent), as well as the organizers (Beno) and the administrator of the forum for clients (Janez). Given the small sample we cannot generalize our observations. Still, it should be noted that only females in the Slovene sample don’t relate sex work to pleasure. We can see a clear difference between those narratives that show prostitution is practiced out of need, to earn money to make a living, and those where interviewees refer to it as a source of additional income. A peculiarity of some interviews with gays in our sample - who all relate their work to “having fun” - should also be noted. Namely, Peter’s story points to some contradictions, since he says he would never be engaged in sex work only for material gains but does it for the reason of “having fun”. While it is clear that he is very professional in what he has been doing for the past 11 years, he also argues at some point that one needs money to live a good life. This points to the fact



that economic motivation is always there in one way or another, sometimes rationalized with the ideas of party and other times separate from them.

In terms of economic benefits it looks like the use of ICTs adds on to what one earns with a more steady job. We've seen how for Anna the contacts she maintains via Facebook or via occasional phone calls don't mean a steady income; rather it's an additional money to the sum she receives performing her job in a night club. Akos's story confirms that it's difficult to only live out of services coming from on-line orders. He had the experience, explains that it was hard and adds that the majority don't make a living out of it. Peter, who only lives out of prostitution, is a contrastive example and his narrative differs in his professional approach to sex services. As for the commercial exchange itself, on-line contacts that resulted in actual services that take place enabled our interviewees to negotiate their terms and payment requirement in contrast to a nearly incomparable situation when, for example, a procurer decides (low) shares of income for a sex worker.

Although observations on the basis of our sample can't be generalized, it's important to stress that it points to a pattern when migrant women are more ambivalent and tend to benefit less from on-line activities if compared to males who are engaged in same sex prostitution. All our male interviewees, Akos, Peter and Rok, describe their sex work in strong relation to the motto of "having fun". The differences in stories noted in the Slovene sample are clustered along gender, sexual orientation and class (material position). Beside the fact that gay males seem to benefit more from using ICTs if compared to straight migrant females, the narratives also show that those who are better off materially again benefit more from ICTs, which reminds us of the fact that the issue of the divide is still an important dimension to be considered in analyzing the developments and meanings of ICTs. On the one hand, the opportunities of gays to use the ICTs and their knowledge related to the use are greater, and, on the other hand, the fact that they're materially not only dependent on what they earn in prostitution, i.e. their "casual" engagement in it, gives them the possibility of a more "open" attitude to on-line communication in the sense that this brings positive results for them.

The Greek case was also able to identify several gay escort advertisements in specialized websites. The sex workers engaged in gay escorting who were interviewed in Athens had a good relationship with the internet, because they mostly used global websites in which people of the same sexual orientation interacted. "So if someone wants to do this job, one can simply mention in his profile that he provides this kind of services".<sup>49</sup> This meant that they were able to integrate their work in their online identity as something "not dirty". They found costumers through the internet deliberately or accidentally and this made it possible for them to create an independent professional status. Gay escorting sex work did not present any visible signs of a particular

---

<sup>49</sup> Interview with male migrant gay escort conducted May 2011 in Athens. The interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

function of ethnicity as a category or as a distinguishing element. In these websites, the conditions of centralization and control were not as extreme as in heterosexual websites, while the stigma and insecurity that was very pronounced in heterosexual websites was not evident. Whereas it is illegal for gay men to provide sexual services outside a legitimate brothel, working independently as a gay escort makes the conditions of their work clearly better than the ones of their female counterparts.<sup>50</sup>

This takes place through my profile. My first job came from there, a guy sent me a message at random 'Do you want to join me? If you want to, I will pay'. [...] I work for myself, I have no obligation to no one, I just send a message to my boyfriend that I m going to work there, especially when I go for the first time, call me after two hours.<sup>51</sup>

Gendered differences don't only stem from the interviews but are also reproduced in online discourses: for example, Bourdella.com (see photo) advertisements clearly point to gender inequality principles online. Sex-workers are female, referred to as 'Girls' and occasionally, listings include information about their nationality and the kinds of sex services they provide. Most of them are white, young (in their 20s and 30s) and come from Eastern European and Balkan countries. Desirability is determined by body features, inflected with a personal touch. Photos may blot out the eyes, but in most cases the woman's face is visible and faces the viewer directly with a smiling, inviting and provocative look aiming to entice the client with her availability and desirability and the promise of personal interaction. Women's gazes can be sweet, serious or even aggressive at times, each intimating the type of sexual performance they would be providing but also the type of woman they are. The women, naked or in scanty underwear, assume several different sexually provocative and raunchy poses lying, sitting or standing, that flaunt the breasts and buttocks. They have well-groomed, clean and fit but curvacious bodies, of thin or average weight. Representations of women's bodies are central in sex-worker photographs, and absolutely necessary: there are no photographs without a body depiction. Body images, therefore, in the context of online marketing of sexual services, can be seen to function not only as objects of sexual provocation/desire but also as 'objective' sexual information; you can see in advance what you will get.

---

<sup>50</sup> It should be noted here that according to our informants there is no brothel where men can work either legally or illegally in Athens.

<sup>51</sup> Interview with male migrant gay escort conducted May 2011 in Athens. The interviewee wished to remain anonymous.

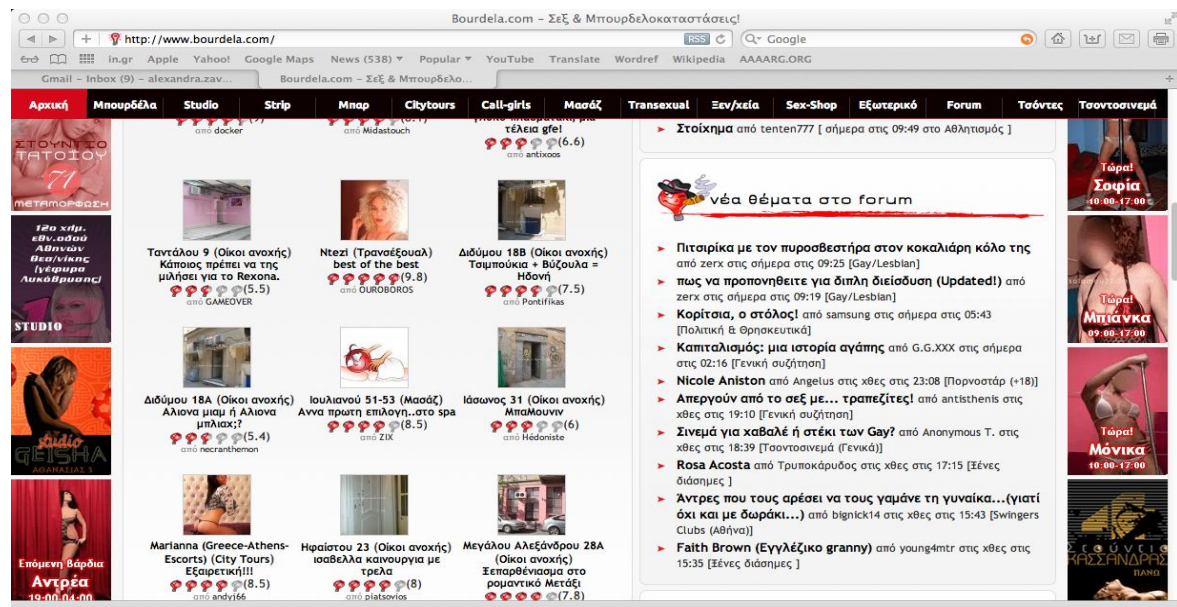


Photo. Home page of “Bourdela.com”. Hyperlinked list of brothel, studio and sex-worker evaluations on the left.

In bourdela.com, a thread “Migrants in Greece” was started in 2008 with a poll about whether or not migrants in Greece should be legalized. The thread has a steady participation to this day, and counts 966 pages. Migration is clearly a contentious political issue around which strong racist and nationalist affects are encoded. What is a striking contradiction in this context, however, is the fact that although the majority of forum members, Greek men, express hostility against migrants, at the same time they value and desire the services provided by foreign sex workers. The topic of migration attracts a variety of responses, ranging from anti-migrant to pro-migrant ones. Anti-migrant opinions generally quite closely reflect mainstream public opinion, and media discourses are reproduced faithfully. However, the “racist disclaimer” with which the first member qualifies his anti-migrant sentiment, indicates that anti-migrant positions need to be justified not in “racial” but in rational terms. It is socio-economic rationalizations rather than “race” and cultural difference, which are used to properly furnish arguments for the undesirability of migrants. The very popular theme of the need to protect and police urban centres, in particular Athens, from being further infested and run by migrant and criminal gangs is currently also part of most political platforms, in particular of the far right. On-line forum members here are clearly repeating these positions unquestioned. At the same time, however, opposing voices are also articulated, who argue for migrants’ rights as a solution to, and not part of, the problem. These voices are a small minority; nevertheless, in spite of, or perhaps because of their singularity, they do in fact construct a field of antagonism and tension by placing in the public sphere a contested perspective. In this regard, the online forum enables a multiplicity of positions to be debated in the same context and on the same topic, and as such can be considered a political space and a space for doing politics itself.

Looking at the French corpus of commercial websites, actors are presented in "ethnic diversity" in 21.2% and are racialized in 7.7% of the websites; the actors' ethnicity is described in 11.5% of the websites ("nationality" in only 3.8%). However, ethnicity and race are only suggested through the offering of different types of massages (Asiatic, Thai, etc.) and are emphasized on some pictures; but they are not "commodified" as such; they are not used for defining and dividing categories of web services. Obviously, this does not mean that there is no ethnic/racial "niche market" on the French digital sexual space, but only that ethnicity/race do not really appear in the section of the web analyzed here.

### **3.2. Enablers and Hinderers of Agency: From Entrepreneurship to Surveillance and Control**

Our interview partners in the Slovene case who work in the sex industry explain how they use ICTs, for example e-mail or Facebook or mobile phone, to increase their chances to attract clients. The narratives reveal that ICTs can at least potentially increase chances to get more work and to attract clients bypassing their fixed work arrangements in clubs, which all provides extra earnings. Similarly as Anna appointed off-line meetings with some of her chat partners, now, when working in a night club in Slovenia, she gives her mobile phone number to some clients, or invites them to e-mail her or look at her profile on Facebook. Again, her further e-contacts with clients increase her earning chances and her options to choose her clients herself. Anna's story at the same time shows how ICTs left some of the traditional fixed employment engagements intact - Anna works in a club (where she physically meets and has relations with her clients) and her work is closely controlled by her employer. She is being accompanied by someone from the club also when working outside of the club.

Similarly, Maša couldn't live on the little money she got while working in a night club as a dancer. She describes her own dependency and that of her colleagues who, bound to their employer who provided miserable earnings, had to make their ends meet in some other way. They used mobile phones and e-mails for separate arrangements with clients. Maša explains that she only got 15 euros per day for dancing in the night club and socializing with guests, which obviously wasn't enough for her daily expenses and was far from enough for her to send remittances home. Given the situation, it was obvious for women in the club to arrange meetings with clients. Unlike Anna, who was denied the possibility of making separate arrangements by her boss, Maša's example points to another strategy and shows that the lump sum of 15 euros she got was purposefully low and informally her boss actually expected her to make further arrangements with clients on her own in order to earn more money. The boss's response resembles the narratives by the nightclub owner in our sample (Beno), who (may) purposefully distance

themselves from prostitution as something with which they have nothing to do – but rather, as something that the migrant women arrange themselves in their own free time, out of their own “free” will. It’s a strategy of prostitution organizers who want to clear themselves of any involvement - in case of investigation, Maša would be held the only one responsible for illegal activity.

Maša’s example doesn’t point so much to the enabled agency or the increased autonomy of the worker in sex business, but more to the ways in which the availability of technologies is manipulated so that the providers increase their earnings. Maša’s and Anna’s narratives show how control over them and their work is practiced by their employers through the use of new technologies. If Anna’s case seems different in the sense that she is herself more willing, if compared to Maša, to explore the on-line opportunities and is therefore able to profit more from them, both narratives point to control mechanisms that determine their off and on-line work, and we can also see how interwoven the off- and the on-line practices are.

All our expert interview partners are in agreement that while migrants are now more informed and often educated, the migrants are nevertheless still under heavy influence and control of the organizers of prostitution and traffickers, just the means have changed. No longer locked up somewhere in total isolation and being stripped of their documents, migrant women may now have access to the internet, mobile phones, go home for visits, and are generally free to move around in actual and virtual space, yet their freedom of movement is nevertheless limited and heavily controlled. In terms of access of migrant women to the new technologies, experts on trafficking note that all the communication of THB victims is always heavily supervised and controlled. This does not only mean that somebody would sit and listen while the women use their mobile phones, but it also entails taking their cell phones and checking the list of incoming and outgoing calls.

Increasing the chances for more work is the main reason to experiment with ICTs and the experimentation is usually the consequence of precarious off-line work circumstances. When agency of migrant women who work in prostitution is recognized in their ICT use, this needs to be explored in larger contexts that determine their work and life options. Thus, our interviews show that ICT use doesn’t change substantially the traditional work relations migrant women are subjected to. ICTs at best help mitigate to a certain extent for some the difficult situations. The fact that Maša is an asylum seeker, who is prohibited to work legally, remains the “heavy” condition that determines the (im)possibilities of her work and also her other life opportunities.

The club owner Beno himself points out that he controls his employees. Protecting himself from possible charges of organizing prostitution which is illegal in Slovenia, he explains how he uses security cameras and mobile phones to control his employees at any time of the day, checking, for example, if their phone is on or if they’re in their workplace working or had

they gone outside and similar. The fact that women get in touch with Beno directly over social networks could indicate that they decide more freely about their potential employer and they have the option to negotiate on-line their work arrangements. Inquiring about work opportunities might help one to decide whether to take a job or not. Still, cases need to be considered when women do negotiate their job arrangements that can then be broken. Also, other circumstances, when a woman migrates to Slovenia for sex business, need to be considered - a night club artist Anna does not know the language, lives and works in the same place where she is supervised by cameras, and is highly dependent on her "boss", who controls her internet and mobile communication. Therefore, ICTs have been seen in the narratives as tools used and abused to execute control over migrant women.

Also, the most often noted point raised by experts and various NGOs in Slovenia involved with issues of trafficking and prostitution in relation to the ICTs is that traffickers (and generally "criminals") are always at least one step ahead in terms of their ability to use and abuse the new technologies and media. THB for purposes of sexual exploitation is known for its fast reaction to new kinds of demand and new types of expectations of users of prostitution and sexual services in general. The interviewed experts are aware of the fact that the ICTs enable the situation where the victims of trafficking no longer need to physically cross the national borders. In fact, the contribution of new digital technologies to the spread of THB has been one of the greatest, while their potential in the fight against trafficking has so far remained chiefly under-studied. Those non-governmental and governmental organisations – including the police – that are involved in prevention and assistance must start becoming more present in the digital media, since the traffickers have already penetrated the field and their presence in the virtual world and digital sphere needs to be properly addressed.

With the digitalization, a new era has also begun in the field of THB, one marked with new ways of finding victims. Traffickers have begun using all the new possibilities and options available by the ICTs in order to access particularly young people, especially young girls. Social media, Facebook as one particular example, are therefore potentially a vast trap especially for young girls, who can thus become migrants, i.e. trafficked, because via the new digital media they may be purposefully "prepared" for sexual purposes and abuse in foreign countries.

In the case of brothels in Greece, the interconnectedness of on-line and off-line networks is mostly determined by the dominance of male subjects: the visible agents are, on the one hand, male clients who "consume" sex services and are users of related websites and, on the other hand, the mostly male "staff" who controls sex workers, as well as the website developers and owners. Women sex workers appear in these networks mainly as passive objects: they are photographed for the relevant websites, categorized, ranked, rated, consumed and used for the sexual pleasure of the clients and controlled by male pimps who protect and make a profit out of them. The

absence of a sex worker perspective is a prerequisite for the development of all-male on-line communities of clients "consumers", who interact with other males in order to exchange their sexual experiences. These findings are supported also by the statement of Janez, the administrator of the forum for clients of prostitution in Slovenia, who argues that "women are not allowed to talk on the forum". Although, for instance, the declarations and interviews of the Greek Union of Sex Workers are usually published on-line, women are not treated as workers, but rather as objects of desire. What unites these all-male communities is the desire for the objectification of women and the denial of their agency, which is secured through a centralized male control of the digital and material space. Digital space, however, provides the terrain for the mystification of women as objects of desire, who only exist on-line as images designed for no other purpose than to please or satisfy the male gaze and attract the clients-consumers to use them.

This is manifest mostly in the "Evaluations" sections of commercial websites. In *bourdela.com* this section covers the largest part of the website and represents its main innovation vis-a-vis other commercial sex websites. Evaluations are published by members regarding sex worker performances and quality of sexual services delivered at particular brothels and studios or by individual female and trans sex workers working independently as call-girls and escorts. Evaluations follow a standardized format, which contains a written account of the sexual encounter, usually focusing on the details of the sex worker's performance, and a quantitative evaluation of specific parameters of the encounter: Girl's appearance; Girl's participation/attitude; Space/Cleanliness; Madam's attitude; Accessibility/Parking; Value for Money. The systematized and itemized style of rating lends evaluations an authoritative tone; sexual services are rendered measurable as commodities and are accordingly valorized for the market by the clients themselves, who are thus cast into the role of consumer experts who, by comparing experiences and exerting their "freedom of choice", can influence the movement of the sex market. Sex in the market is featured as a consumer "product" whose quality can be monitored and, accordingly, controlled, to the extent that it is assumed that the clients' positive or negative evaluations can influence the offer and the demand.

Moreover, the written accounts of sexual performances also become standardized and, in their meticulous regard for detail, lend descriptions of sexual acts an almost clinical dimension. Sexual performance, as represented in the written accounts, involves the delivery of specific, and anticipated, acts during the encounter, following a particular set routine which acquires a ritual status. Most encounters involve foreplay, followed by oral sex, anal penetration and, finally vaginal penetration and culmination in the missionary position. Each one of these stages is individually described and rated, and the quality of sexual performances can vary in relation to any one of the above acts. In other words, a particular sex worker or sexual encounter may deliver different quality of performance and degrees of satisfaction in each one of the prescribed acts. In fact, different sex workers can gain a reputation for



excelling, or failing, in one or several of them. Importantly, intimacy, willingness to please, proactiveness and cleanliness are represented as significant aspects of the encounter and feature prominently in the written accounts of the evaluation.

The regular supply of new sex workers, alongside the presence of more established ones, is necessary for a studio to maintain its clientele, who want to be both enticed by the possibility of “new” experiences as well as enjoy the comfort of known and tried favourites with whom familiarity bordering on intimacy has been developed. Evaluators and evaluations are also subject to critique and ranking based on the number of evaluations they have posted and how useful other members of the forum find them to be.

There are certain practices, however, that manifest the sex workers’ agency. On-line flirting is a communication and marketing strategy for female forum members, who are predominantly either brothel owners or sex workers. They interact with regular or prospective clients, also members of the forum, informing them about new services provided at their studio, special offers, which “girls” are working and how they are doing, or, enticing them with promises of sexual pleasure, often assuming a more “personal” style of communication, exchanging intimacies and pleasantries. In another excerpt it is the proprietress, who calls herself “the boss”, who is initiating the exchange with the purpose of informing customers/clients about the new sexual services provided at her establishment, but also in order to gauge the market and see which “girls” are popular. Interestingly, she defends the “girls” behaviour *vis-a-vis* clients and points out the hardship they face from abusive punters. In this sense, this interaction serves not only to impart information, or to solicit customers, but also to negotiate boundaries of correct and acceptable client-sex worker exchange. In this way, even though indirectly and through personal interaction, a certain degree of control is exerted by those performing in the sex market. Moreover, we see that men, far from assuming only the role of the cold, impartial evaluators, are themselves concerned about their sexual performances and curious about the “girls” opinions of them, revealing perhaps an aspect of their own vulnerability.

According to our research, there is a limited number of independent brothels in Athens that respect sex worker’s rights and grant them agency. In one particular case, the owner of the brothel is a sex worker who has undergone a sex change. After living abroad, she decided “to bring back to Greece a different perspective on sexuality and sex work”. The brothel is one of the few that have a license. There are no pimps or “protectors” and sex workers are “not really employees but collaborators, since they are not paid on a salary but on a commission basis”. Although the brothel is legal, due to her conflict with the “lobbyists” the owner is “continuously running into problems with the police”. The differences in the organization of the brothel are also reflected in the website. The developer of an independent website gave us an interesting account of how it was set up. As she explained, the brothel owner “decided to get out of the lobby of one of the sites, because what it had to

offer was 'cheap' and macho [...] and wanted to show that those who do this job in there are people who do it not because they are forced to do it but because they like it. This is what she asks in the first place." The website is designed with the participation of the sex workers and it also has a forum in which customers can interact with the sex workers. Clients ask questions and express their opinion and answers are given by the employees themselves. As explained by the website developer: "The girls who work there have an opinion on the formation of the site, on the way each girl is presented, on what is said about them, on how their photos are set, etc... In order to build the website, I spent many hours with the girls, talking about it. The girls have expertise in correspondence via the internet, which is very similar to the interactive features of the website and they can reply to comments themselves."

The French case demonstrates that websites' standardization has crucial consequences in terms of agency. As showed by previous research<sup>52</sup>, the fact that various websites share identical structures (menus, search forms, etc.) tends to drastically limit the forms of self-presentation. This normalization is particularly striking in the case of user profiles. Even without considering the extremely stereotyped profile pictures, the very repetition of the same or similar categories and fields of texts (age, bodily characteristics, etc.) making up the profiles produce menu-determined identities - beyond what Lisa Nakamura calls "menu-driven identities"<sup>53</sup>. In both the texts and pictures of the websites composing the corpus, men are totally invisible either as clients or potential actors. Male users are presented in only 7.7% of the websites of the corpus. Female actors are presented in a "porn-like pose" in 28.8% of the websites, "naked" in 46.2% of the websites, and "half-naked" in 63.5% of the websites. In this respect, women are textually and visually *objectified* whereas men are in the position of a pure gaze which cannot be looked at, impeding thus any *reciprocity*.

### **3.3. The Private and the Public: Contested Roles of ICTs to Overcome Binarism**

In Athens, sex work takes place mainly on the street, in brothels, and in strip clubs and bars. In many cases, it does not involve physical contact, although there are many clubs and bars that informally provide sexual services. The number of brothels in Athens is estimated to be over 300. There are also many massage parlours and "company" bars. Most street sex work related spots and shops are located in the surroundings of residential areas, which are known for this reason, and the vast majority can be found in the centre of

---

<sup>52</sup> Diminescu, Dana Matthieu Renault. 2011. The Matrimonial Web of Migrants: The Economics of Profiling as a New Form of Ethnic Business. *Social Science Information*, 1-27.

<sup>53</sup> See Nakamura, Lisa. 2002. *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet*. New York: Routledge.

Athens. In the past, in front of the brothels there was only a red light, but today several brothels are brightly coloured and use the sign "Studio" even when they are located in densely populated areas. Also, the bright signs of strip clubs and bars can be seen in several locations in the city – mainly in large avenues. Street sex work takes place in specific locations in the centre of Athens, although the spots often move following the demand and police clampdowns.

The visibility of sex work in the public spaces of Athens is in contrast to the silencing of the issue in public debates. In this context, sex work related websites function as a public forum for male clients rather than for sex workers. Indeed, the most successful websites, like *bourdela.com*, are those that are produced through user-generated content (most notably clients' views, opinions, ratings, criticisms and exchanges). Interactions between forum members of *bourdela.com* can involve a large number of topics of general and specific interest, including, but not limited to, sex work, such as: the latest news on sexual encounters and services, arrivals of new sex workers, body care and exercise recommendations, current political news, events in the city, football, and even advice on professional, work- and money-related problems. These ongoing interactions establish an online community of users, mainly men, who use the forum as a public discussion site, the object of which far exceeds the "sexual" identity of the website. In fact, the more general interactions constitute not only the bulk of exchanges but also the medium through which a field of homosociality is produced, which encompasses personal, social and political concerns, and where mainstream, or more marginal, societal trends are debated, affirmed or contested. The most popular topics of discussion relate to exercise and body care, sports, politics – all of which belong to the range of social issues that are stereotypically associated with masculinity and male identity. The online forum thus represents a site for the performance of masculinity and for male bonding.

ICTs have affected the traditional public (or, for example, work specific relations) / private divide. Anna's narration in the Slovene case, for example, reveals a peculiarity of the blurring of the line between work and private life. When Anna adds her client on Facebook he becomes her friend, and she also speaks of her former clients as friends from Great Britain or the US with whom she stays in touch, just as she does with her friends whom she met outside her working arrangements. Also, she doesn't manipulate her on-line profile, but uses her real name and shares her interests equally with her friends and family and her former or present clients. Similarly, following Rok's story, it is again hard to divide when he meets somebody in the "professional role" of a sex worker or intimately as a private person, when he gets paid for sex and when not. On the one hand, he seems comfortable with his shifting roles working as an escort, porn actor or both at the same time and enjoys migrating for sexual business abroad, mostly to Germany where he also regularly attends gay sex parties. On the other hand, his sex work related life is totally separate from his other work arrangements. He speaks about sex

work as party time and fun in a similar manner as when talking about having sex at a party. He even uses the word "*zabava*" (*sl.* fun, party) as equivalent to sex. This mixture of spheres that one would expect to be divided is very well demonstrated with Rok's use of the GayRomeo website, where he has two profiles: one as an escort and one as a private user.

Akos, too, has two GayRomeo profiles, one private and one escort. His narration reveals that he wants to keep the distance but recognizes that this is difficult on-line as he receives business offers at his private profile. It seems that this doesn't bother him and he is very keen on changing profiles to suit his current interests. For example, when in Hungary, he would use a different profile than in Slovenia because of different friendships and acquaintances that he has in both countries. His GayRomeo profile, when he's in Slovenia, is aimed to attract clients from Slovenia specifically; Akos explains how he changes his profile location, and he also uses a different phone number for his escort services. In addition, he also has his profile on other platforms; he obviously negotiates several profiles to increase his chances for being contacted but also because different platforms have different things to offer. For example, he uses sexorg.hu platform because it has a chat room where you can have private conversations, while GayRomeo only enables text exchange. Akos also explains that he doesn't use some other available platforms, since they are not so popular with the users and would not increase his chances to get work. Rok, on the other hand, says he has profiles on at least 20 sites (like GayRomeo, Recon, BarebackCity, Scatt). In most cases a friend told him about the opportunity and he has opened a profile there too, but reasons now that he will have to reduce them, since he cannot check them all regularly.

Similar is the experience of Peter who works in Slovenia and occasionally commutes to Trieste in Italy (his clients are predominately Slovene males and in about 10% males from other former Yugoslav republics and Italy). He, too, has a profile on GayRomeo since 2004, when the platform was launched, and has the habit to update it once a year. People change, he says, and is of opinion that one simply has to do so in order to be successful in the business. When changing profiles, he checks what's available, looks at other people's profiles and adapts his own by looking for "niches", i.e. what could be interesting that would increase his popularity. Peter and Akos's cases also show a selective way of use of various media. Official profiles on Facebook or GayRomeo and other social platforms are used to advertise oneself and one's services. After being contacted, they then use mobile phones or e-mail to exchange information and photos.

To summarize, different technologies are used for commercial sexual activities and they reflect life circumstances or life-styles of the users that are highly individualized. Also, technologies are used interchangeably; GayRomeo is usually used to attract a client and then the commercial relationship is negotiated via phone and e-mail (mainly used for sending pictures).

Unlike Anna and Akos, Maša, but also Rok, are more careful in using their Facebook profiles. The narrative reveals Maša's unease about it - she says she is afraid of it - and she is doubtful whether profiles and pictures people send are genuine. While for Akos the manipulation of data isn't an issue and he practices it himself to attract clients, Maša doesn't use Facebook for work and only accepts as friends people she actually knows. She describes herself as somebody who "favours face-to-face communication" and only uses Facebook to communicate with a handful of close friends and relatives back home in Ukraine. Peter is also cautious with his on-line activity. When exchanging pictures over his e-mail account with interested clients, he never sends a picture with his face, and only exchanges bodily pictures, explaining: "You never know when somebody will jerk around with your picture". The reality of such abuses is confirmed by Rok who deleted his Facebook profile not only for the reason of having to disclose too much intimate information but also after the experience when one of his chat friends sent him Rok's photo claiming it was his own. Peter makes sure to be authentic with his on-line profiles as it wouldn't be good for business if people would think there is one person behind several profiles, so he only sticks with one.

The Greek case confirmed the peculiarities of internet use for work/private matters, also for reasons of fear of control: while most women were using the internet for personal purposes – including communication with relatives and friends, collection of information and usage of social media – they never used it for a professional tool only in order to find employment. The importance of the internet for the personal usage of sex workers employed in strip shows, for example, is obvious in the fact that the contract they sign states that the houses in which they will be hosted has a Wi-Fi internet connection. Job recruitment takes place via websites, which belong to the recruiters, who advertise jobs in various parts of the Mediterranean, in strip clubs, while the contract that the girls sign can also be found online. In opposition, during our visit to a "company" bar and a discussion with the sex workers there, when we asked them about professional usages of the internet, we were told that "bad things happen constantly there; Star [channel] says it too, everything in there is prostitution, with children, all bad things". Similarly, a Romanian street sex worker, who worked mostly in Kerameikos, told us that she used the internet to get information about Greece but was very hesitant to use the internet to advertise her work because she considered it "dangerous" and preferred instead to use it to collect information about Greece and other European countries where she was planning to move. The sense of shame and the stigma of sex work may account for this attitude, although clearly the popular media rhetoric of insecurity also reinforces these attitudes.

## 4. Conclusion

The following conclusions can be made from the analysis:

- 1) Sex work and human trafficking are actually forming two separated communities/clusters on the web.
- 2) Migration websites (especially governmental and intergovernmental websites) are much more connected to human trafficking websites (they take part in the same cluster of our corpus) than to prostitution websites.
- 3) There is an invisibility of migrant sex work on-line.
- 4) Prostitution is hardly visible on migration websites and migration as a subtopic also shows weakest links to prostitution (4.6%) and trafficking (8%).
- 5) Community websites recognize to the largest extent prostitution as sex work. These websites to the largest extent recognize prostitution as sex work, and the sex work paradigm is highly present in the web's blogosphere.
- 6) There is an absence of sex work paradigm and of sex workers as a target group in governmental discourses.
- 7) Websites that refer to trafficking as a main topic recognize interrelations to other phenomena (prostitution and migration) most; 16.6% of websites framed trafficking at the intersection of sexual exploitation, forced labour and migration.
- 6) NGO and Coalition websites are more inclined to use web opportunities (production of social media, using web as an economic resource).

The following explanations can be provided, opening up also new questions:

- 1) Policy strategies are generally more inclined to address the issue of trafficking than the topic of prostitution/sex work.
- 2) There is a dominance of the anti-trafficking paradigm in public/policy discourses.
- 3) Coalition websites, blogs in particular, often low costs and low quality, are used as an opportunity to advocate the sex work perspective.

Analysis of the interviews shows that the change in the "old" patterns and ways of how prostitution and trafficking in human beings operate under the influence of new technologies is both significant and yet not entirely fundamental. In other words, while the changes brought about by the offset of new digital media such as the mobile phone and internet have been profound, the basic structure and operation of prostitution/sex work seems to still reflect the traditional patterns, determined by gender, ethnicity, class etc. bias.

While women/migrants are now more informed and often educated, the migrants are nevertheless still under heavy influence and control of organizers of prostitution and particularly traffickers, just the means have changed. Predominantly still not self-organized, experiencing language barriers, segregation and precarious existence, migrant sex workers remain in particularly vulnerable positions. No longer locked up somewhere in total

isolation and being stripped of their documents, migrant women may now have access to the internet, mobile phones, go home for visits, and are generally free to move around in actual and virtual space, yet their freedom of movement is nevertheless limited and heavily controlled, if by no other means than by their frequent lack of financial independence. In terms of access of trafficked women to the new technologies, the communication for the most part still remains heavily supervised and controlled, whereas migrant women engaged in sex work may not have access to the ICTs due to their segregation and a lack of sufficient funds for their procurement. A totality of control and utter loss of privacy is observed not only in trafficking victims but also for migrants in institutions such as asylum centres and other closed facilities, while the field work has shown how technological supervision is used problematically also in the case of electronic processing of asylum applications and by checking if asylum applicants have Facebook\_profiles as a way to deny them the status of humanitarian protection.

Based on contemporary commodification and market-oriented approach to sexuality, making a profit is hence still at the forefront of sex business, and this is clearly visible in our cases of analysis of on-line content at forums and commercial sexuality oriented websites. Wondering whether it is the demand that creates the ever evolving offer, or the latter manages to ingeniously always find new market niches in the area of sexual industry, a tentative conclusion from the expert interviews is that both is probably true, since both act in parallel. Significantly, the new digital media use has brought about a significant new impetus for earning even higher profits particularly in the field of sexualities, and especially in (migrant) prostitution. Yet taking into account the "shelf life" of "goods" on offer, prostitution is an area where the turn-around is particularly fast, hence the new digital technologies have been able to offer more than the "traditional" prostitution. A significant outcome of our research is a notable difference in the way that gay male escorts are able to utilise the ICTs to their advantage. The main reason to use the ICTs is related to increasing the chances for more work, thus particularly the agency of migrant women should be related to their usually precarious off-line work circumstances, and not (necessarily) meaning that the new media *per se* empower those working in the sex industry that still disturbingly lack voices online.



## 5. Supplement 1, Coding sheet

### Non-commercial websites on prostitution and human trafficking

#### Administrative information

Name of coder / name of team:

Website name (where applicable):

URL:

Accessed on (date):

#### I. Websites sampled

1.Reference to geographic location

US

Europe, name country

Other, name country

Europe wide

Worldwide

NF

2.Website category

Ngo-Association

Coalition

Igo-Association

Government

Community

Research

Blog

3.Language

main, which

other, which

multilingual, which

4.Website set-up

high-quality

low quality

5.Form of connection y/n

If y:

mailing address

phone

email

forum

newsletter/email list

contact form

donation  
social media  
share  
own product, which SM  
NE

6. Commercial orientation y/n

If y:

Advertising  
Selling own product

7.Aim

Information  
Advocacy  
Support (with info, contact, legal, socializing possibilities, safe houses)  
Counselling, (psycho social assistance, care programs)  
Other, specify

8.Target group(s)

Sex workers  
LGBT sex workers  
Clients  
Victims of trafficking  
Migrants  
Children  
Researchers  
Activists  
General public

## **II. Text sampled (written and video)**

9.Main topic

Prostitution  
Trafficking  
Migration

10. Sub-topic(s)

a) Prostitution

Trafficking  
Migration  
NA

b) Trafficking

Prostitution  
Migration  
NA

c) Migration

Prostitution  
Trafficking  
NA

11. Group(s)

a) Prostitution  
female  
male  
migrant  
LGBT  
NA

b) Trafficking  
female  
male  
migrant  
LGBT  
children  
NA

c) Migration  
female  
male  
LGBT  
children  
NA

12. Prostitution framed  
sex work paradigm  
violence paradigm  
NA

Provide examples (quotes)

13. Trafficking framed  
victim abuse for purposes of sexual exploitation  
victim abuse for any kind of forced labour  
migration issue  
NA

Provide examples (quotes)

14. Kind of text  
information  
reports/studies  
conferences/events  
manuals  
personal stories

press release, media articles  
video/audio  
other, specify

15. Gender equality addressed y/n

## **Instructions for the use of Coding sheet, "Controversy analysis"**

### **Research outlines and questions**

The purpose of this research is to explore the general controversy on the topics of prostitution/human trafficking analysing non-commercial websites.<sup>54</sup> Previous research has shown that general public, media and also theoretical discussions tend to dichotomize the two phenomena, reconfirming the dividing lines between them. Our previous research<sup>55</sup> has found that realities are much more complex, pointing to the inadequacy of the division and to the interchangeable relations between the phenomena.

The definition of prostitution as violence or sex work, and of prostitutes as victims or sex workers, is often the principal point of departure in considerations of prostitution. Similarly polarized are polemics on human trafficking. Those supporting the abolition of prostitution define trafficking in human beings as violence and argue for the policies of victim protection and criminalization of perpetrators. Advocates of sex work, on the other hand, argue for the de-victimization of women involved in trafficking and draw attention to the need to eliminate class divisions, social inequalities, and ethnic and gender discriminations which sustain human trafficking, much more so than criminal groups. Discussing prostitution and human trafficking requires confronting dominant perceptions. In western societies striving to enhance economic efficiency, these either perpetuate the neo-capitalist idea of free choice, or take over the victimization argument which presumably makes obvious the need for "fight and prevention policies" in prostitution or human trafficking.

We start from the thesis that one-sided definitions of prostitution, either as the selling of a body identical to any other service provided for money or as a priori violence against women, are inappropriate. On the other hand, trafficking in human beings is commonly equated with the sexual exploitation and victimization of women, while other types of forced labor are often excluded from debates, and also are migration aspects of both sex work and trafficking neglected.

Prostitution is related to various types of work such as escort, dance, strip, porn, phone or tv-sex etc. that are prone to be dependent on particular gender, ethnic, class etc. hierarchies. We want to verify whether online discourses and

---

<sup>54</sup> See notes on methodology by Matthieu Renault & Dana Diminescu describing the process of retrieving the corpus of websites.

<sup>55</sup> Pajnik, Mojca. 2008. *Prostitution and Human Trafficking: Gender, Labour and Migration Aspects*. Ljubljana: Mirovni inštitut; Pajnik, Mojca. 2010. Media Framing of Trafficking. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 12(1): 45–64; Pajnik, Mojca. 2009. Mnenja moških o prostituciji in trgovanju z ljudmi (Opinions of males on prostitution and human trafficking). *Revija za kriminalistiko in kriminologijo* 60(4): 309–319; Pajnik, Mojca and Urša Kavčič. Sodne prakse, povezane s trgovanjem z ljudmi in prostitucijo v Sloveniji (Case law related to prostitution and trafficking in human beings in Slovenia). *Revija za kriminalistiko in kriminologijo* 59(2): 141–154.

debates reinforce the sex work-violence dichotomy or are, alternatively, providing novelties in the approach to treat prostitution and trafficking as interrelated phenomena that are becoming increasing also migration and larger labour issues. We want to explore the kinds of on-line environments, the kind of sites there are, what information they provide, how they frame discourses on prostitution, trafficking and migration etc. We're interested to explore if and to what an extend on-line environments challenge the controversy prostitution/trafficking by acknowledging interrelations between them, also with reference to wider migration and labour market trends.

The coding sheet contains two parts: the first part – "Website sampled" – explores general information about the site, such as its location, languages, the quality of the set-up, it identifies its actors, forms of connections available, the target groups the site wants to attract etc. The second part – "Text sampled" – explores characteristics of topics of research (prostitution, trafficking, migration) in written text and in video material where we want to identify patterns of approaches to the topics.

### **Note!**

**To ensure standardization of results and their validity you need to follow carefully the instructions for coding!**

### **Instructions for coding (and explanation of coding items)**

#### **Legend**

**MC: multiple choice.** If instructions below include MC this means that several answers are possible.

**NA: not applicable**

**NE: non existent**

**NF: not found**

For coding we search within the website only, looking at the main position of the site (home) and clicking on the navigation possibilities on the site only, and we analyse from the available material. We don't code by digging too deep into the site or by opening larger documents such as reports, but we look only at the available information on the main site (home) itself and materials available under clicking navigation options one click from main site. We don't code by clicking the links to other sites. The sheet has two sections.

### **I. Website sampled**

#### **1. Reference to geographic location**

We look for location of the actors that manage the site (and not for location of the server etc.). If difficult to find, look for location under the menu "contact details" (where for example address of the organization that runs the site is given). In cases when you can't find the explicit information on the location, you're required to detect it from the wider context. If you chose "Europe" or "other", name the specific country. Choose "Europe wide" when you can't detect a specific location but there is reference to Europe (EU, CEE etc.). Choose "worldwide" in cases when it's clear that

several locations across the globe are mentioned (the last two examples might be valid for some international organizations).

NF: not found.

## **2. Website category**

NGO-nongovernmental organization; look for references of a legal status or decide from context; look the self-presentation claims (menus such as "about us", "who are we" etc.)

Coalition: such as on-line coalition, movement or other kind of informal network (that don't have a legal status of an association); look the self-presentation claims ("about us", "who are we" etc.)

IGO-intergovernmental organization (such as IOM, UN, ILO etc.)

Government

Community: these are locally driven and locally managed sites, such as community media, neighbourhood initiative etc.

Research: research institutes, faculties, universities, informal research platform etc.

Blog: Choose this option only if blog is the main site (and not when blog is part of the site). Choose this option also in cases of individual/small group-like-blog websites.

## **3. Language** (\*MC – main and other)

Write down the name of main language. Main is the language in which all or the majority of text is published. If other language is used beside main mark also the option "other" by writing down name of "other" language. Use this option when "other" language is used, but not so frequently as main (less documents published). Chose multilingual when all information (or the very vast majority) is published in both languages. If you choose this option write down names of all languages.

## **4. Website set-up**

Here we define the "usability" of a site, its navigation and information architecture.

High-quality: clear organization of site, that is easy to scan, it's user friendly in the sense that you easily get information that you're looking for

Low-quality: "messy" organization of the site where it's difficult to orient and find content, also very basic sites (e.g. amateur).

## **5. Form of connection** (\*MC – if yes)

Choose the "n" option if no connection possibilities are given. If the site enables connection (off-line and on-line), choose among the stated (\*MC).

Newsletter/email list: when users can subscribe to newsletters or join in mailing lists

Contact form: when users can fill in and send a contact form

Donation: connection details specified for donation purposes

Social media (\*MC – share and own product):

Share: when the site gives general connection option to social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Vimeo etc. If numerous options are given, write down the first five.

Own product: when the site (it's producers/users) produces its own social media content, when, for example, they have their own You Tube video or their own Facebook site. Choose among the most common (\*MC - You Tube

and Vimeo and ...): You Tube, Vimeo, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, MySpace Web-tv (various kinds such as blip-tv etc.) - write them down in full name - or choose the option "other".

NE

**6. Commercial orientation** (\*MC – advertising and selling own products)

Define whether there are advertisements on the site, i.e. the site is (also) commercially oriented. If you detect such orientation, choose whether the site publishes advertisements and if it sells organization's own products.

**7. Aim** (\*MC – for example information and advocacy and ...)

Choose aim of sites (several options are possible). Information and advocacy are usually aims oriented towards the general public. Advocacy is understood both in more formal, legally oriented approaches and is also more loosely described by other activities. Look under "our aims" and similar navigation options: aim is defined by the website protagonists.

Support and counselling usually aim at target groups as users of services. Choose the latter two options in cases when various programs for users are provided. Write down other aims, if applicable.

**8. Target groups** (\*MC – for example sex workers and clients)

These are groups the site is trying to attract. Look also by navigation options where aims of organization that runs the site are stated.

## **II. Text sampled**

**9. Main topic**

Choose main or the predominant topic. Choose one option (prostitution, trafficking, migration).

**10. Sub-topic(s)** (\*MC – for example trafficking and migration)

If you choose prostitution as main topic, you then only code the section on prostitution. The same goes for the section on trafficking and migration.

Choose subtopic if it appears on the site, if it's mentioned, regardless of frequency of appearance. Choose NA in case of non-existence of subtopic(s).

**11. Group(s)** (\*MC – for example female and migrant)

If you choose prostitution as main topic, you then only code the section on prostitution. The same goes for the section on trafficking and migration.

Choose which groups are mentioned (\*MC – for example male and female and LGBT) or choose the NA (not apparent) option. Here you define groups based on their pronounced presence on the site in written text or in video material. We look for a predominant pattern in (re)presenting various groups. Look also under "who are we" menus or aim-related menus that might help to distinguish a pattern, but, mostly, look at text and video.



You choose the NA option if you can't define groups or if these are only mentioned but are not pronounced and in cases when the site predominately uses general naming such as global workers, sex workers etc.

#### **12. Prostitution framed (\*MC)**

Choose one or more predominant framing patterns. Choose NA (not apparent) option where you truly can't distinguish the frame.

Provide practical examples in forms of quotes of content that explain the chosen paradigm. Limit text to maximum of 100 words. Look for more official statements of the producers of sites, like "we understand prostitution as ...", general statements such as "prostitution is ...", look for glossaries etc. Text can be "one piece" or, alternatively, can be from various parts of the site. If the latter is the case use the sign "(...)" to differentiate the quotes.

#### **13. Trafficking framed**

Same as above.

#### **14. Kind of text (\*MC – for example, information and manuals)**

Choose among the stated kinds where you look at the level of existence / nonexistence of certain kinds of text on the site.

Press releases are meant as texts produced by the website actors about their work; media articles are articles about the site, they can be authored by website producers or they appear as resources.

Manuals are meant as training manuals, various instruction-related documents, how to guideline etc.

#### **15. Gender equality**

Choose "y" or "n" option depending on whether gender equality as equality among the sexes and as a human rights issue is addressed in the texts.

## **6. Supplement 2, Method for lightly structured depth biographical narrative interviews**

The narrative interview method suggests that social order is not just transmitted, but it is experienced and explored.<sup>56</sup> Formal systems and policies are played out in interaction with personal experiences and practices; they reappear as systems through the lives and strategies of individuals. The method explores the intertwining of the system and the lifeworld (Habermas 1998), thus exploring interaction and communication between social structures and the subjectivity of the individual agency.

The method of narrative interview takes into account the agency of migrants (migrant women and men in prostitution, trafficked migrants, mail ordered brides etc.) to explore their expertise. Experiences and views of migrants are put to the forefront. The method is suggestive of ways in which individuals experience and cope with social realities. Its emphasis is on personal history, knowledge, experiences, constraints, assumptions and decisions of individuals that structure their life. The assumption is that theorising from this perspective can provide fresh insight for evaluating lives of marginalized groups. Biographical narrative interviews provide voices of “non-professionals,” the agents of living, the users of services whose narrations challenge and explore predominant interpretations of social life, and they also generate ideas for policy improvement (Wengraf 2006, Chamberlayne et al. 2000, Elliott 2005; see also Rosenthal 1993, Glaser and Strauss 1967, Mauthner et al. 2002, Mishler 1986, Pajnik and Bajt 2009).

### **Theoretical and empirical sampling**

See objectives related to the ‘contrasting analyses’ defined in the research design.

General sample for interview partners:

- (migrant) sex workers (women who have experienced trafficking, *tentative*) - priority!
- clients, users of sexual services
- procurers (organizers of prostitution, *tentative*)
- e-forum administrators
- representatives of matrimonial agencies
- representatives of NGOs (working in prostitution-trafficking; asylum homes; safe houses)
- policy officials

Specific sampling strategies

- adapt sample according to groups of interview partners,

---

<sup>56</sup> This manual is based on the research manual that was originally prepared for project PRIMTS (Pajnik 2009). It is here adapted to meet outlines of the Research design prepared for Mig@net, WP on sexualities.

- adapt sample according to data obtained in the interviews on various accounts of sexualities,
- adapt sample according to data obtained in the interviews on various perceptions of digital media,
- keep gender balance.

Further “purposive” sampling strategies

- monitor how the sampling evolves during the process,
- monitor the topics/experiences covered and develop further sampling according to topics/experiences not covered, i.e. sampling based on the captured heterogeneity (who might tell us something more that is relevant for our research topic?).

## **Approaching the interview partner**

1. Localizing interview partners (“snowballing”): finding access through personal links and referrals, i.e. colleagues, researchers, NGOs.

2. Addressing a potential interview partner by:

- explaining our research topic, providing information needed to explain the objectives of the research, and being careful not to make prejudications;
- explaining why it would be important to conduct the interview;
- providing information on the method: they would tell us their story and how it relates to their experiences in sexualities; we would pose an initial question and invite them to provide narration; it’s important to take as much time as needed for the interview; we will ask questions after they have told their story;
- ensuring anonymity and ethical standards of research (the right to stop the interview or to withdraw the interview and receive the tape or the transcript etc.).

3. Choosing language of the interview: Asking the interview partner to choose the interview language. If translation is needed, describe how this affects the interview process.

4. Making an appointment to meet: Explain that the interview should occur in a quiet place where our interview partner feels at ease. Invite them to choose place and time.

5. Recording: Explain that recording is needed and how you’ll handle materials; try the equipment before the interview.

## **Interview interaction as practice: Some features**

*Language:* Adapt the language of the interview to the interviewee’s preferences and use translation when appropriate. When you speak the same language as the interviewee keep in mind all the discursive practices, by learning the language

(idiolect or mode of talk) of the interview partner. Design questions in the style and the language that the interview partner feels comfortable with.

*Social setting:* Here factors such as location, day, time of day, social constraints, social arrangements and interruptions need to be considered. Private spaces are liable to interruption by family members etc., public spaces also have their distractions. It is of vital importance that interview situation is decided in communication with the interview partner where she/he is invited to state the preferences.

*Social roles:* Both the interviewer and the interviewee come to the interview carrying their "personal history". You need to think prior to the interview of the experiences, histories that you might share as well as those that you might not share and think about how this can affect the interview.

*Interactional goals:* Official as well as unofficial purposes may define the interview interaction. The interviewer may be determined not to lose control of the interview, to impress the informant where the behaviour is different that if you want to listen to the interviewer. Rather than impressing the informants, the interviewer's behaviour should be such as to encourage the interview partners to tell their story. Think about how the interactional goals might influence the interview and design the interview in such a way that the informant is given as much space as he or she needs to develop the narrative.

*Power-knowledge, domination:* Power is a dimension of the interview that is dangerously likely to be overlooked or ignored. Provide constant reflection.

## **Conducting lightly structured depth biographical narrative interview**

### **Beginning of the interview: Initial question**

Start the interview by posing an initial question aimed at inducing the narrative. It's an open initial question that is, however, thematically focused on migrant sexualities and the digital environment.

Features of the initial question:

- it is deliberately vague allowing the interviewees to impose their own system of relevancy,
- it is thematically focused on sexualities related to migration,
- it adopts the initial principle of "minimum further intervention",
- it enables the interviewer to act as a "story-facilitator" and an "active listener".

Example of an initial question

Adapt the question to various interview partners. Make sure to explain Mig@net objectives beforehand. Prepare the initial question beforehand (translate into the language of a particular interview as needed).

- For sex workers:

*I am interested in stories, experiences and perceptions on sexualities related to migration and digital media. I would like to ask you to tell me your story, everything that is important to you personally and has a relation to sexualities and new media. Start whenever you like and please take the time you need. I'll listen first, I won't interrupt, I'll just take some notes for after you've finished telling me about your experiences. When you've told your story, I'm going to ask some questions.*

*Active listening:* At first, the interviewer adopts active listening only and doesn't attempt to induce any narrative. Allow the interviewee long pauses, silence, give non-verbal support in a non-intrusive way and stay quietly focused and attentive. Don't give advice, don't interrupt, don't intrude your experiences and don't suggest what to talk about next.

### **Further questions**

After the interview partner has exhausted his/her narrative, each further question has to be relevant and appropriate not only in relation to the interview objectives overall, but also to a specific context of the narrative. The question needs to *belong* both to the whole as well as to the specific place it occupies in the whole. Each question has to *arise* in the interview. All answers must be "right" answers (where right is not necessarily true). The right answer to a question is the answer that enables us to go ahead with the process.

We're interested in a narration as well as description of life experiences with sexualities. The interview questions should be minimized in favour of other types of "interviewer intervention", such as drawing attention to what was already mentioned by the interviewee but not elaborated in detail.

Strategies for further questions follow three steps (in sequence):

1. Return to unspecific or unclear narrative: ask for further elaboration of what has already been said.
2. Asking for more story about the topics raised, i.e. illumination by more story (getting the details of an experience or a reflection of meaning):
  - Can you give me ANY example of an occasion when ...?
  - Can you give me ANY MORE examples of similar events, incidents at that time / of that type?
  - Was there some CRUCIAL situation or time that you can recall?
3. Asking about sub-topics, adopting "active follow-up strategy" of asking open but focused questions.

Typologies, map of options or follow-up interview questions are addressed in the interview only after the narration is provided. It is important not to "impose" categories and to formulate open questions, such as "How are the working relations performed on-line?" and not, for example, "Have you experienced threat?"

*Themes, special issues, (sub)topics*

- For sex workers; adapt the question to various interview partners.

### 1. *Migration and sexualities*

Relations of migration and sexualities (i.e. sex work, marriage)

Perceptions, subjective meanings of migrant sex work / trafficking / mail order brides

Sex work / trafficking vs. other forms of manifesting sexualities

### 2. *Migrant sexualities and digital media environment*

Understandings and meanings of digital media; impact on one's life

Use of digital media by migrant sex workers

Various meanings of digital media use by migrant workers (issues of representation; divide along gender, ethnic, class lines; digital media and economy)

Opportunities and constraints in using digital media by migrants (stimulating economy; gaps in equal access)

Digital economy: performance; working relations; job/income (in)security

(Un)equal relations and risks: access (personal or mediated); issues of personal safety / forms of exclusion i.e. xenophobia and racism, abuse, threats, violence, attacks

## **One or several stages of interviewing**

The interview can be a one-time interaction. However, if it is longer, an additional appointment should be made to continue with another session. Multiple sessions can also occur.

## **Translator**

In case we have to use translators, we should train them. A good solution is to engage a person with linguistic background who is interested and acquainted with the method, has some experiences and is interested in our topic.

## **Translation / Transcription**

Both translator, who is ideally a native speaker of the interviewees' language, and the interviewer are trained about the method and sensitive to the topic of our research. Translator and interviewer work in partnership. It is very important that the initial question is translated as exactly as possible. In-between translations/summaries to the interviewer about what the interviewee said are welcomed so that the interviewer can also react to what has been said. Translator transcribes the translation of the *whole* narration, where he/she does transcription in either English or in the languages of partners. Interviews are thus transcribed in their entirety, *word for word as spoken*, using spelling rules that allow the transcription to be readable, however not following grammar rules and retaining the colloquial expressions (e.g. slang, jargon, regional specificities). For example, write "bureaucracy" using the correct spelling rather than phonetic attempt "birocracy" but keep "my old man" rather than changing it into "my father" when such speech is used by the interviewee. Also summaries provided to the interviewer by the translator are transcribed so that the interviewer is aware about all the details to be able to reflect upon them in the analysis.

## **Analysing interview materials**

### *General*

The analysis is concerned with discovering textual elements in relation to the general orientation of the interview. The objective is to reconstruct the form and the structure of narration. Structures of meaning are analysed to underline the interviewee's understanding of her story. The aim is to gain insight into the interviewees' system of knowledge, their interpretations of their lives and their experiences.

### ***Field notes***

Write field notes as soon as possible after the interview, describing all the observations during the interview as well as impressions and thoughts about the interview situation. Use template to prepare (Annex 1).

### ***Transcription of interview***

Transcribe the taped interviews using transcript notations in the Annex 2 and line numbering as presented in Annex 3. Use template to prepare transcription (Annex 3): insert data in header (country where the interview took place, pseudonym of the interviewee, place of birth, age, current job, name of the interviewer/translator, date and place of the interview).

### ***Translation of interview***

Interviews in other languages than English are translated in English to enable comparison.

### ***Thematic analysis report of the interview***

For each interview provide thematic analysis that aims to reconstruct the structuring principles of the individual story told. The objective of this step of analysis is to "reconstruct the form and structure of the narrated life story, that is, the way in which it is temporally and thematically ordered in the interview" (Rosenthal 1993, 61). The analysis considers what is relevant for the interview partner, how she or he develops temporal links between experiences, and how present, past experiences as well as future plans and aspirations influence the interpretation of meaning. The thematic field is defined as "the sum of events or situations presented in connection with the theme that form the background or horizon against which the theme stands out as the central focus" (Ibid., 64).

Basically the thematic analysis report follows three steps:

1. thematic field analysis, i.e. reconstruction of the story
2. microanalysis of individual text segments,
3. contrastive comparison with other interviews.

The analysis also needs to contrast the story with other stories. Here information provided in the table of interviews where you insert basic data of each interview as you go along might be of help. A further aim of thematic analysis is to summarize key features of the interview where you specifically interpret the interview in relation to research objectives, theory questions and on-going research findings.

### ***Table of interviews***

Insert basic data of each interview in the table of interviews soon after conducting the interview to avoid leap of information. You can ask the interviewee for assistance and fill in the data together.

### ***Overall analysis of interviews***

Analysis of interviews as part of country reports meaningfully consults the various interview narrations by carefully intertwining thematic sequences and text-sorts presentations. The additional explanation of specific interview situation provided in field notes is also included in the analysis. Overall, the analysis addresses research frame and issues by consulting interview materials.

### **Database**

Transcriptions of the interviews will be placed in the internal data base on the website with limited access for the partners who follow the ethical obligations of confidentiality. All interviews will be made available, regardless of the language used. Field notes for each interview, table of interviews and thematic analysis reports for all interviews (all in English!) will also be placed on the internal data base.

### **Ethics**

The partners to Mig@net project, i.e. team members, also collaborators that provide translations or transcriptions follow the principle of protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals, notably the right to privacy which should be safeguarded in relation to conducting the field work, gathering empirical data, analyzing, maintaining and publishing them.

The partners are sensitive to the ethical issues of accessing and researching the lives of marginalized and "vulnerable" groups such as migrants, "third country nationals" and workers in informal, precarious sectors of economy where they follow the principles of confidentiality and anonymity.

Interviewing will be based on participants' freely volunteered informed consent. The anonymity will be reassured: identifying information in the empirical data will always be made anonymous. The interview partners will be informed about the project and its objectives and about the partners also in written material (brochure). Interviewers need to obtain free consent to tape the interview and they need to make sure to safeguard the materials.

The interview partners will be explained their right to stop the interview if they think that it would be better for them to do so, and their right to withdraw their participation. They will be given a chance to review the transcript or relevant manuscript paragraphs.

Translators will be used where necessary and the potential ways in which this can influence the narratives will be noted. Interviewers will take any efforts necessary to



ensure that interview partners provide their narration in language of their own choice. Interview transcripts and any use and interpretations of interviews will carefully consider expressed meanings and avoid possible misinterpretation and will follow the principle of truthful presentation.

Power in the interviewing situation is most often on the side of the interviewer. The interviewer will reflect inequality and take efforts to ensure its minimum effect. Cooperation of the interview partner will be highly appreciated.

The database with the interviews will be secured and kept confidential and accessible only to the project teams.

Partners need to adapt the ethical considerations to the rules and legislation in their own countries, if these rules require an even higher standard of data protection.

### *Alliances*

As researchers we should take care to establish a good alliance with the interview partners. We can show respect for the time given to us for the interview by offering a gift (flowers, chocolates, a book, lunch invitation etc.). We can try to create reciprocity by expressing our interest in the interview partner and her or his own personal life story by supportive listening. We can offer a transcription of the interview, a tape copy, brochure with information on the project, the publication that will result from the research etc.

Some researchers think it is ethical to reimburse the interview partners for the time they spend during the interview, especially if otherwise they work and will be missing in their earnings. However, some interviewees might feel offended if offered payment. The interviewer should use her judgment what is appropriate in a specific situation. Giving something in return for the interview can take an immaterial form. It can be advising when asked, providing information, making a phone call, writing a letter, translating documents, lunch invitation.

There are also inequalities with regard to social status that might create an imbalance in the relationship and disturb the working alliance. Even though we explain that our research aims at contributing to better policy, this might be too abstract to create a shared interest for some interviewees. We make every effort to explain the research objectives.

## **7. References**

Chamberlayne, Prue, Joanna Bornat and Tom Wengraf, eds. 2000. *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science: Comparative Issues and Examples*. London: Routledge.

Elliott, Jane. 2005. *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Sage.

Glaser, G. Barney and Anselm Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1981. *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns, Band 1, Handlungsrationalität und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Mauthner, Melanie, Maxine Birch, Julie Jessop and Tina Miller, eds. 2002. *Ethics in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.

Mishler, Elliot G. 1986. *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Pajnik, Mojca, Veronika Bajt. 2009. Biografski narativni intervju: aplikacija na študije migracij. (Biographical Narrative Interview: Application to Studies of Migration. *Dve domovini / Two Homelands* 30: 69-89.

Rosenthal, Gabriele. 1993. Reconstruction of Life Stories: Principles of Selection in Generating Stories for Narrative Biographical Interviews. In *The Narrative Study of Lives*, eds. A. Lieblich and R. Josselson, 59–91. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Wengraf, Tom. 2006. *Qualitative Research Interviewing: Biographical Narrative and Semi-Structured Methods*. London: Sage.