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Trafficking, Profiteering and State Complicity: Researching the Demand Side of Prostitution and Trafficking in Cyprus

Nicos Trimikliniotis, International Peace Research Institute, Nicosia Cyprus (email: nicostrim@logos.cy.net)

Corina Demetriou, SYMFILIOSI, Nicosia, Cyprus (oflamcy@logos.cy.net)

Abstract

This paper reflects on the issue of trafficking, exploitation and prostitution, primarily looking at that question from the 'demand side'. Drawing on primary research on the situation in Cyprus, based on client interviews, it critically reflects on the meaning of the sex clients' discourses as particular expressions of Cypriot masculine identities, from the perspective of regulating 'demand' as a means of combating sex trafficking. It locates the various client discourses within the broader issues which define the content and context of the social relations, focusing on the demand for sexual labour in the desire industries of Cyprus. The examination of client discourses reveals the cultural transformations and economic changes which transformed the nature of entertainment over the last years: uncovering the contradictions as regard sexualities, masculinities and the gender order is important to understanding the structure and modus operandi of the system of purchased sex that generates the demand for trafficking. Yet, such cultural practices are reproduced by the social structure, the profit-making industry and the complicit state. The paper questions the assumptions about criminalisation of demand. The case of Cyprus illustrates that trafficking of women is primarily a question of *sexual and bonded labour* and can be addressed via immigration and employment laws and policies.

Keywords: trafficking, distorted migration, exploitation, coercion, state complicity, gender and social relations, masculinity, victimisation

Introduction

This paper draws on empirical findings from the primary and secondary sources of a study conducted in 2006-2007,[1] which addressed the issue of demand for trafficked women in Cyprus. The empirical study involved a number of qualitative interviews with, primarily,

[1] Demand for Stolen Lives: Researching the Demand side of Trafficking in Cyprus, National Report: This was a comparative project on the demand side for trafficked women examining the issue of demand for trafficked women, involving four case-studies: Cyprus, Germany and two locations in Greece (Athens and Komotini). The Cypriot study was part of a transnational study co-funded by the European Community under the framework program AGIS; the Project was called 'Demand for Stolen Lives' (DeStoLi). The Cyprus report was authored by Nicos Trimikliniotis and Corina Demetriou.

buyers of sexual services, referred to in this study as 'clients' or 'buyers' and a small number of 'key informers': in total 32 clients and 3 persons who are considered as having 'special knowledge' were also interviewed; however it is noted that the distinction between these two categories of interviewees is often blurred, as key informers largely derive their knowledge of the sex industry from their experience as buyers of sexual services. Although the sexual exploitation of trafficked women takes place both in the urban centres as well as in the countryside, the study focused on urban centres because it proved difficult to locate interviewees in the countryside, where the local society is introvert and more conservative than in the urban centres. This paper attempts to make sense of a complex phenomenon that is located at the crossings of migration, trafficking and prostitution in Cyprus. It aims to explore the meaning of the sexual client's discourses as particular expressions of Cypriot masculine identities that can be illuminating on the central underlying question of the project: *the question of regulating 'demand' as a means of combating trafficking*. This requires that we deal with the broader issues which define the content and context of the social relations, focusing on the demand for sexual labour in the desire industries of Cyprus. The conclusions are *preliminary*, given the time and other limitations of the study, yet these preliminary results provide certain general directions for the purposes of drawing conclusions and policy recommendations.

The paper examines the demand side for female prostitutes and/or trafficked women by locating the ways in which the notion of demand is structured and operates in the Cypriot context. Although the phenomenon of trafficked women covers different types of trafficking as well as different types of establishments where the sexual exploitation of trafficked women takes place, the study is confined mostly to cabarets and bars where the problem appears to be more acute. Cabarets are the most 'open' or 'public' kind of establishment that employ 1200-1500 women as 'artistes' or 'cabaret dancers' or 'barmaids' and have received international and national attention as places where trafficked women are sexually exploited. Cabarets are the establishments most frequented by men looking to buy sexual services, for reasons which emerged during the interviews: as establishments, cabarets give the semblance of night clubs and create the kind of ambiance that is apparently necessary for Cypriot men (and others) in order to frequent with friends and 'hire' women 'for fun'. Although cabaret owners flatly deny it, it is well known that prostitution takes place in these establishments and the Government has been criticised by national and international NGOs for tolerating this and for issuing thousands of visas every year for 'artistes' from non-EU countries, mostly Eastern Europe, Latin America and south east Asia who are used for sexual exploitation. This paper hopes to shed light on the perspective of the clients, in order to open up the debate on the role they can potentially play in combating or perpetuating the phenomenon.

Aphrodite's curse: new migration, gender roles and exploitation of migrant females in the sex industry

Cyprus became an independent Republic in 1960 following a turbulent history and joined the EU as a de facto divided country in May 2004. It is a small country with a population of less

than a million.[2] Labour Migration to Cyprus is a recent phenomenon which commenced in the 1990s. During the 1960s and early 1970s Cyprus was a net source of migrant labour, mostly to the UK and to a lesser extent to other destinations. After the events of 1974 emigration from Cyprus continued and it was only during the 1990s that significant flows of migrant labour to Cyprus gathered pace. The phenomenon is closely associated with the economic development and economic restructuring that took place in recent years creating conditions for additional labour demand in the productive spheres of the economy and for the provision of services such as in the case of domestic workers. An important factor which contributed to the inflow of migrant workers to Cyprus was the breakdown of the economies and societies of Central and Eastern Europe and particularly the Balkans in the early 1990s thus creating conditions of abundant labour supply. Therefore, during this period there was a steady increase in the number of migrant workers, working on a temporary basis through fixed term work permits. The Government abandoned the restrictive immigration policy followed until 1990, in order to meet low-skill labour shortages, generated by an economic developmental model based on mass tourism and services. There are currently 138,000 non-Cypriots residing in Cyprus,[3] out of whom over 70,000 are EU citizens. According to the Ministry of Labour and social Insurance, the number of EU citizens in July 2008 was 49,639 and the mean figure for 2008 was 42,303 EU citizens,[4] in comparison to 57,137 and 55,174 respectively from third countries.[5] It is also estimated that there are 10,000-30,000 undocumented migrant workers, consisting mainly of 'overstayers', but increasingly there is a flow of persons who enter from the northern Turkish occupied territories. Most immigrants are employed in domestic work, the service industry (tourism, trade), the manufacturing industry, agriculture and construction, in low-paid and low-status jobs.

The migrant women working in the sex industry have been officially classified as 'artistes', 'dancers' and 'musicians' mainly working in 'clubs' and cabarets or cabaret-type venues. Also migrant women working as waitresses or barwomen in bars, pubs and beer shops are likely to enter prostitution, sometimes being forced by their employers. The 'entrepreneurs' of this 'industry' (i.e. pimps) are mainly Cypriots. The official figure given for 'artistes' working in Cyprus is between 1,226-1,509 persons[6] which may be an under-estimate as there are trafficked women working in the sex industry who are officially classified as 'tourists' (Trimikliniotis, 1999). There are also trafficked women working in other types of establishments such as massage parlours whose number does not appear in the statistics. The

[2] In post colonial times, there was inter-communal strife between the two large communities, the Greek-Cypriots (78%) and the Turkish-Cypriots (18%), and constant foreign intervention of one kind or another, until 1974 when a coup by the Greek junta and local para-fascists, was used as a pretext for the Turkish invasion and the subsequent de facto division of the island.

[3] Source: Civil Registry Migration Department and the Population Data Archives, provided on 3.3.2009.

[4] See Total Aliens and Europeans Data 2008, 13.10.2008 at http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sid/sid.nsf/All/3609D4C436EE184AC2257465003967B5?OpenDocument accessed on 23.3.2009.

[5] Total Aliens and Europeans Data 2008 13.10.2008/aliens http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sid/sid.nsf/All/3609D4C436EE184AC2257465003967B5?OpenDocument accessed on 23.3.2009.

[6] This figure appeared in the statistics of 2005. Since then the figure has been included under the 'restaurants' category.

regime governing female 'artistes' is strict, as they can only stay for 3 months (plus another three months as a possible extension) and then they must stay abroad for 3 months with a right to be re-employed in Cyprus. Their visa is a special one, granted for entertainment purposes and issued by the Ministry of Interior, not by the Ministry of Labour, as in the case of migrant workers generally (see Trimikliniotis & Fulias-Souroulla, 2006a). In November 2008 a new policy was announced whereby the 'artistes' visa category would be abolished and the visas for this category of workers would from there onwards be issued by the Ministry of Labour, however this measure has not been put in place yet.[7]

Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the 'artists and musicians' sector was dominated by Filipino and Thai women; in 1994 the figures show 228 and 88 respectively but with the collapse of these regimes the sector is dominated by eastern Europeans: Romanians 482; Bulgarians 163; Russian 52 in 1994. The numbers vary significantly, as these women are constantly being moved around in a sector that operates at the fringes of the law. A large number of the women working in cabaret-type venues are from Russia and other former USSR countries such as Moldova and Ukraine (see Trimikliniotis & Fulias-Souroulla, 2006b) but over the last three years there has a significant rise of South American women. 'E*ntertainment workers'* (cabaret dancers or 'artistes') are granted work permits in the first place and therefore they ought to be treated as legitimate workers, but this is hardly the case. Many of them are brought to Cyprus upon false pretences and without the knowledge that they will be working in the sex industry. This sector forms an illegal network that requires special attention and strict regulation. Cabaret dancers are officially not allowed to engage in prostitution as this is prohibited by law,[8] but this does happen on a routine basis (Ombudsman's Report 2003, Trimikliniotis and Souroulla, 2006b, MIGS 2007). There is hesitation in regulating by law practices such as prostitution in cabarets due to social conservatism; however the failure to do so results in the non-implementation of the anti-trafficking laws and the inability to monitor compliance with such laws. The net result is that many of these women are caught in the margins of legality and their dependence on their employer-pimp increases (Trimikliniotis and Pantelides, 2003, Trimikliniotis & Demetriou 2007a; 2008a; 2008b). The dilemma for policy-makers is that any attempts to regulate the issue by reducing the length of stay of 'artistes', scrutinise their entry and enforce repressive measures against perpetrators, the position of trafficked women becomes ever more marginal, as they are further pushed into illegality, and their dependence on their employer increases even more. The law on prostitution, which criminalises living off the earnings of prostitution (i.e. the work of the pimp), is hardly ever implemented in the case of the cabaret owners (see Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2008a). Women working in the sex industry are allowed to change profession only if they are officially identified by the police as victims of

[7] In a press release the Cyprus Women's Lobby (CWL) expressed "its deep concern at the policy measures taken by the Government in the fight against trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, particularly in relation to the entry visas for women to work in high risk establishments". Moreover, "the CWL has been informed that despite the announcement by the Ministry of Interior regarding the abolition of 'artiste' visas on the 1st November 2008, the renewal of such visas has continued to take place, at least until recently. However, it is not known how and why these visas were renewed, neither has it been made public what the new procedures are and under what criteria new visas can be issued. In addition, it is not clear what body currently examines and evaluates applications for entry and residence permits for third country nationals who are 'creative and performing artists and supporting staff". Finally, if such procedures exist, it has not been made public to what extent they are being implemented by the relevant authorities."

[8] It may render them liable for deportation as this violates their work permit and visa conditions.

trafficking. Pending such identification, women are forced either to continue working for the same employer against whom they have filed a complaint or to leave their place of work upon which they automatically become 'illegal' and subject to deportation unless and until they are recognised by the police as victims. There are currently no social policies to encourage and support women who are willing to exit the sex industry, neither are there any policies intended to improve the working conditions of women wishing to continue to work in the sex industry without exploitation, violence and humiliation by their employers. There is no support whatsoever by any organization to improve the working conditions of migrant women working in the sex industry and only one NGO working in the area of offering support and assistance to women who flee abusive employers.

Global/local debates and literature on prostitution, sex workers, exploitation and trafficking

The global debates on the subject are intimately related to the immediate concerns facing Cyprus as regard the policy framework of regulating prostitution, primarily migrant prostitution and combating trafficking. The question whether we can deal with the complex and thorny issue of trafficking of women can and ought to be dealt with by addressing the *demand* for trafficked women. This is a broad and highly debatable question for the EU, other international organisations and indeed states and NGOs involved in the fight against trafficking. Although the interest in the specific question is rather novel, it cannot really be understood unless it is placed within the *wider* context of 'trafficking' in general. It is thus essential that it is located within the context of migration, prostitution, social and gender relations, labour and class relations as well as the conditions generated by state processes in the 'regulation', or better 'irregulation', of such matters by various state and non-state actors (see Anderson and O'Connell Davidson, 2003). The focus of our study however is not the sex industry in general but the demand for trafficked women. The underlying question, which is a crucial policy consideration for combating trafficking, is whether it is possible or indeed desirable to restrict demand, rather than focus on repression and restriction of supply. Some policy-makers in the EU and the USA support restricting demand as the only way to combat trafficking given the failure of policies; others, including activists, NGOs and policy-makers consider that restriction of demand is unrealistic, ineffective and undesirable.

The debates around the demand for trafficked women must be located within the wider debates that have taken place since the now defunct 1949 Convention on Trafficking and Exploitation of Prostitution. In the late 20th century the so-called abolitionist approach to prostitution, which formed the basis for the 1949 Convention, was challenged by an increasing number of feminists, human rights activists and organizations of prostitutes who considered the Convention ineffective "in curbing severe abuses associated with women's migration, namely forced prostitution, debt bondage and slavery" (Pearson 2005: 22). Since the 1980s and 1990s, a new approach has emerged and has become the dominant paradigm which underpins the UN Protocol on Trafficking of 2000: the view that a distinction must be drawn between *slavery-like practices* and *forced labour* as opposed to *voluntary prostitution*, so that effective measures are taken to deal with situations of forced labour and exploitation from the perspective of anti-trafficking. The abolitionist approach continues to be a strong tendency amongst one strand of feminist circles and has increasingly led countries to legislate against demand, most notably Sweden, Greece and, more recently, the UK. This,

despite the empirical findings of various scholars, which showed that trafficking is not confined to prostitution and that not all migrant prostitutes are trafficked victims.

Pajnik (2009) refers to various explanatory models of contemporary images of prostitution which define distinct positions or schools of thought on the subject, based on what she considers to be false binaries that fail to properly capture the prostitution and trafficking experience. Pajnik usefully sums up and reviews the state of the art literature and illustrates, using the Slovenian example, the necessity to push the debate further and overcome the various doctrinaire binaries that distort the picture. Such an analysis is particularly fruitful as it opens up the potential for developing strategies in the struggles for the rights of prostitutes who are working in precarious and often appalling working conditions as well as developing action points to combat trafficking of persons (be it sex or labour trafficking).

The first school of thought views prostitution as violence requiring 'zero tolerance mechanisms'(Pajnik 2009: 54), which is essentially the abolitionist position: prostitution is an extreme example of male domination over and exploitation of women, therefore the only way to address this problem is with repressive measures. For the abolitionists there is no freedom of choice, i.e. prostitutes do *not* choose to become prostitutes, thus prostitution is not sex work. However, critics point out that such approaches isolate prostitution from other forms of inequality, exploitation and position in the labour market, thus failing to make the necessary social underpinnings and connections in the struggles against such phenomena. Secondly, not only do such perspectives make gross generalizations that do not fit the empirical reality and the varied experiences within prostitution, but the trend to equate all forms of prostitution with trafficking victimizes and disempowers prostitutes preventing them from demanding an improvement to their working conditions. The rhetoric of abolitionism resembles the prohibitionism dominant in the 18th and 19th century, which was based on moralistic and purist arguments. Often such policies have the opposite to the desired effect: they further marginalise the prostitutes and push them further into more vulnerable positions, exposing them to dangers. The case of Sweden, which was the first country to shift the guilt away from prostitutes to the clients/users of sex services is the 'model' favoured by abolitionists. It is this case that has been 'exported' to various countries with some success; however, it must be noted that the Swedish model only emerged when the welfare state of Sweden began to erode and adopted a restrictive policy on drug use (Pajnik 2009: 54, Gould 2002: 208). Critics of the criminalisation of demand argue that the results of such policies are not positive for prostitutes and victims of trafficking and that all we have is a mere *relocation* of the activity and the creation of "new organisational forms" rather than a reduction or eradication of the phenomenon. Secondly, it is essentially a policy that satisfies some notions of gender equality within Swedish society; it is not really about eradication of prostitution but about punishing (essentially) male users. Hence, it totally ignores the position of persons involved in prostitution, which according to many studies has in fact deteriorated with the criminalisation of demand (Pajnik 2009, Kulick, 2003). Recently, organisations of prostitutes claimed that "experience had taught them any law against consenting sex forces prostitution further underground and makes women vulnerable to violence" and that the government's claims that most prostitutes are trafficked is strongly disputed.[9]

[9] For instance the English Collective of Prostitutes: Niki Adams, a spokeswoman for the collective, claimed: "What we do know is that women from all walks of life, also working as teachers and students, are also working

The alternative school of thought considers prostitution as sex work and has support amongst certain strands of feminism, some trade unions and most self-organisations of prostitutes (Pajnik 2009: 57-59). There are of course various positions within this school, such as the position that it is essentially a woman's right to control her body (O'Neill 2001) or the view that prostitution amongst consenting adults can in fact be 'emancipatory' or even 'empowerment practice' (Blume 2006); others see it as a necessary recognition that would at last begin to redress the current gender and labour inequality and positions of exploitation and vulnerability via autonomy and self-organisation. The policy goal here is destigmatisation of prostitution, which condemns and creates the condition for fighting exploitation and improve poor working conditions but does not condemn prostitution. The approach of this school of thought is that exploitation and poor working conditions are not inherent in prostitution per se but the consequence of restrictive measures and stigmatisation, which are the modern variant of 18th and 19th century moralism (Pajnik 2009: 55-58).

Although the UN Trafficking Protocol has placed trafficking high on the international agenda, the attempts to control irregular migration pose a threat to the success of initiatives to combat trafficking. The former advisor to the UNOHCHR expressed concern that the distinction drawn in the protocol between trafficked victims and smuggled migrants, and the greater protection afforded to the former, offers an incentive to states to identify irregular migrants as smuggled rather than trafficked so as to avoid the financial and administrative burden of protection (Gallagher 2002: 27). Pearson points out that the eagerness of states to control irregular migration, coupled with the sensationalism around "sex slaves", in practice means that the rights of smuggled migrants are largely ignored and calls for a more comprehensive migration policy to include trafficking as an issue of concern within the wider migration context, rather than prioritise trafficking as the only issue of concern in the process of migration (Pearson 2005:26). It is argued that by focusing on the supply/demand dynamic a new insight is offered as it "brings into play a range of other societal, economic and psychological factors such as the social construction of sexuality, the viability of alternative choices for prostitutes and clients, and the impact of regulatory regimes on the provision of sexual services" (Munro and Giusta, 2008: 10). As the pioneers of the study of demand, Anderson and O'Connell Davidson (2003) point out a study of the demand side of trafficking is riddled with conceptual and political problems. The very definition of the term 'trafficking', as well as 'demand' for trafficked victims are difficult areas: the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons (2000) fails to define many of the constituent elements of trafficking. Anderson and O'Connell Davidson (2003) point out that,

> the terms sexual exploitation and exploitation of the prostitution of others are not defined. This makes it virtually impossible to specify who has or has not been trafficked into the commercial sex trade without becoming embroiled in the more general debate about the rights and wrongs of prostitution, a debate which is both highly polarized and hugely emotive.

in prostitution. She claimed that the government's claim that most prostitutes were trafficked was "completely fabricated. It's consenting sex." See "New law to criminalise men who pay for sex with trafficked women", The Guardian, 19.10.2008, http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/nov/19/prostitution-justice

Moreover, the fact that the protocol fails to explicitly define terms such as 'exploitation', 'coercion' and 'vulnerability' leaves the question of who is a 'trafficked person' to be defined by the courts as a matter of fact, based on the surrounding circumstances and is thus clouded by uncertainty. The fact that the whole area is riddled with "fuzzy and unworkable distinctions between trafficking, smuggling and migration" (Anderson and O'Connell Davidson, 2003: 7) makes the study of the subject difficult and somehow murky. Moreover, there are political issues at stake, as there are "strong political pressures to divorce the debate on trafficking from the more general phenomenon of migration, and to treat smuggling and trafficking as distinct phenomena". Their overall conclusion is particularly relevant to this study:

> If the primary concern is to locate, explain and combat the use of forced labour, slavery, servitude and the like, then there is no moral or analytical reason to distinguish between forced labour involving illegal immigrants, smuggled persons or victims of trafficking. The distinction between trafficking and smuggling may be clear to those who attach political priority to issues of border control and national sovereignty, but it is far from obvious to those who are primarily concerned with the promotion and protection of the rights of migrant workers. Indeed, it is widely believed that the trafficking/smuggling distinction represents a gaping hole in any safety net for those whose human rights are violated in the process of migration … [P]olicies designed to control and restrict immigration can actually fuel markets for trafficking and smuggling and contribute to the construct of irregular migrants (trafficked, smuggled or otherwise) as cheap and unprotected labour.

A similar conclusion is drawn by Rutvica Andijasevic (2007), who argues that in order to properly appreciate 'trafficking' in a meaningful manner one has to move beyond the paradigm of 'violence and organised crime' which restricts the debate in a dualism of 'victim-criminal', portraying 'trafficking' as merely organised crime and (migrant) women as victims in the logic of coercion and deception.[10] She proposes instead to approach trafficking not as an issue of violence against women as many feminists and activists prefer, but within the context of European integration and accordingly transfer the terms of the debate towards migration and work. By approaching trafficking in this manner she obtains a much more refined and nuanced analysis of the variance of the female migratory experience and moves away from the 'victimisation' hence the disempowerment of these women as social actors with human will and potential for resistance; in short it allows for an appreciation of the actual social experience and the sophistication involved in the generation of subjectivities, social power relations in the context of socio-political and cultural-economic transformations that the globe is undergoing.

In the context of Cyprus, where our empirical study took place, the question of the treatment of cabaret dancers, whether 'trafficked' or migrant women who are illegally working as prostitutes in conditions of exploitation and bonded labour, has been the subject of public debate; there is also some literature on the broad subject (Trimikliniotis, 1999, 2003; Agathangelou, 2004; Lenz, 2004; Kiatipis, 2004; MIGS 2007). A number of recent human

[10] She draws on fieldwork with 25 eastern European migrant women she conducted in Bologna between October 1999 to February 2000 (see Andijasevic, 2007).

rights reports named Cyprus as a destination and transit hub for trafficked and sexually exploited women. The US State Department on Trafficking in Persons Country Report 2009 which places Cyprus in Tier 2 Watch List for a fourth consecutive year, criticises the Cypriot government for not fully complying with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The report expresses satisfaction at the announced abolition of the 'artistes' visa', indicating on the one hand that the results of this new policy remain to be seen and expressing on the other hand concern over the increase in 'barmaid' visas (526 "barmaid" work permits were issued in 2008, compared to 416 issued in 2007), fearing that the barmaid work permit may take the place of the "artiste" work permit in facilitating sex trafficking to Cyprus.[11]

A controversy was caused by the refusal of the Attorney General to acknowledge Cyprus' trafficking problem in his meeting of 06.11.2007 with Celia de Lavarene, an international expert and author on human trafficking, also the founder of the international NGO Stop Trafficking of People (STOP). De Lavarene, who was visiting Cyprus in order to raise awareness of sex trafficking, told the press that the Attorney-General "denied everything" and told her "no such thing existed" and that their meeting lasted between seven and ten minutes. The issue was further inflamed by the parliamentary human rights committee chairman[12] who on 7.11.2007 responding to De Lavarene's accusations about Cyprus' sex trafficking problem, flatly denied the problem existed. NGOs expressed concern particularly about the Attorney General's stand, since he is the officer charged with implementing the National Action Plan against human trafficking, claiming that his refusal to admit the existence of the problem means that no steps are taken to combat it.[13]

In spite of the growing interest of the media in trafficking and the focus of international reports on the subject, there are gaps in the literature on Cyprus and this issue. The empirical basis of the various studies is rather slim, reflecting the challenges in investigating these issues. A critical review of the relevant bibliography on Cyprus illustrates the unequal division of freedom of action amongst the various social actors and how this is particularly gendered in the neo-liberal setting of *global governmentability*. In this context the dichotomy of 'coercion' versus 'free choice' is essentially a false dichotomy that cannot but affect the legal concept of 'trafficking': the broad and rather vague definition adopted by the EU is best understood in the wider context of the contradictory and differentiated nature of the restrictive migration policies of the EU. The policies to 'combat trafficking' are also part of this broader framework of setting essentially racist and utilitarian criteria for inclusion/exclusion in Europe in the guise of 'managed migration' (Anthias, 2000; Lenz, 2006: 49-50). Moreover, the problematique around the question of trafficking ought not to be depicted as a somehow 'non-state' process because that would be misleading. Trafficking is necessarily a state-related socio-economic and political-cultural phenomenon within the global context. Agathangelou (2004: 2) illustrates how conventional studies tend to depict migrant women as operating in a world economy where the mere operators are "households"

[11] http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/123361.pdf

[12] MP Sophocles Fyttis of the party DIKO

[13] In a press release dated 15.11.2007, the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies criticizes the statement by the authorities that research should be conducted in order for the government to be in a position to rebut the accusations made against Cyprus by international organizations regarding sex trafficking, stating that it demonstrated an unwillingness to combat the phenomenon.

and "possibly, the local economy," but "rarely do they focus on the complicity of the state, including those on the periphery of the world economy, in facilitating the exploitation of reproductive female labour".

There are a number of international, European and national reports, three books and several on-line resources of media reports, which cover the broad subject of sex work in Cypriot cabarets, although none of them addresses demand. These are the annual U.S. State Department Reports on trafficking,[14] the Robles Report,[15] the Cyprus Ombudsman report of 2001, the report of the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies or MIGS (2007), a national NGO which carried out a mapping of the situation by interviewing policy makers and NGOs and three books and a paper that complement each other or approach matters from different angles. In 2007 the MIGS national Report *Mapping the Realities of Trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Cyprus*[16] alleged that "the government appears to tolerate trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Cyprus and contributes to demand for sexual services through the issuing of specific 'artiste' visas as well as 'high risk' establishments". It points out that "within 20 years [1982-2002] there has been a dramatic increase of 111% in the number of cabarets". It notes that sex workers are unable to move freely, are forced to work over and above their working hours, and live in desperate conditions, isolated and under strict surveillance. An unspecified number of trafficked women are misled into believing that they are expected to work as waitresses or barmaids and are subsequently forced, through the use of threats and/or violence, into prostitution. The Third ECRI Report on Cyprus (ECRI 2006) also refers to the problem of 'artistes' in cabarets, night clubs and pubs, who are often victims of trafficking (para. 111).

Agathangelou (2004) locates the Cypriot desire industry within the context of what she refers to as 'the Global Political Economy of sex, desire, violence and insecurity in Mediterranean nation states" by focusing on the situation in Cyprus, Greece and Turkey. Her work investigates the structures and processes that reproduce these industries. From the outset she refers to the "complicit state" (Agathangelou, 2004: 15-16) which offers the economic order of things: the institutional and policy framework for legitimising and covering up the exploitation of two types of migrant females – the 'objects of desire' in the sex industry and the "unwanted" domestic workers.

The work by Lenz (2006) on prostitution and trafficking of migrant women in the Republic of Cyprus is based on fieldwork involving two 'artistes' (sex workers/performers in cabarets) who actually do not admit to offering sexual services, cabaret owners and two clients as well as state officials and NGO representatives dealing with migrants. The empirical research is based on a theoretical framework, which perceives that the process of neo-liberal globalisation has profound influence on migration and trafficking. Moreover, the author

[14] For the report for the year 2008, please see http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/123361.pdf. For the year 2007, please see: U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Cyprus*, released by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons on 12.06.2007, available at: http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2007/82805.htm

[15] Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Council of Europe (2006), Follow-up Report on Cyprus (2003-2005): Assessment of the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Strasbourg (29.03.2006).

[16] *Mapping the Realities of Trafficking in Women for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation in Cyprus*, October 2007, by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, available at: http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org/wp/?p=322

challenges the static idea of gender relations translated into the traditional model of 'pride and shame' specific for the conventional ethnography of the Mediterranean; she proposes that a focus on dynamic processes is necessary when considering gender relations.

The book of Kiatipis (2004) is based on a critical analysis that draws on his own experience as a client for sexual services in the 1980s and 1990s. The article by Philaretou and Allen (2006) on the cabaret sex industry in Cyprus provides what it refers to as an 'exploratory investigation of Greek-Cypriot male cabaret patronage' and on a number of articles in the media and research papers that are illuminating. The empirical basis of the work in Cyprus, however is rather slim: in the case of Agathangelou, the focus is on a theoretical analysis of the positioning of the sex industry in the globalised economy of the region. In the case of Lenz, only a small number of interviews are presented, amongst which are some with women who had previously worked in the sex industry but are not identified as victims of trafficking. In the case of Kiatipis, the author sets out his own experiences as participant observer but offers no findings of any empirical research.

We now turn to the prostration of the empirical findings of our work.

Methodology and findings

The methodology is essentially a mixed one drawing on critical discourse analysis and utilising a number of perspectives, disciplines, cultures and directions on research. It attempts to be both 'diverse and multidisciplinary' (Dijk 2001) in a comparative framework, so that clients' views are understood and interpreted by carrying out a content analysis of the issues emerging from their discourses. The method used consists of descriptive statistical analysis as we draw upon critical discourse analysis (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Weiss and Wodak 2003), institutional and contextual sociological analysis to reflect and interpret clients' views.[17] The research was conducted in the context of comparative research at a national, EU and more global level. The primary research was based on an analysis of client interviews, in total 32, and 3 with persons with 'special knowledge', whom we named 'key informants'. The interviews were carried out by four male research assistants who were better connected through their own networks with persons willing to be interviewed. Using the snowball method, the interviewees were contacted and interviewed by the research assistants, bearing in mind the ground realities of Cyprus with regard to traditional mentalities, the small size of local societies and the resulting hesitation of potential interviewees to divulge information regarding their sexual behaviour.[18] After reading interview texts, these were summarised and based on an 'elementary grounded theory' utilising taxonomy under different types. There was an effort at interrogating, contextualising, de/re-contextualising and interpretation of the meaning of the interviewee discourses. This requires a mixed method that draws on 'content analysis', 'discourse analysis' and 'deconstruction'. It is possible that the fact that it was young male researchers speaking to male interviewees may have had some impact on the discourses; however, this does not hamper the quality of the findings: if anything it provided a 'safe environment' for the buyers to speak freely

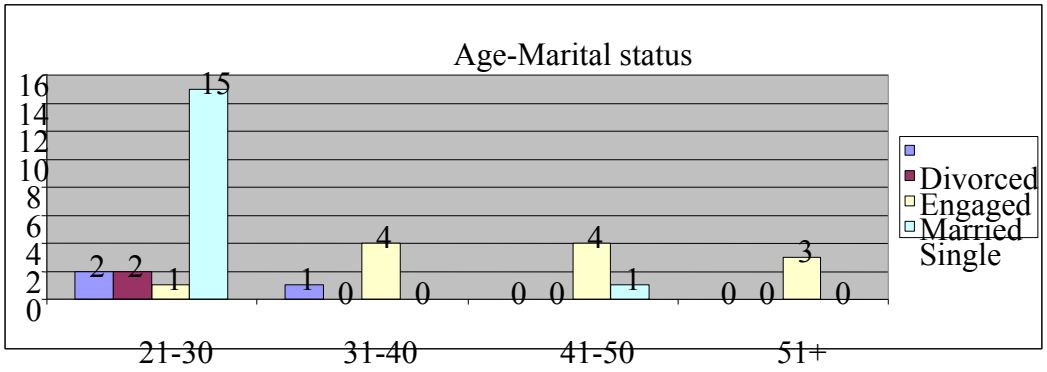
[17] The study benefited from a coding using NVivo 7, albeit utilising the software in a rudimental manner.

[18] Prior to each interview, the research asssistnats submitted the profile of the potential interviewees for approval by the authors of this report. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees and transcribed by the research assistants who also contributed their own research notes as to the surrounding circumstances, the body language of the interviewees and other relevant factors.

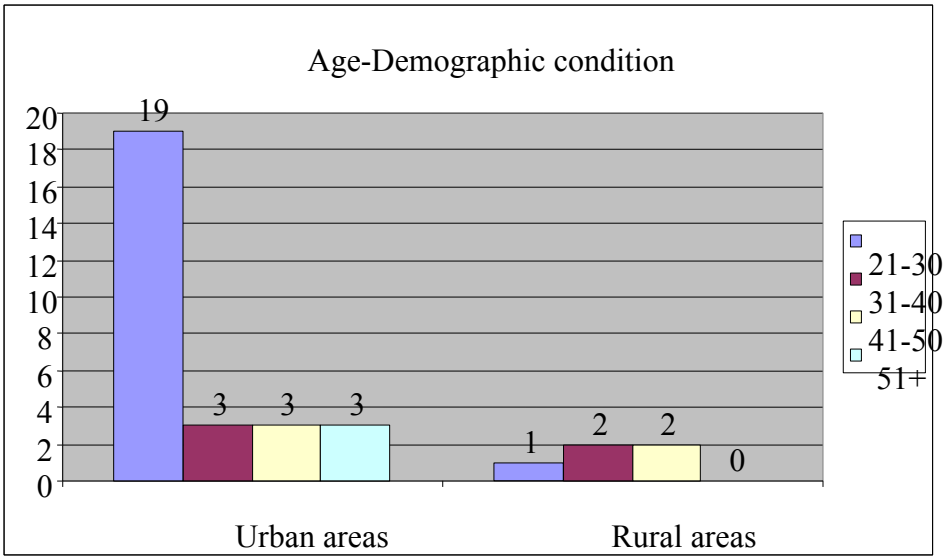
Given the difficulty in finding clients willing to be interviewed, the interviews were necessarily restricted to contacts of the research team and focused primarily on cabaret clients. Nevertheless, efforts were made to take into account certain key characteristics when selecting interviewees such as age, education, socio-economic status, marital status, location of residence etc. All clients interviewed frequented cabarets, whilst some had also visited other establishments offering sexual services by foreign women, such as bars and massage parlours. This study thus concentrates on examining the most 'open' and 'public' of the three types of establishments offering sexual services of one sort or another. Although some of the interviewees mentioned having visited establishments other than the cabaret, none of the clients interviewed referred to visiting establishments which are not so 'public', such as 'shadowy' rooms of the informal sector or visiting foreign female students who are also working as prostitutes. As far as the age groups of the sample of clients is concerned, 20 interviewees belong to the age group of 21-30 and 9 are over 40 years of age, reflecting perhaps the fact that younger and single clients were more willing to be interviewed. The fact that not all age groups are represented may be a sampling weakness; nevertheless, given that the largest age group of clients of cabarets seems to belong to this particular age group, the fact that not all groups are represented is less significant for the purposes of this study. As far as the educational level of the clients is concerned, most have tertiary education or were in tertiary education at the time they were interviewed (21 interviewees); nine interviewees had only secondary school education and one had only basic/primary education. This presumably also mirrors the type of persons more willing to be interviewed, as rigorous efforts were made by the research team to locate more interviewees from the lower education group. The disadvantage is that from the sample the working class/ manual labour clients are not properly 'represented' and neither are migrants or ethnic groups other than the Greek-Cypriots. On the other hand this is perhaps less significant than it appears at first glance, given that Cyprus is primarily a service economy and in particular a tourism-based economy and thus there is an increasing number of persons working in the service sectors; manual jobs are decreasing and there is a significant increase of the higher and tertiary education graduates over the last year, as the need for unskilled and manual jobs is primarily covered by migrant workers (see Trimikliniotis, 1999, Trimikliniotis & Pantelides, 2003, Trimikliniotis and Demetriou 2007, 2008b). Another weakness is that all clients are Greek-Cypriots; nonetheless, as the bulk of demand for sexual services (including the demand for trafficked women) in Cyprus, at least in the area controlled by the Republic which is the area of our focus, is drawn from the Greek-Cypriot population, then this weakness is somehow mitigated. Demographically and geographically the study was conducted in the large urban centres of Nicosia and Limassol, as well as in the rural and semi-rural areas located in the broader districts of these two cities. Twenty nine interviewees lived and worked in urban areas and only five came from rural areas – something that also reflects the demographic features of the country and the trend towards urbanisation and social change since the 1960, a trend that has accelerated since the 1980s (see Attalides 1981 and Trimikliniotis, 2006). Although we are aware from NGO reports and media articles that sexual exploitation of trafficked women also takes place in rural areas, rural societies have proven to be introvert and closed to our interviewers, probably because of their small size and the predominance of traditional values.

Clients' Profiles: Age-Marital Status, Residence and Income

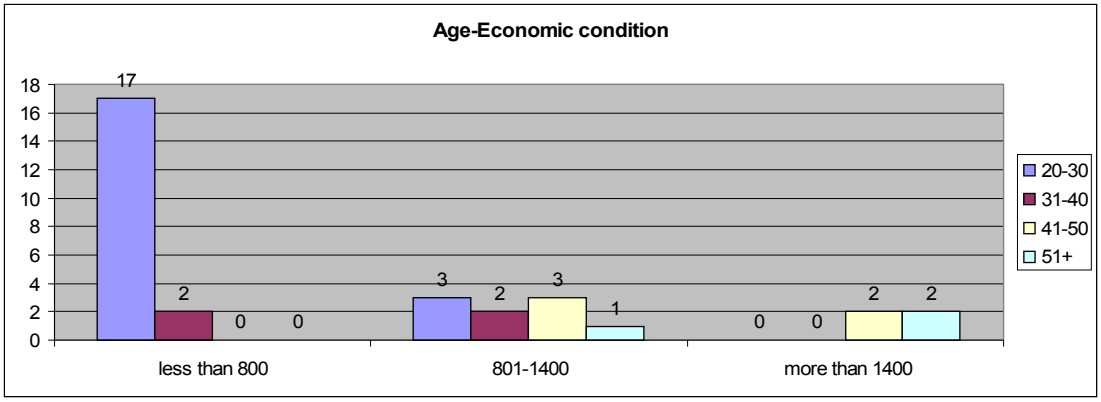
In the research sample there is a good balance between married persons (13 in total) and unmarried (16). The table below depicts the sample comparing age to marital status (**Table 1**):



The table below depicts the sample comparing age to residence (in terms of urban/rural (**Table 2**):



As far as financial status is concerned, interviewees were classified in one of the following three categories: those earning less than 800 Cyprus Pound (approximately 1,370 Euros) per month, those earning between 800 to 1400 (approximately 1,370-2,400 Euros) per month and those earning over 1400 Cyprus pounds (approximately 2,400 Euros) per month. Below we have a table depicting our sample comparing age to socio-economic condition in Cypriot pounds (**Table 3**):



Nineteen interviewees earn below CYP800 (1,369 euro) per month, nine earn between 800 to 1,400 (1,369 to 2,396 euro) and five earn over 1,400 Cyprus pounds (2,396 euro) per month.

The overall clients' profiles are set out in the table below (**Table 4**):

Clients' Profile

Interview number	Age	Marital Status	Occupation	Residence	Income (CyPs[19] per month)	Education
1	20	single	Student	Urban	> 800	University
2	30	single	Property developer	Urban	801-1400	Lyceum
3	35	single	Psychiatrist	Urban	> 1400	University
4	53	married	Car mechanic	Urban	> 1400	Lyceum
5	29	married	Employee in the private sector	Rural	< 800	Secondary
6	26	single	Barman	Urban	< 800	University
7	24	single	Employee in the private sector	Urban	< 800	University
8	38	married	Warehouse keeper	Urban	< 800	Not stated
9	???	???	Bar owner	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated
10	28	married	Employee in the private sector	Urban	801-1400	Lyceum
11	48	married	Employee in the private sector	Urban	801-1400	Lyceum
12	26	single	Student	Urban	< 800	University
13	30	married	Not stated	Rural	Not stated	Not stated
14	25	single	Student	Urban	< 800	University
15	26	single	Journalist	Urban	< 800	University

[19] The Cyprus Pound was the currency used at the time. The official exchange rate between the Cyprus Pound and the Euro is: 1 Euro = 0.5852 Cyprus Pound

16	25	single	Hotel employee	Urban	< 800	University
17	25	single	Student	Urban	< 800	University
18	25	single	Student	Urban	< 800	University
19	35	married	Not stated	Rural	< 800	Lyceum
20	60	married	Small business owner	Urban	> 1400	Primary
21	37	divorced	Small business owner	Urban	801-1400	University
22	42	married	Hotel employee	Rural	801-1400	University
23	38	married	Police officer	Urban	801-1400	University

First encounters with 'artistes' in Cyprus: do buyers see migrant women in the cabarets as coerced or free agents?

The term used to describe women working in cabarets is the slang derogatory 'artista'.[20] An interesting point emerging from our sample is that the first encounter of men with women working in cabarets seems to be at the ages of 15 to 18.[21] Of course given that the study makes no claims as to the representativeness of the sample, this does not allow one to draw conclusions as to any general trend. Nevertheless, in the absence of other more accurate research with a larger sample, the finding remains important for policy considerations and for designing awareness campaigns addressing clients. Moreover, the figures are useful in detecting the changing sexual habits of young males over time. Interviewees who belong to the younger age group (21-30) seemed to have their first sexual encounter with women working in cabarets/bars when they were younger than those who belong to the higher age brackets. Interestingly, although these men were under-aged, they seemed not to have any problems being admitted into establishments such as cabarets or bars. In the male youth subcultures of machismo it is considered to be an 'achievement' when the younger member of a group goes to a cabaret or a bar in order to buy sexual services. A first glance at what the clients *think* about the reasons why migrant women work in cabarets reveals that the vast majority think that the current situation is somehow a lot better than what it 'used to be' - even though the ages of the clients reveal that their 'knowledge' as to 'how it used to be' cannot be based on actual experience but from hearsay and assumptions about the past: most clients claim to have visited cabarets and bars of this sort for the first time between the ages of 15 to 18 years old. Most speak about a 'transitional period' as 'there was ignorance in the past' (this nebulous 'past' is not defined) and 'more exploitation' in the cabarets, but this is currently changing. As for the *current* situation, 18 clients believe that the working 'girls' know what is going on in the cabarets before they come to Cyprus, they are not particularly happy about it but their financial need is such that it makes them stay on; 13 interviewees believe that the 'girls' were fully conscious of what was going on in the cabaret before they arrive and face the methods practiced including prostitution as a profession; only four believe that the women working in cabaret were 'coerced'.

[20] It is interesting in the discourses that the use of particular terms such as 'poutana', 'artista', i.e. words which derive from the word 'whore' (poutana) were used by the interviewees throughout.

[21] Not all clients referred to age but most did refer to these ages.

From the clients who believe that these women face work at the cabaret as a profession, all of whom are unmarried, most (six of them) believe that they are doing it out of economic need but are fully aware of the situation prior to working there. None of the unmarried persons believes that these women are coerced to be there and/or to offer sexual services. We may well assume that the picture they present is one based in part on their own observations as well as their fantasy. Many unmarried young men appear to believe that these women do not have sex with them merely because of the money but because these women also desire them (this observation derives from many interviews). From the clients who are married or engaged to be married, two interviewees believe that the women are fully aware of what is going on and what it is expected of them (i.e. to offer sexual services) but most interviewees (nine of them) believe that the women are working there because of economic need. Only four married clients believe that these women are 'coerced' to be where they are and to be prostituted. Thus, we may perhaps assume, with every caution given our small sample, that there seems to be some connection between the marital status of the clients and the attitude towards these women: generally speaking, unmarried men tend not to see these women as victims of trafficking, which they only associate with physical coercion. The reasons for this are difficult to deduce on the basis of the knowledge we have about the clients and their actual experience and relationship with the women working at the cabarets. It may be that they have little experience or understanding of the definition of 'trafficking' or simply that the signs that these women were trafficked victims were not visible from their viewpoint. Or it may be that they have some underlying moral regrets about buying sexual services from these women and thus refuse to see or acknowledge what would otherwise have been apparent and potentially deterring, i.e. that the exploitative conditions of work of these women render them victims of trafficking. Interestingly, we can observe a greater degree of sympathy and understanding about the situation of these women by married men and men engaged to be married. However, age may be relevant too: nine clients between the ages of 21-30 consider that these women treat their condition as a profession, in other words younger men tend to afford little sympathy for the situation of these women.

Regarding the relation between the educational level of the clients and their perceptions of these women (Table 4), it seems that most interviewees with university education tend to believe that these women treat their work as a profession or as a result of their financial/economic need (ten and nine respectively) and only two of them believe that they are coerced. From those interviewees with secondary school education, six believe that women do this job due to their financial/economic need, one of them that it is a profession and one of them that it is a result of coercion. As for the two interviewees with primary school education, one of them speaks of "need", the other about "coercion". No conclusions can be drawn regarding clients with basic education as there were only two such persons in the sample. However, some conclusions may be drawn regarding interviewees with higher/tertiary education levels: there is clearly a dominant opinion that does not encompass the concept of 'coercion', at least in the sample that was interviewed.

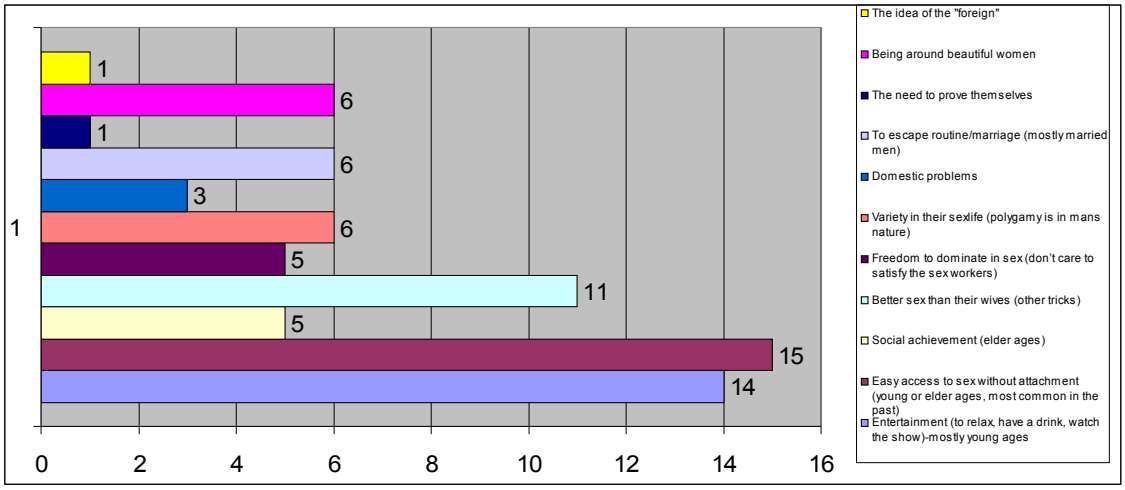
Reasons Articulated as to why Cypriot clients go to cabarets and bars offering paid sex

Efforts were made to group together the key reasons for visiting cabarets and bars, based on the client interviews conducted. The following categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but in practice there were a number of such reasons given by the interviewees; nonetheless, there are some views more dominant in certain 'types' of clients based on age, profession, education and social class, personal commitments/ family status, personal, psychological and sexual orientations and interests.

Table 5

Reasons for frequenting cabarets/bars	Number of interviewees
• 'Easy access to sex without attachment/commitment'.	15
• 'Entertainment'. The Cypriot word used [«πασιαμάς»] encompasses notions such as 'having fun' including relaxing with friends, having a drink, watching the show etc, i.e. not necessarily just the act of having sex.	14 (mostly young ages)
• 'Better sex than their wives' (other 'tricks' and sexual services not available by wives).	11
• 'Variety in their sex-life' (polygamy/promiscuity is 'in a man's nature').	6
• 'To escape the monotony of their married life and everydayness' (mostly married men).	6
• 'Being in the company of beautiful women.'	6
• 'Social achievement / sexual reassurance', particularly for older ages. Also men over the age of 50 found that being in the company of beautiful women was good for their 'image'.	5
• 'Freedom to dominate in sex '(no need/care to satisfy the sexual needs of the sex workers).	5
• 'Family problems at home'.	3
• 'The need to prove themselves'.	1
• Attraction to the notion of the "foreign" which is conceptualised as better than the local or the "own".	1

Table 6



From the tables above (tables 5 and 6) it is apparent that the most important reasons for visiting cabarets are as follows:

'Easy access to sex without attachment': This is an interesting concept given that the notion of casual and an easily accessible supply of sexual services is a determinant of 'demand' and as such it illustrates the artificiality in trying to understand demand detached from supply. It seems that for younger persons, who are more desperate for sex as well the older person who are keen to have sex usually outside marriage i.e. there is a difficulty in accessing sex elsewhere. This seemed to be more important in the past at the time when society was considered to be less permissive and it was more difficult to access sex.[22]

'Entertainment': Clients appear to conceptualise the cabaret as a space for 'light' entertainment with the opportunity for relaxation, for 'chilling out' by 'having a drink' and 'watching the show'. The term used in the Greek Cypriot youth slang is 'pashiamas' [«πασιαμάς»], which refers to having 'fun', a 'laugh', an easygoing passing of time. This reason was expressed particularly by those interviewees who are younger and it is obviously connected to the above category (1) of 'easy access with no strings attached'. Two such examples are offered below:

> Interviewee: But also when we were in the army and we used to go [to cabarets], we could only go for 1-2 drinks and then leave, just for the sake of going, in order to be trendy and macho.

The second example is:

> Interviewee: OK, the young ones go [to cabarets] because it may even be their first time to have sex with a girl and stuff like that…they may go to see something for instance, a show…

[22] A characteristic quote is offered by one client: "The main reason in my opinion for which they go [to cabarets] is the fact that there they find a woman to make love with them without having to beg her, without having to do any preparation, I mean to approach her, to court her. There, you will pay and you will get what you want."

'Better sex': Married men who frequent cabarets explain their sexual encounters with migrant sex workers as being due to 'better sex' than that available at home with their wives; in particular many refer to "other tricks", in other words sexual services not available by their wives or generally by Cypriot women who are potential wives, for those who are not married. This may reflect the fact that there is a particular (male) sexual appetite and fantasy for unconventional sex whilst there is no opportunity or willingness to communicate such desires to their wives or partners, for fear that they may be considered to be 'unacceptable' in a conventional marriage or relationship. One key informant interviewed was particularly illuminating, claiming that there is a 'social crisis' in the institution of marriage in Cyprus. Most married clients referred to this, but there were unmarried clients who projected what happens in practice and what is *likely to happen* when they are married in the future. One client's account is telling:

> INTERVIEWER: Are there many men in Cyprus who have sex with such women?
> INTERVIEWEE: A great many, my friend, it depends on their wife, if they are married. When they don't have a good sexual life with their wives, my friend… You know how Cypriot women are, they just spread their legs and lie down…

Six clients referred to the 'variety in their sex-life': Interviewees made a "statement of fact" that "polygamy is in a man's nature", justifying male promiscuity including having sex with prostitutes:

> INTERVIEWEE: A normal man wants to have many sexual relations. In my view it is normal that every normal man should want to have multiple sexual relations.

Another referred to the need for 'variety' to spice up their lives: 'one cannot live off beans everyday' he said, referring to sex with his wife; 'sexual experience', he said, is 'good for men':

> INTERVIEWEE 2: Well, the next generation is our own, this is correct…So why does our generation go to these places? Well, it goes in order to satisfy a need, more or less, to live something different…
> INTERVIEWEE 1: How many days [can one live off] beans?
> INTERVEIWEE 2: Exactly, how many days with your wife, lets say, it is good to have a relationship such as this, it enriches…how can I say this?
> INTERVIEWER: The sexual experience?
> INTERVEWEE 2: Yes that's right, the sexual experience…

'To escape the monotony of married life and everydayness': Six interviewees who were mostly married men spoke about their urge to escape their daily life, the everyday routine in their married life. This category to some extent overlaps with the previous one.

'Being around beautiful women': Several interviewees placed emphasis on the external appearance of these women, most of whom were described as very beautiful. One client said:

> Demand is demand, but the more attractive the product you offer, the more demand will there be. [Beauty] will attract even someone who is hesitant about

> going. When the girls are very beautiful, you tend to say, what the heck, it is worth it.

'Social Achievement/ prize': This reason is obviously related to reason (6) above and (10) below, as they refer social acceptance of the fact that most eastern European women are considered to be 'a good catch' in the 'male street fantasy'. One client referred to the fact that Cypriot men like to 'show off', to 'brag' and to be seen with beautiful women, particularly when they [i.e. the men] are of a certain age (i.e. in their 50s or 60s). Another client referred to how other males will comment with admiration when they see a male in the company of a tall blond [eastern European] woman: "look at this cool/tough guy ['leventis'] with the blond!"

'Freedom/ opportunity to dominate in sex': Five clients claimed that the reason why men go to cabarets is because the sexual services available by the sex workers are such that they allow men who would find it otherwise difficult to engage in flirting or courting women or make any other effort in approaching a woman. They have the opportunity to have sex in the easiest and most convenient way and in a manner that allows the client buyers to be in charge of the kind of sex required:

> You go somewhere, you take a woman, you pay her and you do what you want with her (he smiles ironically). I believe there are also men who go because they find it difficult to approach a woman and talk to her, because it takes an effort, isn't it? Because the woman you will approach must also like you in order to allow you to do what you want with her (he smiles ironically). Instead, these men may not want it that way. They may not even want a conversation; they may not even want to know what this woman wants and give it to her. They only want what they need from the woman…it is the easiest way…

'Domestic/ family problems at home': The clients referred to domestic and family problems as the reason. One client said that he will stay with his wife until their children are grown and that the visit to the cabaret is a relief:

> INTERVIEWEE: Something must be going on at home, there must be a problem. I am not in a position to know…I can only speak for myself… shall I tell you for instance why I go? Of course I always liked women but…I have had relations with other girls…but it is the first love that counts. Well, I loved someone, I was hurt let's say and since then things are different. The wife I have at the moment, we are not a good match, but we are staying together for the sake of children, until the children grow up, because we feel sorry for the children and then meanwhile I do various other things.

'The need to prove themselves / need for sexual reassurance': one client said that those who are of a certain age require something to boost their ego and give them the sexual reassurance they need:

> INTERVIEWEE: Well, the older men are going because they are at the age where they have the… their doubts…when their sexual problems start. And they are forced, no this is not the right word, they feel psychologically that they must

go in order to … to do what they have to do in order to feel better psychologically…

'Attraction' to the notion of the "foreign": one client referred to the attraction to a 'foreign woman', which may be linked with 'beautiful women', category (6) above:

INTERVIEWER: Generally speaking, why do you think that men have sex with foreign women?
INTERVIEWEE: Well, the foreign is different and …the mere fact that it is foreign, to start with…
INTERVIEWER: In other words, the idea of the foreigner?
INTERVIWEE: Yes, the idea of the foreigner, this is very important…as the saying goes, the food is sweeter when you eat it in someone else's house. The other thing is that these foreign women who come here are really beautiful, they are beautiful girls and it is worth paying a certain amount in order to have sex with them. It is also the fact that with the Cypriot woman the situation is different: to form a purely sexual relationship with a Cypriot woman is harder… the circumstances, the family, where she comes from, who knows her, who was her previous boyfriend … the situation is still very different. Whilst a foreign woman who comes to your country is not known to anybody and the circumstances are easier.

It is interesting to examine how various clients perceive the cabaret dancers/sex workers/ 'artistes' in terms of how they view their job:

Table 7

Client	They see it as a profession	They don't like it but do it out of need	They are coerced
Single	10	6	0
Married	2	7	4
Engaged	0	2	0
Divorced	0	3	0
Total	12	18	4

Most single men interviewed (10 out of 16), who are by and large under the age of thirty, see these women as 'professionals', whilst six of them consider that the cabaret dancers are not happy with what they do but do it out of need. Interestingly, the latter view is shared by most married men (seven out of the 13), whilst four think that they are coerced and only two that they see themselves as 'professionals'. All three divorced men take the 'middle position'.

An analysis of the demand for paid sex in Cyprus based on buyers discourses

In the various interviews a number of subjective reasons as to why they buy sexual services emerge, some of which are self attributed reasons by the clients themselves. Some clients tend to answer the question as to why they go to cabarets with irony, as they consider the answer to be extremely obvious: "To have sex". However, although this may appear self-evident, it is in a way tautological as the true nature of the question; this becomes clear only

when the clients are asked *why* they don't have sex with their wife/partner instead. Only then, (apart from certain interviewees who come forward with a cynical response), do certain aspects of what may be seen as 'deeper' reasons emerge as to really why these men are drawn towards paid sex. There are a number of reasons given as to why clients claim that they prefer to buy sexual services, the most recurring of which be summarised as follows: (a) convenience, (b) problems with wife-family, (c) trouble accessing local women for sexual interaction, (d) alleged 'sexual inadequacy of local women', (d) foreign women are considered 'more beautiful' etc. Of course such claims cannot be taken for granted as being necessarily *the* reasons, but can also be mere articulations from the interviewee to the interviewer.

It is a widely spread cynical belief, convention or approach, particularly among younger male clients, that the services purchased in these establishments are similar to all the other business or trade like economic activities. The argumentation is more or less as follows: "As a man it is in my nature to want to have sex regularly and what is easier for me is to go to a cabaret pay and get it! It is easy, fast and straightforward. I don't have to be nice to the girl, I don't have to pretend and show off. I just pay, we have sex and that's it." This reasoning is either explicitly articulated or implied in almost all the interviews. However, it is important to note here that this kind of rationalization is based on a classificatory procedure by which certain phenomena are conceptualized in a specific manner. This nevertheless, is not unrelated to the crystallization and active recreation of certain social norms in Cypriot society and specifically those that support that a) a man by nature is a sex craving creature and that b) certain social phenomena (in this case sexual exploitation) can be seen as goods to which monetary value can be attached. The latter can be attributed to the dominance of a monetary and market economy way of thinking.

The notion of 'freedom to have unconditional sex', as emerging from the interviews, is popular among young male Cypriots [Interview GF 12] but one which they feel cannot be met by Cypriot women. This approach falls in line the position that the purchase of sexual services is merely an issue of sexual relief, where the "artiste" is nothing more than the means to sexual relief, a notion echoed in a number of interviews. One interviewee went as far as to state that buying sex is no different to buying soap from a supermarket [Interview ND2].

Another important aspect of demand is the perception that the visit to the cabaret is an excursion, an escape from everyday routine and a distraction from marital and family problems. In other words, it is perceived that when a man has problems, particularly if these problems are with his wife/partner, he becomes even more legitimised in going to the cabarets where the women there are less demanding and are willing to meet their sexual needs "willingly". The visit to the cabaret and eventually the purchase of sex becomes the way of facing these problems.

The problems 'forcing' husbands or partners to buy sex often include a particular attitude attributed to Cypriot women, manifested in problems in the sex life of many Cypriot couples and specifically alleging a feeling of 'coldness' and an 'emotionless' approach by Cypriot women towards their husbands/partners, as they become more and more disinterested in sex

with age. We have no way of knowing whether this is mere prejudice in a patriarchal society or apologetics offered by buyers of sexual services; nevertheless this was the reason some clients offered, which itself reflects a rather popular myth or ideological construct in the sexual image of womanhood in Cyprus.[23] Furthermore, a number of clients support that their main reason for frequenting cabarets is because the women that work there (and Eastern European women in general) are more beautiful and sexy than the local women. However, this is not found in all the cases as some men claim that they consider Cypriot women to be sexier and that they wish some Cypriot women could be found at the cabarets. Nevertheless, it is widely believed that because of this increase in the numbers of the women from Eastern Europe working in cabarets in comparison with the decline of the 'traditional' Filipino prostitutes/sex workers, the 'quality' of the service has increased thus creating more favourable conditions for an increase in demand. Also, it is quite clear from the interviews that sex with a prostitute/sex worker is widely regarded as a form of male 'initiation ceremony' into adulthood and it is seen as 'normal' for teenagers and young boys under 18 to lose their virginity with women in cabarets. Several clients' accounts suggest that they were introduced to this environment either by an uncle or other close male relative at an early age as part of this 'initiation process'. Finally, the prevalent view that is supported by nearly all interviewees at varying degrees is the win-win business transaction, where the client receives sexual relief and the 'artiste' financial relief.

Post-colonialism, Globalisation & Social transformation: a society in a constant state of transition and flux

A close examination of clients' discourses reveals that the kind of cultural transformations and economic changes which occurred have transformed the nature of entertainment over the last years. These have transformed the cabaret into a popular and more 'socially acceptable' male destination for 'fun', irrespective of class background. More or less the same notion of 'purchased sex for leisure' is popular with all ages. Cyprus can be thought of as a 'post-tourist society',[24] where there is *commodification, idealisation* and *glamorisation* of cheap and expensive sex on a massive scale, considering the size of the country. The 'supply' of migrant women for sexual labour/services is allegedly produced to meet the large 'demand' generated by the mass media, advertisements and available quick and cheap thrills for fun. This takes place in the context of a permissive social setting for male sexual promiscuity, which is mediated via a 'Eurocentric ideology' (Argyrou, 1994), the mythology and images of the sexual behaviour of 'European women'. Male youth and 'older' male subcultures operate as routine practices for leisure. Such subcultures are simultaneously generated by, and they themselves reproduce and re-generate, attitudes as regards sexual tastes, fetishisms, stereotypes and fantasies over sex preferences and sexual games: these are part and parcel of 'entertainment' in the quest for 'pashiamas', easy access and 'no strings attached.' Such perceptions may well reflect men's fantasies of alienated males who have illusions about

[23] One of the most popular figures in psychiatry in Cyprus, Dr Yiangos Mikellides, on numerous accounts to the media, raises this issue of the sexual behaviour of Cypriot women and characterizes Cypriot women as being frigid and "cold" in bed, identifying this as the main reason why married men frequent cabarets and may eventually marry foreign instead of local women. In other countries it would certainly be considered racist and sexist to make such comments on air.

[24] For more on the subject see Trimikliniotis (2008) "Editorial: Rethinking Migration, Discrimination and Multiculturalism in a Post-tourist Society", The Cyprus Review, special Issue on Migration, Racism and Multiculturalism in Cyprus, Volume 20: 2 Fall 2008, pp 13-16 and . "Borders, Migration, Security and Trafficking Dilemmas: Current Debates and Cypriot Challenges", *The Cyprus Review*, Volume 20: 2, Fall 2008, pp. 207-232.

paid migrant sex in a society that is changing, or may reproduce the contradictions of what Carol Pateman called 'the sexual contract' in a country in societal transformation. In any case, various contradictions are apparent as regard sexualities, masculinities and the gender order that are relevant to understanding the structure and modus operandi of the system of purchased sex generating the demand for trafficking. However, such cultural practices are in general reproduced by the social structure, the profit-making industry and the complicit state.

The crucial role played by 'global' and regional factors that have transformed Cyprus from a relatively poor agricultural society is apparent: first the colonial period and then the building of the developed post-colonial society, member of the EU and financial service-providing mass tourist destination hosting over 150,000 migrant workers. All these changes have occurred at a time when Cyprus continues to be divided and despite the heavy losses suffered during the war of 1974. This broader context is addressed in later sections of the study. The legal framework is a colonial remnant, which was happily adopted by the post-colonial Republic of Cyprus: the legal and policy framework contains anachronistic socio-cultural and moral underpinnings that are in urgent need of reform. In fact, there is a heavy colonial legacy in regulating sexual practices and sexuality. As Karayiannis (2006: 258) observes, "the Victorian colonial legacy has been honoured by many postcolonial governments in Cyprus keen to regulate sexuality in an imperial fashion", which has made the Cyprus Republic "a devout upholder of colonialist morality." This 'morality' makes accommodations for female prostitution (for the benefit of men) but without endowing rights on this category of women, particularly migrant women who face deportation if caught to be involved in prostitution.

To conceptualise the general social context where the 'demand' for prostitution and trafficking is generated, one must appreciate the operation of the sex industry in Cyprus, the role of the cabaret, prostitution and trafficked women in a small island economy based on tourism due to its warm weather. Cyprus is undergoing a rapid social transformation, whereby the notions of 'tradition and modernity' are redefined and constantly re-played in a manner that demonstrates what Argyrou calls the 'dialectic of symbolic domination' (1996: 170-183). The cultural life of Cyprus and in particular the ways of entertainment, especially of men, are largely based on 'common sense' stereotypes about sex, sexuality, the role of men, women, 'foreign women', European/Eastern European women. The machismo involved in the 'legacy' or 'tradition' that wants Mediterranean males – and particular males proud of being youthful, energetic and ready for sex- must be understood in the context of the stereotype that developed in the 1980s and 1990s: the *kamaki* (harpoon) is the Greek 'hunter' or fisherman who 'hunts down the female, in particular the foreign female, who is after sex' (see Zinovief, 1991). Argyrou (1996), who conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Nicosia and Paphos on the subject of perceptions over entertainment and human/gender/race/class relations in the context of tradition/modernity as regards the culture of Cypriot weddings, points out that the meaning of entertainment is culturally specific to the class, gender and ethnic subject under examination. Nevertheless, the stereotypes he describes are regurgitated and perpetuated in the discourses of some of the clients interviewed in this study. For instance, the perceptions that "the European women who come to Cyprus are after 'the three Ss' – Sun, sea, and particularly sex" (Argyrou, 1996: 175).

The cultural setting of Cyprus that generates the sex industry or 'desire industries' (Agathangelou, 2004) must be closely scrutinised. Particularly *group*, as opposed to *individualised* entertainment is an 'act' that requires some performance: it is not just about 'having fun' it is about showing, or even better, *showing off* that one is enjoying oneself and *knows how* to. This has different social locations and it is class and gender specific. We have therefore a notion of both the demonstration of the performance or act of enjoyment and a defiance of the financial cost or other implications.

Crises and changes of Cypriot masculinities and male sexual identities: From the 'mastros'[25] to the 'manager'?

From the client narratives we are able to decipher clear demarcations that define continuities and ruptures in Cypriot (male) conceptualisations of 'masculinity', male identity, sexualities and sexual practices and attitudes vis-à-vis women. Most of the clients consider that over the last years (30 to 40 for some, the last 5 years for others) there has been a considerable transformation in gender power relations and social positions of men and women in Cypriot society, as well as in the attitudes about sex. These shifts certainly have a knock-on effect on the way they perceive prostitution, migrant sex workers, the notion of 'entertainment', the use of sexual pleasure and the 'demand for trafficking'. Whether we are actually dealing with a crisis of masculinity', where there is uncertainty "over the social roles and identity, sexuality, work and personal relations", as some authors suggest (see Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002: 1) or "a crisis in patriarchy", whereby there is an "undoing of the patriarchal family" as a result of transformations in women's work/employment and consciousness, which processes result from global transformations, women's liberation struggles, technological changes in reproduction, as Castells asks (1997: 135-136) is a matter for further debate. David Morgan's account (2006: 109-123) which puts forward the thesis of Connell (1995) that we are dealing with "a crisis in gender order" seems an apt description of the current state of affairs in the globe, and particularly in the case of Cyprus: we have a fluid and dynamic process that is contradictory and contested as there is a constant renegotiation and conflict in various spheres of life. Yet, we cannot speak of 'equality'; but of 'struggles for equality' particularly in work/employment, the social-cultural and symbolic spheres and the complex ways in which the public-private domains are organised. On the other hand, from a Foucaultian and Deleuzian perspective we have transformations in the "microphysics of power" that generate new forms of oppression, control and symbolic violence.

From the clients' narratives emerge a most uncertain and ambivalent account of gender relations in Cyprus, which is related to how they perceive the 'artistes' and their relations to them. In effect what these narratives show is an attempt to 'rationalise' and 'get to terms' with the 'crisis in gender order'. The interpretations offered often contradict each other and have in themselves internal inconsistencies. However, this is neither surprising, nor new: Gramsci' s notes of 'common sense' as a rudimental and contradictory form of a capacity of every person to be a 'philosopher' illustrates how we can proceed to interpret these narratives. In another sense, we can utilise Gramsci's concepts of 'hegemony' and 'organic crisis' and apply these to the notion of *a crisis in gender hegemony* in Cyprus, but not in an overthrow of the hegemonic system (Gramsci, 1972). Clients' conceptions of women's roles,

[25] The local variant of the male master.

'liberated'/ 'liberal' men and women are highly gendered and racialised from perspectives that are ridden with patriarchal and Eurocentric bias, as hegemonic ideologies are at the core.

The role of the State in curtailing sexual and labour demand for trafficking from 'entrepreneurs'

In the case of Cyprus as well as in many other countries, trafficking of women is primarily a question of *bonded labour* that may be addressed via immigration and employment laws and policies. Clients regularly referred to the fact that that it was the State that regulated the whole industry and that 'everyone knows what is going on' or that 'it is all legal': the legality or at least acknowledgement by the authorities about the paid sexual relationship was stressed by almost all clients and was a pertinent reference point. In fact, the routine State practices heavily contribute to the creation of the structural conditions of bonded labour: the operation of immigration rules, including the 'special rules' about inspecting and certifying their health so as 'not to spread venereal diseases', the rule that prohibits women who are not yet identified victims from changing employment sector and the requirement of 10,000 Cyprus Pounds (17,088 Euros) as deposit for each of the cabaret dancers are crucial factors in rendering victims of trafficking heavily dependent on their employers, who push them to prostitution to 'repay their debt'. In the 1980s, the phenomenon was characterised by a combination of entertainment acts and sale of sexual services: the key issues were the work hours; living arrangements outside conventional society; the requirement for high deposits to immigration authorities; work permits designating a specific workplace; the requirement of health certificates. Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the women working in cabarets originated mostly from the Philippines and Thailand. The trafficking of Filipino women came to a halt following the intervention of the Filipino embassy in Cyprus, which in 1990 prohibited its female nationals from coming to work in Cyprus as 'artistes'. However, similar problems continue to this day. There is little monitoring of the implementation of the above rights and little support in assisting these women to exit from this highly exploitative sector. As for the police and in general the authorities dealing with this category of migrant women, there is little sensitivity involved, despite the good efforts of the specialised unit within the Police, which is badly under-resourced and largely ignored in the wider policy-making on the subject. The working conditions of these women are unacceptable with little hope for improvement as there are no measures in place for monitoring and implementing labour standards or for the unionisation of cabaret workers, given the imbalance of power in this sector. NGOs, women's organisations, human rights centres and trade unions are not particularly strong in Cyprus (see CIVICUS report 2005).

Routine state practices contribute to the creation and reproduction of the structural conditions of bonded labour via the operation of immigration rules, including the 'special rules' about inspecting and certifying their health so as 'not to spread venereal diseases'. Moreover, the persistent failure of the State to deal decisively with cabarets creates the impression that there is state complicity as well as large profits in the sector (Agathangelou, 2007): the actual demand for 'labour' comes from cabaret 'entrepreneurs'. Calls for the disestablishment and abolition of the cabaret as it operates today are made (e.g. Kiatipis, 2004). Overall, the issue falls under the informal economy of Cyprus (see AKEL in Kiatipis, 2004) that obeys its own

'laws' and needs to be considered in its own right (see Berggren, Likic-Brboric, Toksöz, and Trimikliniotis, 2007)

Conclusions and Policy Challenges

The policy issues derived from the study are crucial for rendering policy responsive to the actual realities on the ground. From the interviews conducted and the research in the field, no evidence was found of demand for *trafficked* women per se, but only of demand for migrant sex workers; if anything, the vast majority of clients seemed to be rather 'put off' by the idea of sexual exploitation and appeared critical of labour super-exploitation, bad working conditions and the weak social position of migrant sex workers in cabarets and bars. Nevertheless, there was ambivalence as to whether migrant sex workers were 'free agents' or somehow 'victims of circumstances'. They seemed to acknowledge the fact that it is their employers who are pimping them and that the State is providing the framework for the social relations of exploitation and dependence of these women on their employers.

The clients consider that criminalising demand for prostitution in general would only push the practices further underground and they point to the fact that prostitution by these women is already illegal. Clients clearly have vested interests as it is they who would be prosecuted in such an eventuality, therefore our assessment cannot be based solely on their point of view. Nevertheless, the fact that they think that little would change if demand was criminalised is an illustration of the social environment in Cyprus that appears not to be favourable if criminalisation was the policy. In fact, irrespective of what clients say, migrant women become 'illegal migrants' liable to deportation if caught prostituting and this factor needs to be borne in mind: it is highly probable that criminalising demand for paid sex would put these women in a worse position as they will be exposed to more dangers in a world beyond the reach of the media, the communities of NGOs, human rights monitoring and the law. Also it is likely to make them more dependent on pimps.

We have already suggested that punishing the client is likely to cause more problems than it may resolve as it is likely to further marginalise trafficked women. Moreover, such a measure would require a type of policing that would be problematic in its implementation in the Cypriot context. The suggestion made to follow the Swedish model to deter the purchaser of sexual services is highly problematic. Article 19 of the newly adopted European Constitution on Trafficking in Human Beings criminalises the use of the services of a victim of trafficking, including sexual services. The UN Protocol on trafficking calls upon us to discourage demands that foster exploitation and lead to trafficking. The problems with these approaches are the following:

1. Knowledge that woman is a victim of trafficking is difficult to prove unless it falls within the 'extreme' categories. It is well known however that the vast majority of trafficked women do not fall within these extreme categories.
2. Collective victimisation reduces the freedom of many women who want to operate as free sex workers.
3. The difficulties with policing and prosecuting are such that most cases will go untouched.

Under these circumstances other solutions need to be found: the recent abolition of the 'artistes' visa was a welcome and necessary first step forward but hardly the end of the road.

A way around the issue of dependence would be on the one hand to abolish the immigration rules that grant cabaret/ bar owners permits to employ 'artistes' and on the other hand to allow migrant women to work on their own as sex workers, if they so wish, with equal rights under the law as Cypriot workers and increased protection because of the risks and vulnerabilities of the sector. One needs to deal with each component part of 'trafficking' as *a form of distorted migration* hence the question of freedom of movement/ border need to be addressed in the same way as with other irregular or undocumented workers. Regularisation is the only way to deal with 'irregular migration' therefore trafficking must be dealt with by abolishing visas that produce/reproduce trafficking (i.e. *artistes*) visa and regularisation of the work of foreign prostitutes. Monitoring, implementing labour standards and unionising sex workers is crucial, if we are to address the imbalance of power in this field (weak NGOs, women's organisations, human rights centres and trade unions are not particularly strong in Cyprus).The creation and effective operation of a trade union or organisation of sex workers is one of the best ways to deal with this issue and there are various international organisations and support groups that can assist to this end.

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