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## **Between the Structure and the Agent:**

Prostitution and Sex Trafficking of Nigerian Women  
in Two European Documentaries

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# Abstract

A contentious debate has been under way for decades over whether prostitution is inherently harmful to women, or a job that can be freely chosen. This debate has become particularly heated around one subject: human trafficking for sexual purposes. In recent decades human trafficking has manifested in many forms and affected countless victims. There has also been a rise in films and other media devoted to human trafficking, especially sex trafficking, some of which have been the subject of academic analysis. This study seeks to shed light on this debate and the related discourses, and contribute to this growing field of scholarship. Two documentaries about women who have either been smuggled voluntarily or trafficked from Nigeria to different parts of Europe are analyzed. A narrative analysis is applied to gain insights into how these women perceive and integrate the, sometimes traumatic, experiences they have had. The study concludes that structure seems to dominate or negate agency in these cases, and that the distinctions of voluntary and forced prostitution can obscure a complex reality, which can further marginalize victims of exploitation.

**Key words:** Human trafficking, feminism, prostitution, agency, Nigeria.

**Word count: 10,020**

## **List of Acronyms**

CATW- The Coalition Against Trafficking of Women

GAATW - Global Alliance Against the Trafficking of Women

ILO – International Labor Organization

TIP – Trafficking in Persons

UN – United Nations

UN GIFT - United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

## **Abbreviated Terminology**

1949 UN protocol – International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others

Palermo Protocol – Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

This study deals with and connects many issues, including: prostitution, feminism, human trafficking, Nigeria, and film. This chapter provides a general overview and summary of this study, its focuses, and the motivation behind it. Then two guiding research questions will be presented and an outline of following sections of the study will close the chapter.

## 1.1 Human Trafficking and Prostitution

The practice of prostitution, and whether it is an inherently harmful practice for women, has been a central issue in feminism since the first wave emerged in the late 19th century. From the early stages, there seemed to be a somewhat united front in the face of this patriarchal institution. In fact, Sheila Jeffreys asserts that until the 1970's there was a *de facto* consensus among Western governments that prostitution should not be legalized (2009: 1-2). However this consensus of sorts have since dissipated and perspectives and opinions on the matter have become more polarized as "deep divisions" endure (Outshoorn 2005: p.4).

This debate has intensified significantly with the apparent increase in, and subsequent rise in attention to, human trafficking in recent decades. Often called "modern day slavery", this form of slave labor which "always involves control" (Brysk & Choi-Fitzpatrick 2012: 17) is present in many forms and through most all sectors of the informal and formal economy (Plant 2012: 28). Awareness of all forms of trafficking has been growing since the 1980's (Outshoorn 2005: 2). This movement to explain and fight human trafficking was preceded by the feminist discourse around trafficking for sexual exploitation, or *sex trafficking*, which has been particularly prominent since the 1970's. This is still a highly gendered issue 25 years later. A general feminization of poverty in some countries and increased female migration (Rao & Presenti 2012: 240-241), coupled with more strict migration restrictions in destination countries (Rao & Presenti 2012: 239) compound female migrant's vulnerability (Shelley 2010: 231). Whereas migration literature has been focused on males, "in the trafficking literature women are hypervisible." (Rao & Presenti 2012: 231).

Estimating the scope of this problem is tricky and has been the subject of much scholarship (see Brunovskis & Surtees 2010; Savona, E. & Stefanizzi 2007). The ILO estimated that 20.9 Million people had been victims of forced labour (this includes both domestic and international trafficking though) between 2002 and 2011, 4.5 million of which were victims of sex trafficking (ILO 2012: 13). In her comprehensive 2009 book on the subject, the result of 16 years of research, Louise Shelley asserts that the number of its victims on a global scale are surely increasing (2010, iiv; 4). A simultaneous increase in attention given to trafficking has been most pronounced in the past fifteen years (Plant 2012: 21), especially in news and entertainment media. The most awareness has apparently been channeled towards trafficking for the purpose of sexual labor, or sex trafficking (Rao & Presenti 2012: 234-5).

This is consistent with the attention trafficking has received in political settings recently, however some Western governments have been implementing anti-trafficking policies for over 150 years (Gulati 2012: 73). Academic research is now apparently conducted more frequently on the subject too (Shelley 2010: 24-25). However this has not translated into a significant reduction of the incidence of human trafficking possibly as a result of “inappropriate or disproportionate policies” (Brysk & Choi-Fitzpatrick 2011: 2). Although a definition was settled upon in the construction of the UN Palermo protocol there remains a lack of consensus on what exactly constitutes human trafficking (Desyllas 2007: 2-4). Thus a more nuanced understanding of why and how trafficking occurs is essential in finding effective solutions, which will also require a more holistic understanding of the structural conditions behind it (Brysk 2012: 74).

## **1.2 Trafficking in Cinema**

A “plethora” of films have emerged, in Western Europe (including the UK) and North America, which address sex trafficking (Baker 2014: 209). These range from fiction to dramatizations of real events, to documentaries. “Film is a powerful medium for framing social issues and raising awareness as well as funds to combat social problems.” (Baker 2014: 209). The message is often similar: the horrors experienced by the victim are unfathomable. This seems to be a powerful way to convey the trauma of sex trafficking. The Western viewer who

may be unaware of, or apathetic to, the issue may also be relatively wealthy (in finances, freedoms and capabilities) and most able to take action.

These films can also be perceived as extensions of broader discourses. In the predominant feminist discourses we find what is often referred to as the “structure vs. agency” debate, centered around which dominates; the greater structural factors, or the agency of the individual. These portrayals can be related to the discourses around forced vs. voluntary prostitution. These films may provide archetypal examples of victims and perpetrators/traffickers. Trafficking is addressed, but often through the use of dramatic and melodramatic elements which may obscure key complexities present in reality. In some of the most prominent examples (including *Trade* and *Lilja 4-ever*) the issue of consent is often negated. A “white male savior” or “rescue narrative” tendency has been observed in numerous films. There is a healthy amount of analysis already devoted to such subjects, thus this study is focused on two documentaries which are inherently different.

The issues of consent and choice have been central to this debate for decades (Vijeyarasa 2010: 1), questioning whether any adult person would actually choose such a profession. However, choice becomes much more complicated in relation to the desperate situations many impoverished people face. This is why the issue of *agency* has become such a popular one in the discourses around prostitution and trafficking. The term derives from the word agent, and denotes possessing some degree of self-determination, even under severe constraints. It means being active over passive; “doing things, making things happen, exerting control” (Hewson 2010: 12). Here we are speaking about *individual* agency.

### **1.3 Research Problem and Motivation of Study**

This study seeks to examine the issue of agency in two films about Nigerian women who have been exploited in the global sex trade. Shelley highlights that human trafficking is just as present in Africa (2010: 22) as in all the other continents of the globe (2010: 2) and that this is especially true in Nigeria (2010: 129). . Poverty and inequality are rampant in Nigeria, especially since the 1970's (Ichoku, H.E., Agu, C. & Ataguba 2012). There has thus been an increase in



Nigerian female migration to parts of Europe since the 1980's (Baye & Heumann 2014; 78). Unfortunately international trafficking of Nigerian women has also increased in the same time period, and Nigerian crime groups seem to dominate the trade in Africa (Okugbule 2013: 58). While this issue is addressed in some academic literature, it's nearly neglected in much of Western entertainment media. Two exceptions are the documentaries *Sexy Money* (2014) – which represents a somewhat less clear cut example of exploitation/trafficking and *Trapped* (2007) – representing a very clear case of sex trafficking. These films stands in contrast to others which seem to carry a more conventional, “Hollywood” style narrative (Geiger & Rutsky 2005: 38). in which a resolution is reached with the help of a savior, or the greater economic and societal conditions are conveniently ignored (Arthurs 2012: 149).

The motivation behind this study is to uncover any and all insights into the sense of agency, or lack thereof, as perceived and felt by the women who are the subjects of each film. The lack of attention to the trafficking situation in Nigeria, and greater Africa, makes this an important area of study. Additionally, these documentaries were produced by outsiders; a Belgian-born, Netherlands-based filmmaker in the case of *Sexy Money* and a Danish filmmaker in the case of *Trapped* (Original title: Når månen er sort). I myself am an outsider too. Thus, how the experiences of these subjects can be conveyed to outsiders, and via other outsiders, is central. The main objective is to apply the analytical findings, using a theoretical framework based around feminist theory, in an effort to answer the research questions below.

## 1.4 Research Questions

**Q.1** How is the exploitation of the women featured in “Sexy Money” And “Trapped” portrayed in the films? Are they framed as victims of human trafficking?

**Q. 2.** Do the accounts of these women indicate clearly their sense of agency, or lack thereof, in their situations?

# Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

This section provides some background on the current academic setting in which this study is situated. The three main feminist discourses are discussed *generally*, as they comprise the foundation of the theoretical framework. Some related historical information will also be included throughout for a sense of context. Additional theoretical considerations will be discussed to close the chapter.

## 2.1 Radical Feminism and the Trafficking Discourse

Essentially, the core of the abolitionist viewpoint is that prostitution is an inherently harmful practice towards women (Jeffreys 2009: 10) and “in the eyes of radical feminists, prostitutes were victims of patriarchy par excellence.” (Beloso 2012: 48). Kathleen Barry’s *Female Sexual Slavery* (1979) was a seminal work on the subject, articulating this perspective. In this, she emphasizes the intersectionality of conditions; including a lack of economic opportunity and marginalization due to race, which leads to the sexual exploitation of women; symptoms of an “unjust social order” (1979: 8). Patriarchy is the main source of oppression, along with the broader structural (especially economic) factors. The sex industry on a whole is framed as exploitative to women partly because of its dangers and the fact that pimps take all or most of the profits (Barry 1979: 81). Jeffreys’ also asserts that the majority of profits go to those who are in charge, who tend to be men (2009: 28). A quintessential contemporary example of this would be the pornography industry, where technology has allowed a “sophisticated slavery” of sorts to flourish (Jeffreys 2009: 65-66). Barry “[characterizes] all forms of commercial sexual activity as rape, to which no women can consent” (Cavalieri 2011: 1419). Barry and her peer Janice Raymond are also actively involved in CATW, which influenced somewhat the drafting of the Palermo protocol (Outshoorn 2005: 148-9).

*Female Sexual Slavery* was published as the issue of sex trafficking was being “rediscovered” (Outshoorn 2005: 144) during the second wave of feminism. There was a supposed wave of sex trafficking during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Called

“white slavery”, this involved women being trafficked across international borders for sexual slavery. Subsequently “the trafficking of women was outlawed in international law in 1904.” (Outshoorn 2005: 142) as a result of the first anti-trafficking treaties (Rao & Presenti 2012: 235). By Shelley’s account this white slave trade lasted from the 1880’s-1930’s and ended because of the unified international effort (2010: 177; 295). This version of history has been contested though.

The white slavery “panic” has been the subject of much critique. Prominent liberal feminist Jo Doezema’s 2000 article *Loose Women or Lost Women?* has been highly influential in this area. In this, she claims that historians have since dispelled the myth of white slavery (2000: 24) and that it was actually an effort to restrict women gaining mobility and migrating (2000: 27). White Slavery “served as a metaphor for a number of fears and anxieties in turn of the century European and American societies” (2000: 26). Desyllas connects this xenophobia with racist and anti-feminist immigrations laws in the United States, mainly that the “Mann Act” of 1910, which effectively served to restrict voluntary movement by unmarried women and interracial couple (Saunders & Soderlund, 2003, Saunders 2005 cited in Desyllas 2007: 61). Even at present “[trafficking] is often portrayed as a phenomenon distinct from larger streams of migration.” (Derks, Henke & Vanna 2006 cited in Rao & Presenti: 232).

## **2.2 Distinctions and Dichotomies**

One way that the white slavery discourse was successful was through establishing the innocence and purity of the victim, who was always white. We see echoes of this today, e.g. in some of the films which discussed in the following chapter. Previously the prostitute had been seen as a “fallen woman” or “sexual deviant” (Doezema 2000: 28), so there was a rhetorical shift. The traffickers were then portrayed as nefarious (often non-white) foreign “others” (Doezema 2000: 30). Doezema asserts that the majority of trafficking “victims” actually *know* in advance what kind of work they are migrating for, but are deceived about the actual conditions (2000: 24). The “innocent victims vs. filthy whores” is presented as a gross oversimplification and detrimental to sex workers and trafficking victims (Doezema 2000: 36-37). She also links

this binary with that of the “guilty” and “innocent” migrants, leading to distinctions of who does and does not deserve sympathy and aid (Doezema 2002 cited in Desyllas 2007: 64).

Shelley Cavalieri discusses how the distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution reaches *at least* as far back as this white slavery era. She also highlights that generally “Barry refuses the traditional distinction between voluntary and involuntary sexual labor.” (Cavalieri 2011: 1420). Jeffreys also rejects distinctions and views them essentially as an attempt to make prostitution a respectable and viable form of employment (Jeffreys 2009: 9). Distinctions obscure the harsh realities and myriad forms of coercion, exploitation, and control (beyond the most obvious). Thus, it is imperative to make “connections rather than distinctions” (Jeffreys 2009: 127).

Jeffreys' book “The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade” outlines the modern global sex market, the immense size and power of which is driven by immense profits (2008: 3-5). This was facilitated by the liberalization of values (of the 1960's and '70's) which then converged with the economic attitudes of the neo-liberal era (the 1980's) to normalize the industry, resulting in a change of terminology for some; from prostitute to sex worker (Jeffreys 2009: 15-16). Jeffreys’ consistent use of the terms prostitute and “prostituted women” (along with many of her contemporaries) is loaded with meaning.

Catherine Mackinnon, a prominent contemporary of Barry, calls the idea that prostitutes are asserting agency a “fantasy of privilege” (Mackinnon 2011: 291). She has also made valuable points about the distinction between child and adult prostitution. A child or minor can never give consent, their victimization is self evident. So then what changes when this exploited child becomes of legal age (2011, 281)? The scope of child trafficking is vast, a recent Trafficking In Persons report (from the U.S. government) estimated that 1.2 million children are trafficked every year (Shelley 2012: 57). Mackinnon also claims that “Most adult women in prostitution are first prostituted as girls and are just never able to escape.” (2011: 306).

The abolitionist perspective was a major catalyst for efforts to fight prostitution as a whole, and effectively dominated the mainstream discourse until the 1960's-70's. The apex of

this movement is understood to be the 1949 UN protocol. This “called on all states to suppress not only trafficking but also prostitution, regardless whether they occur with the consent of the woman involved.” (Outshoorn 2005: 142). During the 1970's and '80's this abolitionist discourse was increasingly opposed by a liberal discourse with a differing take on “sex work”. Nicola Smith summarizes concisely one of the main critiques of this school of feminism: “that radical feminists (including Jeffreys) have been accused of silencing women’s voices – and, in particular, sex workers’ voices” (2010: 537).

## **2.3 Liberal Feminism and the Sex Work Discourse**

On the other end of the spectrum is the liberal feminist school, which is generally “pro-sex worker”. Prostitution is framed not as an inherently harmful institution, but something that can be just another form of securing income. This view has risen in prominence in the last five decades. At the same time the aforementioned sexual liberalization in the West began to manifest itself in policy. From the 1970’s through 2000, many Western nations (including European nations, the UK, and Australia) began repealing laws which criminalized or otherwise implicated prostitution (the US maintained strict criminalization though) (Outshoorn 2005: 144). Perhaps the most prominent manifestation of this would be the legalization of prostitution in the Netherlands in 1999 (Outshoorn 2012).

The writer Melissa Gira Grant takes a clearly pro-sex worker stance. When asked in an interview/discussion recently to sum up the message of her book “Playing the Whore” (2014), her reply was “...sex work is work.” (Vice Podcast 2014: 01:16). This stands as an affront to Barry's assertion that prostitution “is not the economic alternative for women that many have believed it to be.” (1979: 81). Taking as fact that sex work *is* work, harm reduction is absolutely crucial here and Gira Grant advocates for it wholeheartedly (feminist current 2014). Gira Grant is a particularly interesting voice because of her own involvement in the sex trade, purportedly as “one of the first ‘web-cam girls’” (The Observer 2014). However she emphasizes the fact that her experience is undoubtedly different from many other sex workers (Vice Podcast 2014: 18:14) especially given the relative security of this form of sex work compared to e.g. street prostitution.

Rather than try to speak for sex workers she advocates for their rights and she is focused on the individual in the face of structural barriers.

The increased presence of a pro-sex worker viewpoint, originating from liberal feminism, can also be seen in policy on an international level. The clearest example of this would be, again, the Palermo Protocol which “defined trafficking as the recruitment and transfer of persons by means of the threat or use of force or coercion, fraud, deception, or abuse of power for the purpose of exploitation.” (Outshoorn 2005: 149). This leaves a lot up to interpretation, compared to the 1949 UN protocol. Prostitution was not included at all, thus leaving room for voluntary prostitution as distinct from trafficking (Outshoorn 2005: 152). This partly reflects the efforts of the GAATW, who began advocating a distinction between forced and voluntary prostitution in the 1990’s (Doezema 2000: 33). They allied with other organizations to influence the protocol’s language (Outshoorn 2005: 150). The de-linking of prostitution and trafficking was a milestone for the movement.

## **2.4 A Middle Way**

In between these two very polarized viewpoints lies what is known as the “third way”. Cavalieri’s article “Between Victim and Agent” is an initial proposal for a new discourse (2011: 1447-1448). For example, two of the four central tenets would be (a.) acknowledging systematic social oppression, while (b.) leaving room for agency and “agentic change” (Cavalieri 2011: 1447-1448). As this is still emerging, its not clear exactly what constitutes the third way. Gloria Steinem has spoken and written about it, portraying it as a reaction to the binary of either decriminalization or legalization, and the fact that the effects of the latter may not have been as empowering to prostitutes as expected (Keynote Conversation 2014: 192). An example of this would be policies that have been instituted in Sweden and Norway in which the consumer is culpable, not the prostitute. Steinem proposes, “it’s not criminalizing the customer. It’s penalizing and educating him.” (Keynote Conversation 2014: 192). This may be a pragmatic effort to move forward from the ideological gridlock which diverts energy from anti-trafficking efforts (Cavalieri: 1444). Steinem’s statement that “I think we have to listen to each other....We

have to see where it is we agree and can support each other” (Keynote Conversation 2014: 197) sounds rather third-way.

Ursula Biemann is a visual artist who, for over fifteen years, has been making films about modern migration policy and technology, often intersecting with gender (Women Make Movies 2012). She has made some powerful statements in her visual and written works, often emphasizing the structural factors behind migration and the global sex industry (2002: 79-80). When it comes to the voluntary vs. forced dichotomy, she finds this to be an “artificial distinction” which is not right “for moral or any other reasons” (Biemann 2002: 80). For example she finds that “when we speak of sex tourism, we always mean the trafficking of women as well” (2002: 77). Biemann’s perspective could fit into the third way as differing aspects of her viewpoint are consistent with perspectives held by both “sides”.

## **2.5 History and Race**

The connections and shared attributes between human trafficking and historical slavery are significant as well. Quirk highlights how “slavery never ended in some parts of the world” (2012: 26) . Yet he also states that much trafficking literature fails to engage with historical slavery, because of a *de facto* dichotomization between old and new slavery (2012: 26). The “white slavery” example highlights a troubling tendency: white or Western victims receive more attention than their black and African counterparts. Unfortunately this cannot be discussed in depth here. However, the history of slavery and exploitative colonial relationships in Sub-Saharan Africa (Shelley 2010: 32; 265) and how they persist in the form of neocolonialism is highly relevant here and has influenced this study significantly.

# Chapter 3: Previous Studies

In this chapter the state of Western films about sex trafficking is discussed. Valuable examples of relevant film analyzes, which have informed this study, are also presented. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of how this discourse has informed the selection of the two films which will be analyzed in this study.

## 3.1 Representations of Trafficking in Film

This chapter is by no means intended to be a comprehensive discussion of films on human trafficking, which would be daunting given how large and diverse this group has become, thus many films have been omitted here. A website from The UN GIFT lists fifty films about human trafficking. Most of these films are quite recent, with only one (*Streetwise Kids* from 1996) older than fifteen years. A striking aspect of this “Films on Human Trafficking” list is that it applies a rather inclusive definition of trafficking, apparently informed by the Palermo definition in which coercion and deceit are key elements. An example of this would be the documentary *Born into Brothels* which centers on the children of prostitutes in Calcutta, India, where inter-generational prostitution (often due to debt-bondage) is very common (Shelley 2010: 167-8). Another example would be *Maria Full of Grace*, a drama about a young Colombian woman who chooses to smuggle drugs in order to migrate to the United States. In concert with the amount of film-making devoted to the subject of trafficking, has been a burgeoning amount of scholarship analyzing such films.

*Taken* (2008) and *Trade* (2007) both have “Hollywood” style narratives. Chet Baker characterizes them as so because they “use the rescue narrative, portraying sex trafficking simplistically, in black and white terms, with a clear bad guy, innocent victim, and savior.” (2014: 209). The saviors are predominantly white and Western in this narrative. *Taken* is highlighted as especially fitting this type, emphasizing the supremacy of patriarchal authority (2014: 212). Interestingly though, this is featured on the UN GIFT site as a “poignant [sic] film” (UN GIFT). Perhaps the idea is that it has the potential to raise awareness of trafficking, having



the highest mainstream profile on this list. “Rescue narratives have a long history, articulated in a range of contexts to justify relationships of domination” (Baker 2014: 209). Thus the potential for films like these to spark a genuine concern and spur them to gain awareness or take action may be limited or negated.

A prime example of film catalyzing awareness, and initiatives, is that of *Lilya 4-Ever* (original title: *Lilja 4-ever*, 2002), a graphic fictionalized account of a teenage girl being deceived into emigrating to Sweden and then being held as a sex slave. It is based on the true life story of a sixteen year-old Lithuanian girl who committed suicide in Southern Sweden (Sparrman 2006: 167). The news story and later the film received so much attention that an initiative, to screen and discuss it, was instated in Swedish schools starting in 2003 (Sparrman 2006: 167). In the same year “the International Organization for Migration (IOM) began a counter-trafficking campaign in Moldova, using the film *Lilya 4-Ever* as the centerpiece of its media strategy.” (Suchland 2013: 365). Although it was relatively successful (reaching over 60,000) this initiative only lasted a year (IOM 2004).

Sheldon Zhang has identified a “Natasha” narrative tendency in academic literature and the news media (2009: 180-181). This has also been identified in films. “Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the image of the trafficked woman from former state socialist countries has come to signify the global crisis in sex trafficking” (Suchland 2013: 363). In this type of narrative, a young, innocent Eastern European girl is recruited deceitfully then held against her will and brutalized physically and sexually. This is mostly the case in *Lilya 4-Ever*. One notable exception here is *Lilya*’s acceptance of sex work as an absolute last resort for survival, before leaving for Sweden (Suchland 2013: 365). However, Jennifer Suchland argues, her total vulnerability and status as a minor effectively allows the issue of agency to be sidestepped (2013: 366). She concludes that the film carries an anti-prostitution message (2013: 364) but argues that “there is no clear message about preventing systematic sexual violence produced by the film. The audience is meant to feel, but not necessarily to think.” (Suchland 364). It does not have a “white male savior”, quite the opposite. The wealthy western men are a source of oppression and exploitation. While this aspect may be overly simplistic, there may remain some potential in indicating to viewers the very palpable effects of global inequalities. Another

excellent example of a “Natasha” story with real-life origins is *The Whistleblower* which is both a film and a book (both from 2011). In this Kathryn Bolkovac goes to Bosnia as a UN peacekeeper and discovers a trafficking ring involving other peacekeepers and fights it (Bolkovac 2011). Its an excellent example of military prostitution, which is a grave problem (Shelley 2010).

Biemann’s films occupy a rather unique space here. Although most all of her films are relevant, *Remote Sensing* (2001) is particularly so. Like many of her other works it's a “multifocal, overtly technical, critically detached”, (Druxes 2011: 509) documentary. This “multi-perspective composition” (Biemann 2002: 79) express a viewpoint and understanding of the commodification of women’s bodies which is layered and highly complex. This is consistent with the third way association made with her in chapter two. However her films are mainly shown in educational or art institutions or at special screenings or conferences (Women Make Movies 2012) and thus may be limited in their reach or accessibility.

There has also been an increase in academic works examining the role of such films. Jane Arthur’s article *Distant Suffering, Proper Distance* (2012) provides a relevant discussion of the ethics of using films as conduits of an anti-trafficking message. “A key ethical problem is how to use film to establish empathy with female victims of trafficking without losing the critical distance required for a credible social and political critique of the complex issues involved” (Rayns 2002 cited in Arthurs 2012: 143). She concludes by calling for greater awareness of how “[constructing] distant others as the objects of philanthropy denies their capacity as subjects who have agency” (2012: 155).

# Chapter 4: Analytical Framework

The first section of this chapter will discuss the methodology I have applied in the analysis. The second section will outline the empirical material which has been employed.

## 4.1 Method of Analysis

The first of the research questions deals with the issue of how the women have been framed in each of the films; as victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation or not. The second question has more to do with how the women articulate their own understanding and feelings about their experiences and looking for signs of agency in these articulations. This may be a more complex question to answer and requires a methodology well suited to such goals. In the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter, the analytical findings are then compared to the dominant feminist discourses (as discussed earlier) to see if it supports any of the three (radical, liberal or third way).

This method is useful for examining both form and content (Punch 2005: 218), allowing a critical view of the construction of the films themselves. This is necessary to understand how the women are represented, particularly by filmmakers who are “outsiders”. The filmmakers, and a psychotherapist involved in *Trapped*, also do not appear to be former prostitutes/sex workers or victims of sex trafficking (or at least have not disclosed this). I am also an outsider in the same way, not only in my origins and location but also in my security and freedoms. I am also a white male. All of which undoubtedly influences my authorship. Thus, self-awareness and reflexivity will be crucial.

It is also crucial to make the distinction, of the “told” from the “telling” (Chandler, Lalonde & Teucher 2004: 253). The told mostly comes from the subjects themselves (although it is edited and framed by the filmmaker/editors) and the telling is constructed by the filmmaker. So the construction of the film itself serves as data, and so does the content; mainly the interviews with the women. This content (the responses) is secondary data, meaning that I have not collected it myself. Bryman points out the possibility that “a secondary analysis will allow

the researcher to mine data that were not examined by the previous investigators or that new interpretations may be possible.” (Bryman 2008: 561). The primary investigators here are the filmmakers, and the psychotherapist in *Trapped*; who may have a certain attachment to the film and its subjects. Given that these are films, the ethical issues of subjects' confidentiality (Bryman 2008: 561), are not of concern here as they have been addressed by the filmmakers (for instance Anna's face is not shown in *Trapped*).

Although viewers are subject to the filmmakers' decisions, these films have been chosen based on their intent focus on these subjects. As mentioned, narrative analysis will also allow me to examine how the women speak about their lives and experiences. Narrative Analysis is a useful method for understanding meaning (Lawler 2002: 243). Given that this is an exploratory and qualitative study, this will not seek to quantify the number of such statements, as would be the case in a content analysis. This is not appropriate for the context-specific and exploratory nature of this study, because it can sometimes result in fragmentation of data and becoming atheoretical (Bryman 2008: 288; 291). The aim is to give a more general summary of these articulations and how these statements fit into the overall narrative/plot of the respective documentary. This is done here by abstracting statements which indicate a clear sense of agency, and those which indicate the lack thereof.

According to Lawler it is episodes that are key in the composition of a story, or its emplotment. She explains emplotment as that which “brings together past and present events in (what is understood to be) a logical, coherent and meaningful ‘story’” (2002: 251). Thus we can see the episodes as segments in the long-term narrative of these women’s lives. This is important because as Lawler also points out, the majority of “Euroamericans will read linear progression *into* narratives (especially life narratives)” (Lawler 2002: 248). Bryman posits narrative analysis as “sensitive to the sense of temporal sequence” (2008: 556) which people perceive in their lives. This makes this method all the more suitable for the chosen documentaries, given that these subjects are generally speaking about past events and with a strong focus on the future (especially on survival and safety), situated in a precarious present. Additionally, Bryman highlights that in Narrative Analysis the focus shifts from *what* has happened to *how* someone is coming to terms with what has happened (2008: 556-7). Thus the episodes or segments of their

lives can be utilized in our analysis as indicators of how these subjects perceive and interpret their past experiences and current situations. They can be examined individually, for indications of agency or victimization, while not being removed from their context.

This method has also been selected because of how it can help address the individual in relation to the collective by relating their narratives to broader discourses, given that “stories circulate culturally, providing a means of making sense of that [social] world” (Lawler 2002: 242). This is the setting in which these individual narratives are produced. This does not mean that greater public narratives must be accepted, in fact “people may well use public narratives only to oppose them” (Lawler 254). Thus the aim is to better how understanding the meaning which the women have given to their experiences, which has presumably been influenced by broader social discourses.

This method is also compatible with the theoretical framework, which centers around feminism. As Lawler highlights there is “no unbiased access to the past” (Ricoeur 1991; Somers & Gibson 1994, cited in Lawler 2002, 249). Narrative Analysis is thus more concerned with perception rather than facts (Bryman 2008: 560) and there is an inherent rejection of positivism (Lawler 2002: 243). This is consistent with feminist research practices, along with cultivating a non-hierarchical dynamic in the research process (Punch 2005: 136) and the rejection of “a value neutral approach” (Bryman 2008: 26). In the case of both *Sexy Money* and *Trapped* there are indications that non-hierarchical and semi-structured or unstructured interview practices have been employed.

That this study examines and compares two different case studies should enrich the overall understanding of human trafficking and migrant sex workers in Nigeria, according to “the logic of comparison” (Bryman 2008: 58). “By comparing two or more cases, the researcher is in a better position to establish the circumstances in which a theory will or will not hold.” (Bryman 2008: 60). The objective is to then examine the findings from the analysis to examine whether they support the general theoretical standpoints as articulated in chapter two.

For this analysis, a *thematic* narrative analysis is applied, which places “an emphasis on what is said rather than how it is said.” (Riessman 2004 cited in Bryman 2008: 553). So, statements indicating the subject position, or agentic language - where they speak of managing something, taking action or expressing themselves, were sought. This as opposed to language in which they take the object position - when they talk about things done to them and conditions which limit or oppress them (Souto-Manning 2014). These types of statements are also sought in the analysis.

One observed weakness of narrative analysis is that the researcher may not take a critical view towards the narrative itself (Bryman 2008: 560). Although there are no clear ways to offset this, I have taken every measure which appeared necessary or helpful. I was not familiar with either film before I began this study and thus first watched both with a critical eye. Their potential for analysis was central to their selection. I believe my distance from both projects (as I have not been involved in any way in either) should help me maintain neutrality. However, it is important to acknowledge the implausibility that any research, especially this study, could ever be neutral (Bryman 2008: 25), consistent with the feminist research value mentioned before. However, keeping my western values and sympathies for the subjects in check has been a primary concern for me throughout this process.

## 4.2 Empirical Material

A main reason why these documentaries were selected is their fixed focus on the women’s experiences and their narratives. They deal with the issue of agency head-on. This is in spite of limits on what can really be covered in a relatively short documentaries, which they both are; with *Trapped* running fifty-two minutes and *Sexy Money* running about eighty minutes, and their brevity could even be an asset in regards to accessibility. Another reason is their focus on a nation in Africa, which has not been the focus of so many western films on human trafficking. The UN GIFT List includes documentaries which *include* African trafficking victims, such as *Not My Life* (2010) and *Modern Slavery* (2007) among a group of people from several different settings, on different continents Another example - *I am Slave* (2010)– is a British film which tells the true story of a Sudanese girl trafficked for domestic servitude in an affective way.

Compounding matters further is the apparent misrepresentation or underrepresentation of Africa and African subjects in western media. This is emphasized by Ayisi and Brylla in their article *The Politics of Representation and Audience Reception: Alternative Visions of Africa*. “Such visualizations in different media forms have been influenced, to a large extent, by histories of slavery and colonialism and neocolonial relationships with the West.” (2013: 125-126). Although there is a healthy amount of academic scholarship on trafficking in some countries and regions of Africa (e.g. South Africa) very few African nations are included in the UNODC trafficking database (Rao & Presenti 2012: 244). Shelley outlines the six biggest “business models” of criminal trafficking organizations around the world. One of them she names “Traditional Slavery with Modern Technology – Trafficking out of Nigeria and West Africa” (2010: 128). She explains that these crime groups traffic mainly women and children (alongside drugs), utilize rather brutal methods of coercion and control (including “voodoo”) and how trafficking to Europe has increased since the 1990's (2010: 129-130). Yet, there seems to be a gap here.

This prompted me to seek out films centered around sex trafficking victims and migrant sex workers from Africa. The very recent release of *Sexy Money* seemed fortuitous. Although, so far it has only been released in the Netherlands in several cities (after premiering at the International Film Festival of Rotterdam), its form of storytelling, especially as it involves music, seems accessible to wider western audiences. *Trapped* is another excellent case study and a good point of comparison. The very different stories told in these two films, as well as their styles and formats, provide some notable contrasts which can aid in providing key insights. The films are detailed in the next chapter.

The core of the empirical material is quite straightforward; the films themselves. *Trapped* is available on dvd and via the internet and I have been granted an online “screener” (thanks to distributor De Productie) for *Sexy Money*. Thus I have been able to fully transcribe and really engage with both films through multiple viewings. I also analyze some literature around the film, all internet-based. There is one official film website for *Sexy Money*. There are two for *Trapped*, one from Journeyman Pictures - a UK based company which distributes the film in English -

and one from the production company - Danish Doc, in which it's called *When the Moon is Dark* (Danish Docs; Journeyman Pictures). These two sites have different texts, but are somewhat similar in message. Examining this literature is crucial for gaining insights into how and why the films were made. While reviews and other media reports of both films were sourced and read, they did not provide any additional information other than opinion and are excluded from this analysis. There is also a follow up documentary to *Trapped* called *A life After Trafficking (Et Liv Efter Trafficking, 2014)* in which Joy's life back in Nigeria in the time since is shown. This was discovered too late in the research process to integrate into the analysis.



# Chapter 5: The Analysis

This chapter contains a breakdown and summary of the analysis process. This will be split into two sections, one summarizing the analysis of each film's structure and plotment. The second section will summarize the analysis of the women's narratives as given in the interviews and otherwise in the films. In addition to discussing the films individually, comparisons are drawn between them throughout this deconstruction. Brief conclusions, which will be elaborated on in the following chapter, are also presented.

## 5.1 The Films

Both of these documentaries seem to have followed an independent approach in their filming. In *Sexy Money*, the director Karin Junger, who also conducted the interviews, did all the filming herself in Nigeria. This was the only way to gain the sort of access she did. *Sexy Money* is situated completely in Nigeria, mostly in Lagos and also a bit in Imo State (in the southeast). Thus the film feels intently fixed on these women and their situations in their home country at a particular point in time. The setting and structures around them, how they interact with them, is the main story here. They have migrated to Europe, having apparently been deceived and exploited in the process, and have returned apparently downtrodden. Back in Nigeria they attempt to prosper, or at least get by, and this is what we follow them through. Apparently *Trapped* also utilized a single camera in the filming process. However it attempts to cover more ground (both in multiple settings and more elements in the narration). This first part of the film takes place in Copenhagen, Denmark. Here Michelle Mildwater, a trauma specialist, takes us through the story of two women which have been trafficked, one of whom - Anna - has been forced to work as a prostitute and endure rapes, while the other - Joy - is in a refugee prison. They are both deported to Nigeria (at different times), the viewer follows Joy on her trip home to Lagos along with Michelle, who later meets Anna in Benin city (in the southern state of Edo with a high instance of women being trafficked).

*Sexy Money* is a “musical documentary” and five women sing original songs, sometimes alongside Nneka, a prominent Nigerian musical artist. Two of these women - Laura and Janet – are the main focus of the film, and are followed in their daily lives. There are additional woman interviewed throughout the film. The women were apparently involved in the composition of the songs, as some of the answers given in interviews are then turned into song lyrics. The film contains subtitles for the dialogue in English. There is absolutely no voice-over narration from the director, we hear her voice approximately twice in interview scenes. The English version of *Trapped* does not contain subtitles (however a version with Danish subtitles is also available) and it is occasionally somewhat difficult to interpret exactly what the women are saying, but by and large the message remains intact. *Trapped* also contains narration from Ms. Mildwater and the women themselves.

The way the women are presented and framed is very different in each film. In *Sexy Money* they are first and foremost framed as *women*. Although they are referred to as *prostitutes* twice on the film’s website, they are referred to much more as *women* (De Productie 2014). However in the film and website they are not once referred to or framed as victims of trafficking or even forced prostitution, mainly just as victims of coercion. In the film however, one interviewee indicates she was only fifteen at the time, and thus a victim of child trafficking. Another interviewee indicates that upon arrival in Europe, she was forced to pay back more money than had been agreed upon. According to Vijayarasa’s interpretation of the Palermo protocol, this woman has clearly been trafficked (2009: 18). It seems most or all of the women were deceived in some way, including having their ignorance of Europe (e.g. of how much a Euro is worth in Nigerian currency) fully exploited. Thus, although their exploitation is made relatively explicit, they are not presented as trafficking victims. Some (or most) of them apparently are, according to the definition from the Palermo protocol. Instead they are portrayed as having been coerced, “pimped”, and cheated.

In *Trapped*, the fact that these women have been trafficked is explicit from the start. For example, the first minute includes statistics along the lines of: “Each year an estimated 2 million women and children are tricked, beaten, raped and forced by threat of death into the world’s

growing sex industry” (Journeyman). Additionally, Joy was first trafficked at the age of ten so she was also a victim of child trafficking. It is not clear at what age Anna was trafficked.

There are indications that the directors of each documentary are sympathetic to the subjects. In regards to *Sexy Money* the director Karin explains: “I admire their vitality, their resilience, their inventiveness. They inspire me. They are the heart of this film.” (De Productie 2014). There are no indications that she is trying to maintain a facade of neutrality, especially in the interview scenes. There is so much involvement from psychotherapist Michelle in *Trapped* that neutrality would be out of the question. She appears to maintain a professionalism as a psychotherapist while conveying sympathy and care. We can also read a sort of sympathy in the framing of the film on the Danish Doc website: “they tell their horrifying stories, revealing the suffering endured by many victims of trafficking” (Danish Doc), suffering and the structural factors all seemed to be highlighted on this site. This is less evident on the website of the UK-distributor Journeyman Pictures (Journeyman).

There are so many elements of the film-making which would be valuable to evaluate which is unfortunately not possible due to logistical constraints. *Trapped* is rather pedagogical, informing the viewer about what difficulties trafficking victims face, the trafficking situation in parts of Nigeria etc. The narrative here is not as smooth as *Sexy Money*, partly because it is bringing together so many disparate elements. The structural factors are emphasized here. Here we see much more about the issue of migration, whereas it is only present in the beginning and end of *Sexy Money*. The issue of the Danish immigration authorities is dealt with directly; by showing Joy’s imprisonment, Joy and Anna’s deportations, and when Michelle asks Joy questions about why the authorities are so insistent on seeing identification papers. These punctuate the indications of “dual victimization” (Cross 2013) or “double vulnerability” (Shelley 2010: 69) in this film. This means victimization by the crime groups, traffickers etc. paired with being treated as criminals and marginalized by law enforcement. This is perhaps the most predominant message of the film.

## 5.2 The Women, In their Own Words

### 5.2.1 In *Sexy Money*

Many women are interviewed in *Sexy Money*. They are, naturally, not a singular group and thus their responses varied (with some commonalities though e.g. nobody seems to *like* sex work). We find many expressions of agency here. The person who expresses this the most - Janet - also receives the most camera time and attention (along with her daughter Sophie). There are statements related to her electing to be smuggled to Europe, e.g.:

“I knew what I was going to do before I accepted it. I knew it was prostitution.” (3:18)

They talk also talk about having to sell sex (as implied) to get by and continue studying auto-mechanics:

Janet: “Really, I have some guys who used to keep me, financially.” (21:02)

Laura : “Yes I have guys, friends.” (21:22)

Neither of them look pleased to be saying this to the camera. This illustrates some of the complexities of this very constrained choice. Here is another prime example but with a slightly different tone, from towards the end of the film:

Laura: “I go to a club once in a while. I have male friends. I don’t feel too bad about it because I’m taking money for it.” (1:08:00)

A prime example of the complexity of agency is here too, from another interview participant (whose name is never made clear, along with many other participants):

“Sometimes when they enter my room....They will tell to me: 'I want you to smile'...I'll say 'No, I don't want to smile'.” (22:45)

She has been compromised enough by engaging in sex work, and in refusing to smile she keeps some kind of self-determination. Another example is when another interview participant (we'll call her the 2<sup>nd</sup> interviewee) when asked if she would go back to Europe under similar conditions, said:

“I know I'm going there to be a prostitute.” (1:09:54)

It indicates action, a decision made in response to the situation she's in. Statements along these lines (many not agentive) are edited together towards the end. Here most all, or all, of the interviewees say essentially the same thing: that they would go back to Europe under similar circumstances, even given their past experience. This is used to highlight the resolution of the story (where nothing is resolved really), that the space they occupy is so precarious that they would consent to this exploitation again.

On a different note, there are many examples of aspirational and optimistic statements in this film. For example:

Janet: “I want to be like Sandra....I want to work...I know the future is bright. The future is bright.” (11:05)

For this study these have not been interpreted as articulations of agency. While they may show a resiliency of will or spirit, they do not inherently carry the meaning of “doing things, making things happen, exerting control” (previously cited Hewson 2010: 12).

Now, there are also many clear expressions of a lack of agency, or victimization, in the film. In the interviews, the majority of the recounting of the past are statements of something *being done to* the women:

2<sup>nd</sup> Interviewee: “There was one man who wanted to sleep with me....He just took a pillow and covered my face. He pressed me down so I couldn’t breathe. I was shouting. That’s how he slept with me.” (26:15)

A 3<sup>rd</sup> interviewee: “Twenty, thirty. In one day, in one body” (20:58)

This last statement is a particularly potent indicator of being subject to an act, maybe to the point of even disassociating from one’s body (this may also be her way of using her voice to illustrate how it's too much for *any* body). However she then goes on to say:

“I’m not happy it’s no good. It’s not what I was born for....I don’t have anybody to help me. That’s why I’m managing it.” (23:05)

The managing is something she had decided to do, even though it comes after the emphasis on a constraining structural factor and is thus an agentive statement. The tension between structure and agency throughout the film is remarkable though, especially given the many examples of joy, expression and aspiration.

### 5.2.2 In *Trapped*

*Trapped* is quite a contrast. For one, they both seem to have been trafficked almost exactly as described in Shelley’s account of the West African Nigerian trafficking model (Shelley 2010: 129), including the use of “voodoo” (West African Vodun) to control them. There are very few indications of agency in the film. Here is a statement which appears partly agentive:

Michelle: “And, so how do you deal with your security?....”

Anna: “No I am not safe....I live in a different particular place for now. I have to stay here tomorrow and then next tomorrow I’m in the other place to run away from the traffic people so they don't find out where I am for now.” (42.38)

The idea is that she is *managing* it and has taken an action to improve her security. Towards the end when Anna expresses to her mother's pressure to return to Europe:

“I don't want to work for the street anymore!” (51.10)

This also seems to be her taking an active role, given the context, that she is *resisting* a structure. Joy recounts a time when she asserted her agency when brought to an area where prostitution is solicited in Madrid (when she was previously trafficked to Spain). She resisted by hiding from view:

“I said no I can't. This is not the kind of thing I want to do. I was just crying, shaking. They were still trying to bring me out....I refused....” (15.50)

This apparently led to her being trafficked to Denmark, indicating that asserting one's agency can be complicated and thorny, in reality. Anna also makes a plea in a voice-over in the film:

“All I just ask of is help. Not only for me but all the girls that is in the streets” (6:25)

She seems to have taken action here (in the form of voicing a verbal plea) to assert her own need for security and decency (while calling attention to the needs of others). These are the only clear articulations of agency my analysis yielded. When Joy makes the decision to return to Nigeria rather than continue seeking asylum (19:30), this could be a form of decision making or managing the situation, but she doesn't express a sense of agency.

The statements expressing victimization and lack of agency seem abundant in the film and are paired with facts and narration which emphasize their dire situations, compounding the impact on the viewer. The most extreme examples of this would be when Anna speaks about being gang raped after returning home with a client from the street:

“It was eight of the men and then eight of them, they all go around and sleep with me, I

can call that rape. But I did not do anything, I was so scared to go to the police because if I go to them they will send me back to Africa.” (5:47)

This indicates clearly double victimization. Although she talks about *choosing* not to involve the police, it's phrased as a passive choice. Other strong indications of lack of agency (and safety) and victimization from Anna include:

“I think if anything happened there I could not call the police. This is just like I'm alone with the client, he could do anything to me.” (3:45).

“I can't [run away]! The first time I tried to run away they have these Russian boys....they almost killed me they beat me so hard.” (5:10).

Another example of double victimization is when Michelle narrates that Joy was arrested upon arrival at Copenhagen Airport, rather than identified as a victim. Two examples of Joy feeling victimized or not experiencing agency are:

“The only thing you have is you have to abide by the system. Anything they ask you to do, you do it...But I'm already inside, I can't go back.” (26:00).

“After I get here in Spain she tells I would work for her on the streets....She tricked me. She did me all kinds of things...threatened me.....” (16:48)

There are many expressions of: how something is painful (especially from Anna), difficult, and how they have suffered, endured trauma, and feel trapped. The structural factors are implicated, and addressed head-on, in *Trapped*.



# Chapter 6: Conclusions

This chapter will present the findings from this study in the first section. For the sake of this paper the main findings have been summarized as much as possible while retaining the most crucial information. The second section of this chapter gives a general summary of what has been presented and what conclusions have been drawn from this study, which closes this essay.

## 6.1 Key Findings

This analysis was conducted to answer the research questions: “How is the exploitation of the women featured in *Sexy Money* And *Trapped* portrayed in the films? Are they framed as victims of human trafficking?” and “Do the accounts of these women indicate clearly their sense of agency, or lack thereof, in their situations?”.

For the first question, we see major contrasts between the two films. In *Trapped* the women are presented and framed explicitly as victims of sex trafficking. They were both fully deceived and truly trapped in their situations, especially given what Anna endures in forced prostitution and being chased by the traffickers and having her family threatened and assaulted. The coercion, victimization and deception they have experienced is depicted as being oppressive and traumatizing. In the narrative and framing of *Sexy Money*, these women are presented more as agents of their own livelihoods. They are not presented as victims. However these limiting structural factors ultimately appear to dominate the women's many (apparently wholehearted) attempts to assert their agency. They are presented as victims of coercion and deceit, but not as victims of trafficking in any clear way.

This also holds for the women's personal narratives; the subject position is taken more than the object position in the film, especially in the interview scenes, in *Sexy Money*. The many expressions of agency are overshadowed by expressions of helplessness, lack of options, being subjected to any number of harsh conditions and the like. The personal narratives are particularly

bleak and horrific in *Trapped* and the tension between structure and agency, present in *Sexy Money*, is not present. It is clear from their narratives that the structure dominates any opportunities to assert agency, and Joy and Anna clearly do not sense much (if any) agency in their lives given the layered and deep reality of their victimization. The coercive and physically forceful control held over them is very real.

In both cases There is also an apparent agreement between the narratives of the films and the personal narratives of the women. In *Sexy Money* this takes the form of the women's agency being emphasized by the director and expressed or asserted in dynamic forms by the women themselves. In *Trapped* this means the profound victimization experienced by the women is couple with the gravitas given to their plight in the overall narrative.

## 6.2 Further Considerations

In recent decades human trafficking has become a major issue in the academia, domestic and international politics, and the news and entertainment media. This issue however is not new, but trafficking appears to be manifesting in very diverse forms due to technology and increased capitalistic integration on a global scale. Sex trafficking is one of many forms of trafficking, but receives the most attention. The causes of this are numerous and not always clear. However a rise in the number of films related to sex trafficking, and attention in the news and other entertainment media, have apparently fueled this. Part of the impetus for this study was that films about trafficking from Africa, especially from Nigeria, are under-problematized and under-explored. There are many films about trafficking, and the analyses thereof seem to hold potentially useful insights for understanding what messages are articulated through these films.

Prominent theoretical discourses in feminism have plenty to say about the matter of sex trafficking. There are very clear sides in this debate, but some views are not easy to categorize, and a less polarizing or partisan discourse way has also been proposed. In this study, an analysis of two documentaries with similar subject matter, but contrasting content, was carried out. The findings of this have also been applied to the feminist theory to see if they support radical, liberal, or third-way feminism. As cited in the previous section, it appears in the emplotment and

personal narratives of both films that the structure dominates. In *Trapped* there is very little agency, and this supports the (general) radical feminist viewpoint and aspects of the third way (e.g. through the emphasis on structure). Sex work is not conveyed as being an economic alternative for these women to move forward, but more as a trap, as it provides just enough to get by and cover their expenses. The findings from *Sexy Money* indicate that distinctions can indeed be misleading in that they often miss the nuances and the gray area of the precarious and insecure social position which many coerced sex workers/prostitutes inhabit. This appears to further marginalize the women, as in the examples of double victimization.

Moving forward there seems to be some potentially useful research options and methods to gain a better understanding of how these films can convey the experiences of a trafficked individual. One would be to possibly interview individuals (in this case westerners who are not particularly aware of trafficking) before and after they have seen multiple films on trafficking. The films shown could be highly varied in genre, content, form etc. to give an understanding of which films seem to have the most impact and why. These groups could also be divided by different demographical criteria (age, income, educational level) or not. Understanding how best to harness the power of film for this purpose could make it much more powerful in affecting constructive change.

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