

Risk Factors to the Sex Trafficking Victimization of Female Refugees

Global

Capstone

Logan Randle

Abstract: This is a theory-building paper which examines three sections of risk factors and conditions that contribute to the vulnerability of female refugees to sexual exploitation throughout the forced migration process. In looking at the underlying individual demographics which transcend the stages of the migration process, age, economic status, and marital status are acknowledged as relevant risk factors to the sex trafficking victimization of female refugees. In addition, the use of smugglers, the danger level of pathways, the level of border security throughout the journey, and who refugees are traveling with all serve as conditions that contribute to the vulnerability of female refugees. Lastly, regarding destination conditions, refugee camps are acknowledged as a site of

enhanced risk to exploitation, and camps' level of oversight and proper accommodation are identified as variables that increase risk and vulnerability. This is done through the content analysis of research literature and organizational reports of correlated studies relating to sex trafficking of the larger female population and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against female refugees. The purpose is to provide a framework for answering the following question: *Under what conditions do female refugees fall victim to human sex trafficking?*

Keywords: risk factors, female refugees, vulnerability, sexual exploitation, forced migration, sex trafficking, victimization, sexual and gender-based violence

Introduction

Both forced migration and human trafficking are global problems in need of solutions, and as such, they have been gaining more international attention in recent years, especially due to increased refugee movements from the Syrian Civil War and the rise of trafficking cases. Within human trafficking, there are gendered experiences which need to be understood and addressed, whereby females are disproportionately targeted and victimized for sex trafficking. Within the forced migration context, there are also gendered experiences. Refugees are already a vulnerable population, but this vulnerability is amplified for female refugees whose forced migration experience is intertwined with sexual victimization. Female refugees face levels of insecurity that male refugees and other non-refugee female populations do not. They need and deserve distinct protections to address their unique vulnerability and insecurity. As such, it is

time to look at and understand how these two experiences of vulnerability intersect – to understand the sex trafficking victimization of female refugees. In order to fully understand this and implement the necessary protection measures, it is important to ask why such victimization occurs. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to examine the conditions which contribute to female refugees' vulnerability to sex trafficking victimization. However, it is important to first outline the background information on the issue and illustrate the relevance of this examination.

In 2017 there were 25.9 million refugees worldwide, with females accounting for 48% of those refugees (UNHCR, 2019a). Refugees, specifically female refugees, are therefore a considerable population deserving of academic attention. A 'refugee,' as defined by the 1951 Refugee Convention and subsequent 1967 Protocol, is any person who:

owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UNHCR, 2010, p. 14).

Due to the lack of explicit acknowledgment of gender-related persecution as a category included in the above definition, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) supplements this definition with the UNHCR Gender Guidelines (2002), which interprets the above definition to include gender-related claims under 'particular social group' and as a subset of

the other categories listed. In recognizing the unique female refugee experience, the UNHCR Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls (2006) acknowledges the violation of female refugees' right to personal liberty and security through sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), smuggling, and trafficking. A meta-analysis of nineteen studies illustrates the regularity of SGBV against female refugees, finding SGBV to affect 21.4%, or approximately 1 in 5, female refugees and internally displaced women (Vu et al., 2014). Female refugees are therefore highly vulnerable to SGBV. Gender-based violence (GBV) is defined by the UNHCR as a human rights violation consisting of "acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threat of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty" which deliberately target an individual or group based on gender (2003, p. 10). One form of GBV is sexual violence, which is "any act, attempt or threat of a sexual nature that results, or is

likely to result, in physical, psychological and emotional harm” (UNHCR, 2003, p. 10). It is acknowledged that while males can experience SGBV, females are the main targets (UNHCR, 2003). SGBV includes rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, physical assault, and trafficking/slavery (UNHCR, 2003). This ties SGBV to the issue of trafficking.

Human trafficking or ‘trafficking in persons’ is defined by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol) as:

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of

the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (UN General Assembly, 2000, p. 32).

Exploitation here includes sexual exploitation, forced labor, practices of slavery or servitude, and the removal of organs, with sexual exploitation defining sex trafficking (UN General Assembly, 2000). It is the inclusion of exploitation as a characteristic of human trafficking that differentiates it from the concept of human smuggling, which does not involve exploitation according to its international definition. Human smuggling, or the ‘smuggling of migrants,’ is defined by the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime as:

the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or

other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (UN General Assembly, 2000, p. 41).

In 2016, the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) detected over 24,000 victims of trafficking in persons in data that covered only 47% of the global population and does not account for undetected trafficking victims (2018b). Thus, the actual number of trafficking victims is far higher, indicating the prevalence of human trafficking as a global issue. Within all forms of human trafficking, sex trafficking accounts for 54-59%, making it the most common form (ICAT, 2017; UNODC, 2018b). While that would include 14,160 of the 24,000 detected victims, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that the actual figure of victims of forced sexual exploitation in 2016, including those undetected, to be 4.8 million globally (2017b). Given its

prevalence, sex trafficking is a current global issue that requires greater attention. Importantly, females are the most vulnerable to this common form of trafficking, accounting for 94%-96% of those trafficked for sexual exploitation (ICAT, 2017; UNODC, 2018b). This percentage illustrates the gendered nature of sex trafficking and why *female* refugees are the target population of this paper. These statistics, along with the statistics on female refugees, exhibit the prominence of female refugees and female sex trafficking victims, indicating the need for and importance of research on those topics, especially in relation to female refugees as female sex trafficking victims.

As a result of growing numbers of refugees and trafficking victims, the international community recognized forced migration and sex trafficking as issues to combat. With this international recognition came a large and growing body of literature on both topics. However, the research on the

connection between forced migration and sex trafficking is limited. As such, the focus of this paper is the intersection of human trafficking and forced migration, specifically as it relates to the vulnerability of female refugees to sex trafficking victimization. In this paper, I take a human rights-based approach and examine female refugees as a vulnerable population to sex trafficking through a human security lens. This human security approach is centered on the security of people rather than state security, and entails focusing on prevention, through understanding the risk factors and root causes of victimization, rather than looking at how to intervene after victimization occurs (UNDP, 1994).

Both refugees and human trafficking victims face human rights abuses and threats to their human security. According to the Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights are the rights entitled to every human being regardless of “race, colour, sex, language, religion,

political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (UN General Assembly, 1948). These rights include, among others, the right to life, personal liberty and security, freedom from slavery and servitude, freedom from inhumane and degrading treatment, and equal protection against discrimination (UN General Assembly, 1948). Both refugees and trafficking victims face violations of these rights. For victims of trafficking, the foremost human rights abuse is against freedom from slavery and servitude. These human rights violations contribute to these populations’ insecurity. According to the 1994 Human Development Report, human security, which includes freedom from fear and freedom from want, means both “safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression” and “protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life” (UNDP, 1994, p. 23). Forced migration and trafficking are thus both threats to human security. More specifically,

these processes are threats to personal security, which is security from physical violence (UNDP, 1994). Threats to personal security are often tied to gender insecurity, for personal insecurity follows females throughout their life-course in the form of violence and general inequality (UNDP, 1994). Due to their violated human rights and their particular conditions of insecurity, refugees, especially those who are female, are doubly disadvantaged and are consequently a vulnerable population (UNHCR, 1991).

In this paper, I examine the vulnerability of female refugees to trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation by looking at what conditions contribute to the victimization of female refugees for sex trafficking, whether during their migration journey or their settlement. For the purpose of this examination, and due to the lack of a concise definition in the literature, ‘vulnerable’ will be defined as it is in the Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary:

“able to be easily physically, emotionally or mentally hurt, influenced, or attacked” (2013). The impetus of this analysis is to construct a human security theory for future research to be based on. Therefore, the first step is to analyze the current body of literature on the topics of human trafficking, especially as it relates to sex trafficking, and female refugees, especially as it relates to the sexual victimization of female refugees. Utilizing the main findings and discussions within the literature as a base, I establish a range of hypotheses related to risk factors for the sex trafficking victimization of female refugees, which include individual demographics such as age, marital status, and economic status; conditions specific to the migration journey; and destination conditions, especially in regard to refugee camps. Based on the content and data analysis of the available correlated literature and data on sex trafficking and sexual violence against female refugees, I explore the validity and relevance of each of these

variables in constructing a theory. The analysis within this paper ends with a discussion on its contribution to the field as a framework for further studies on this topic and specific research question.

Literature Review

Human trafficking, especially sex trafficking, is a prominent and growing topic of study within the literature in the fields of political science and international relations, criminal justice, and sociology. Multiple discussions among the literature come to the foreground: 1) the need to understand and address the insecurities of those vulnerable to human trafficking, 2) women and children as the most common victims of sex trafficking, 3) the risk factors associated with victimization, and 4) the migration-trafficking nexus and the relationship between human smuggling and trafficking. Sexual violence against refugee women is also a leading topic of study in the fields of political science and international relations, forced migration and refugee studies, and

sociology. Within this larger topic area, multiple discussions are noteworthy: 1) the need to understand and address the specific insecurities of refugee women as a vulnerable population, 2) sexual violence against refugee women as common, 3) the occurrence of sexual victimization throughout every stage of the migration process, and 4) the risk factors associated with the sexual victimization of female refugees. The literature utilizes multiple frameworks to assess the above topics and their subsequent discussions, with traditional security and human security as the two leading frameworks. However, most of the literature on sex trafficking and sexual violence against refugee women examines the topic through a human security lens.

Trafficking Literature

Human security is currently the central paradigm in the human trafficking literature. This paradigm shift came about as a human rights critique (Askola, 2007; Berman, 2003; Duger, 2015; Worden, 2018)

of the traditional security model that focuses on trafficking as a criminal justice and national security issue (Babatunde, 2014; Stanslas, 2010). Although some of the more recent security-based literature recognizes the need to tackle the root causes of trafficking, the main purpose of doing so is to combat transnational organized crime, protect the *state*, and improve national security, especially by increasing border control (Babatunde, 2014; Stanslas, 2010). Thus, the main subject in this traditional security literature on human trafficking is the state and not the actual victims, which is a failure on the part of the literature. The main purpose of trafficking studies should be the protection of vulnerable individuals and victims. The human rights critique acknowledges this failure, calling for a human security approach that views trafficking as a human rights violation rather than solely a criminal justice issue, and aims to prevent trafficking victimization through the protection of vulnerable *people* and

combating the insecurities which make them vulnerable (Berman, 2003; Duger, 2015; Lansink, 2006; McSherry & Kneebone, 2008; Worden, 2018). Askola's critique (2007) goes a step further, considering sex trafficking to be a gender inequality issue. The human security approach arose out of this critique as a separate, yet prominent, paradigm contributing to a debate within the literature.

The human security literature focuses on vulnerability and the importance of understanding specific insecurities which lead to victimization. The literature on trafficking emphasizes the prevalence of and increased vulnerability to victimization for females and children, identifying the primary risk-associated variables as age (Clark, 2003; Demir & Finckenauer, 2010; Omorodion, 2009; Silverman et al., 2007) and gender (Askola, 2007; Clark, 2003; Lansink, 2006). This is part of the vast number of sources which investigate the characteristics and risk factors associated

with trafficking victimization, including those that study sex trafficking specifically (Askola, 2007; Demir & Finckenauer, 2010; Omorodion, 2009; Ray, 2015; Silverman et al., 2007; Simkhada, 2008). Askola (2007) lays the foundation for female victimization, in particular, with a discussion on gendered conditions as root causes of vulnerability and exploitation. Such conditions involve the socioeconomics of women, such as poverty, which is the most referenced in the literature (Chuang, 2006; Clark, 2003; Demir & Finckenauer, 2010; Lansink, 2006; Omorodion, 2009; Ray, 2015; Silverman et al., 2007; Simkhada, 2008). The literature also finds that traditional gendered norms and gender-based violence (GBV) contribute to vulnerability to trafficking (Clark, 2003; Ray, 2015; Simkhada, 2008). Further research finds that other personal characteristics also increase women's risk. For example, females who are single and never married are more likely to be victims of sex trafficking (Demir & Finckenauer,

2010; Silverman et al., 2007). However, this literature neglects to analyze the connection between these variables and travelling alone. Hynes (2010) associates movement with risk, especially for those traveling alone. Although this reference is limited to children, other discussions bridge the gap to females. According to Babatunde (2014), Clark (2003), and Ray (2015), conflict, displacement, and forced migration are linked to women's vulnerability to trafficking. For Yousaf (2018), it is the movement of persons within the forced migration context that increases insecurity and amplifies vulnerability to trafficking.

This association between movement and vulnerability is part of the larger discussion on the migration-trafficking nexus and how it relates to the relationship between human smuggling and human trafficking. While the literature asserts the distinction between human trafficking and smuggling, differentiating the two concepts based on the use of exploitation in

trafficking but not smuggling, it also contends that there is a relationship between the two which often blurs this distinction (Askola, 2007; Gallagher, 2002; Hynes, 2010; Mandic, 2017; McSherry & Kneebone, 2008; Peixoto, 2008; Yousaf, 2018). According to this perspective, despite the sharp boundaries created by their definitions, there is often overlap, since a migrant can initially consent to be smuggled, only to become trafficked when the process becomes exploitative through force, coercion, or deception, whether during the journey or upon arrival to the destination (Askola, 2007; Gallagher, 2002; Hynes, 2010; Mandic, 2017; McSherry & Kneebone, 2008; Peixoto, 2008; Yousaf, 2018). While this view is beneficial since many situations of trafficking begin as smuggling, it neglects trafficking situations that do not begin as such and are therefore separate. Furthermore, the research states that traditional anti-trafficking and anti-immigration policies, which often

implement stricter border control, exasperate the problem, rather than stop migration, smuggling, or trafficking (Askola, 2007; Gallagher, 2002; Hynes, 2010; Peixoto, 2008; Yousaf, 2018). By making migration more difficult and less accessible through regular means of migration, these counterproductive measures increase irregular migration and the demand for smugglers (Askola, 2007; Freedman, 2016; Hynes, 2010; Yousaf, 2018).

Female Refugees and SGBV Literature

Within the fields of forced migration and refugee studies, the human security paradigm is also central. There is an entire body of literature dedicated to the vulnerability of female refugees (Bartolomei, Eckert, Pittaway, 2014; Freedman, 2016; Greatbatch, 1989; Krause, 2015; Kwiringira et al., 2018; Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001; Yazid & Natania, 2017). A gendered discussion on refugees and forced migration developed as a result of the 1951 Refugee Convention's failure to

recognize gender-based persecution and women as a particular social group, leading to feminist critiques such as that of Greatbatch (1989). As a result of such literature, the understanding of the 'refugee' shifted and the field of research on female refugees grew, especially as it relates to their vulnerability and human security. One example of this research is that of Pittaway and Bartolomei (2001), which assesses the gendered character of the refugee experience and the double discrimination that refugee women face when racism and sexism intersect, noting the specific vulnerability of refugee women to human rights violations in comparison to refugee men and the failure of policy to address it. Yazid and Natania (2017) follow this line of discourse, surveying the human rights abuses that refugee women face and calling for targeted policies to address the particular needs of refugee women. It is this call for policies to address the unique needs of refugee women that is why it is of import to understand their

vulnerability to sex trafficking so that policies can be implemented to protect those that have been victimized and prevent further victimization.

Within the discussion on the gendered persecution and needs of refugee women, much attention is given to sexual victimization in particular, with the literature indicating the prevalence of sexual violence, especially rape, against these women (Bartolomei et al., 2014; Freedman, 2016; Krause, 2015; Kwiringira et al., 2018; Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). Despite the importance of this topic, one key form of sexual exploitation is almost missing entirely from the conversation: sex trafficking. The literature only gives limited attention to the sex trafficking of female refugees (Yousaf, 2018), even though it acknowledges trafficking as a form of violence against women (Freedman, 2016; Lansink, 2006). Nevertheless, the larger discussion on sexual violence against refugee women can provide the necessary

context for forming a framework to look at their vulnerability to other forms of sexual exploitation, such as sex trafficking. As part of this larger discussion, a subset of the literature finds that sexual victimization of female refugees occurs at every stage of the refugee's situation, from persecution in their home country pre-migration, through the migration process, and finally to destination settlement (Bartolomei et al., 2014; Freedman, 2016; Krause, 2015; Kwiringira et al., 2018; Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001). Hynes (2010) also reports victimization at every stage of the migration experience but in reference to human trafficking. Despite children being Hynes's (2010) target population, the commonalities between Hynes's research and the above research indicate an important theme: the victimization of vulnerable refugees, whether through violence or trafficking, is not limited to one frame of the refugee experience. Rather, all aspects of the refugee

condition need to be taken into consideration when examining patterns of victimization.

In the examination of the sexual exploitation of female refugees, the research identifies several risk factors (Freedman, 2016; Krause, 2015; Kwiringira et al., 2018; Yazid & Natania, 2017). These risk factors involve every aspect of the refugee condition and forced migration process, thereby maintaining and building upon the previous line of discussion. First, a study finds that previous sexual victimization accounts for future risk (Kwiringira et al., 2018). Regarding socio-demographic considerations, a number are signaled as risk factors and many parallel those that the trafficking research identifies. Those who travel alone or only with children are at a higher risk of being sexually victimized (Bartolomei et al., 2014; Freedman, 2016; Krause, 2015; Yazid & Natania, 2017). Poverty, unequal power relations, and inhibited access to resources are other risk factors that the research acknowledges

(Kwiringira et al., 2018). Additionally, the use of smugglers by refugee women increases their risk of sexual violence and sexual exploitation (Freedman, 2016). Lastly, refugee camps and their conditions are included as risk factors. Overcrowding, lack of proper accommodation, and a lack of resources for the refugees also increase insecurity and risk (Freedman, 2016; Kwiringira et al., 2018). Moreover, lack of monitoring, oversight, and protection at refugee camps increases the risk of female refugees becoming victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) (Krause, 2015; Kwiringira et al., 2018; Yazid & Natania, 2017).

Gap in the Literature

Despite the overwhelming literature on the risk factors for the sex trafficking victimization of children and females in general, there is a gap in the research on one especially vulnerable subset of this population in particular: female refugees. While some of the literature mentions forced

migrants and/or the relationship between forced migration and human trafficking victimization (Clark, 2003; Gallagher, 2002; Hynes, 2010; Mandic, 2017; Ray, 2015; Yousaf, 2018), it mostly only includes a brief mention and it fails to recognize what specific factors of the female refugee situation makes them at risk of sex trafficking victimization. The literature on female refugees and forced migration, which Yousaf (2018) intersects with, fills some of this gap. It goes a step beyond the sex trafficking literature, noting that female refugees are victimized by human traffickers and are among the most vulnerable to trafficking (Freedman, 2016; Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001; Yazid & Natania, 2017; Yousaf, 2018). However, it still fails to ask and answer the question of *why* refugee women are more vulnerable. Therefore, in this research paper I examine which conditions, or risk factors, lead to the sex trafficking victimization of female refugees, in order to fill this gap in the literature.

Methodology

Purpose and Type of Study

An acknowledgment among the literature is that there are empirical limitations to the study of human trafficking, especially due to the fact that most available data and statistics are estimates rather than precise statistics (Askola, 2007; Babatunde, 2014). Reports on human trafficking, which provide such data, acknowledge this issue as well. The IOM report on modern slavery (2017b) indicates the data to be global estimates, and the UNODC (2018b) explains that its statistics exclude undetected victims, or the ‘dark figure’ of human trafficking, which is why estimates are made. Moreover, the case studies in the literature, which provide more precise data, do not account for refugees, specifically. The same is true for the IOM (2017b) and UNODC (2018b) statistics.

Given the lack of data available, the purpose of this paper is one of theory-building, in which I explain the relevance of

my independent variables to the issue of the sex trafficking victimization of female refugees. I use research on sexual violence against refugee women and on sex trafficking as a whole as the correlated data/information to provide evidence for my independent variables. Sex trafficking is categorized by the UNHCR (2003) as a form of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), making the broader literature on SGBV against female refugees relevant to forming a framework to examine the sex trafficking of female refugees, more specifically. Research on sex trafficking victimization as a whole is relevant to refugees in particular because the movement of refugees increasingly follows the same patterns – migration routes, smuggling networks, and destinations – as all migrants, and consequently refugees and general migrants share similar risk factors (Wilson, 2012).

Furthermore, due to lack of data and the purpose as one of theory-building rather

than theory-testing, there are no chosen case studies for the paper. Rather, the following examination of the hypothesized conditions, or risk factors, which contribute to the exploitation of female refugees for sex trafficking is a synthesis of available correlated data from a range of studies, issue reports, and data portals through content or secondary data analysis. The studies included in the following examination are those found in a search of “trafficking,” “sex trafficking,” “sex trafficking and risk factors,” “sex trafficking and vulnerability,” “trafficking for sexual exploitation,” “sexual exploitation,” “sexual violence,” “sexual violence and risk factors,” “female refugees,” “trafficking and female refugees,” “sexual exploitation of female refugees,” and “refugee camp conditions” in online academic databases. Some of the studies included are those in the literature review which include empirical findings from a study directly related to female sex trafficking or the sexual exploitation of

female refugees. Organizations such as Amnesty International, Fafo, IOM, UNHCR, and UNODC work on issues such as human rights, forced migration, and human trafficking. As such, I conducted a search on the same terms and phrases from the literature search, but now within the websites and publications of these organizations. I utilize these sources to examine the following variables and hypotheses.

Variables

The dependent variable in this paper is sex trafficking victimization. Given that this variable is limited in scope to the victimization of female refugees, it is measured as a female who fled from persecution in her home country and has been recruited, transported, transferred, harbored, or received through the threat or use of force or coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation. This follows the definition of a refugee from the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol,

as well as the definition of trafficking from the Palermo Protocol, both of which are outlined in the introduction above. For this particular discussion, a female will be defined in relation to biological sex and gender, limiting the scope to cisgender women, or those who were born female and identify as female. While this definition is limited and fails to acknowledge transgender women and gender non-conforming women as female, it addresses the fact that the transgender and gender non-conforming population have a unique experience which the following independent variables do not fully account for.

The independent variables follow those found within the literature on sex trafficking and the sexual exploitation of female refugees. While most of the variables are entirely independent variables, some of them are strictly interaction variables, and all of them have some element of interaction in that the more risk factors associated with

an individual, the more vulnerable she is going to be to sex trafficking victimization.

Demographics.

The first set of independent variables relate to the individual demographics of female refugees as risk factors. Within the literature on sex trafficking and the sexual exploitation of female refugees there is much overlap in the demographics found to be risk factors for victimization. It is within this overlap that I determined which independent variables to utilize. The first variable is **age**. It is acknowledged throughout the literature that along with gender, age is one of the most important determinants of vulnerability, with younger females being at greater risk of trafficking. Younger females are usually viewed as being more attractive and thereby more profitable than older females for sex trafficking. Young children who have not reached adolescence, however, have not reached puberty, and therefore are not sexually developed. While there is a market

for young children, those in their teens and early 20s fit the profile of highest profit and use for sex traffickers. Thus, I hypothesize that female refugees who are in their teens and early 20s will be at a greater risk to sex trafficking victimization than those who are in their mid-20s and older.

The second variable is **poverty level**, which is measured by combining a refugee's household income and wealth into one measurement, following Weisbrod and Hansen's (1968) proposed measurement. In order to determine the income-wealth measurement, net worth, or wealth, would be converted into an income flow by translating it into an annuity (Weisbrod & Hansen, 1968). The income-wealth measurement would be the sum of the household's annual income and "the annual lifetime annuity value of its current net worth" (Weisbrod & Hansen, 1968, p. 1316). The annuity value accounts for the net worth as it relates to the head of the household's life expectancy and the rate of

interest (Weisbrod & Hansen, 1968). Incorporating life expectancy into the value acknowledges that the ability for wealth alone to sustain a minimum standard of living depends on the amount of time it must provide for that minimum standard of living. Once calculated, the income-wealth measurement is then compared to the poverty threshold of \$1.90 per day as determined by the World Bank (Cruz, Foster, Quillin, & Schellekens, 2015). Those whose income-wealth measurement is below the poverty threshold are considered impoverished. Poverty is acknowledged among the literature as a gendered condition of vulnerability, which serves as a risk factor to exploitation and victimization. As such, I hypothesize that refugees determined to be below the poverty threshold, and thereby impoverished, are at a higher risk of victimization.

The third variable is **marital status**. An individual's marital status can either be single/never married, divorced or separated,

married, or widowed. My hypothesis is that those who are single are the most at risk to trafficking for sexual exploitation. Marital status is a distinct consideration because of traditional gendered norms and stigmas specifically surrounding a single marital status. The stigma associated with a woman being single contributes to isolation within the refugee population which places her as an easy target for traffickers. This in turn limits the support system of a single female refugee and increases her vulnerability to victimization both along her route of transit and in the destination setting.

Migration conditions.

The second set of independent variables involve the migration process of the female refugees. The first variable is the **use of human smugglers**, whereby smuggling is defined as it is in the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants. I hypothesize that the use of human smugglers by female refugees increases their risk to sex trafficking victimization. I expect this to be

the case because of the close relationship between smuggling and trafficking, whereby the routes of smugglers and traffickers are often the same, and smuggling can easily become trafficking once coercion and/or exploitation is introduced. This relationship between smuggling and further victimization is acknowledged throughout the literature, whereby the use of smugglers increases risk to SGBV and trafficking victimization. As such, I expect the relationship between the use of smugglers and female refugee sex trafficking victimization to be the same.

The second variable is the **level of border control** of the transit countries and/or destination country. This is measured by whether or not there is a physical border in place and the number of immigrants allowed to cross the country's border each day. A country with no physical border and which allows a higher number of immigrants in has the lowest level border control. A country with a low to moderate level of border control would be one which has a

physical border, but which still permits entry to a high number of immigrants. The next level of border control – moderate to high – entails a country having no physical border, but only permitting entry to a few immigrants. Lastly, a country with a physical border and which allows only a few immigrants in has the highest/strictest border control. Border control applies to both the transit countries and the destination country for a refugee, thereby affecting her journey to the destination, which is why it is included in this section. The third variable is the **danger level of the migration route** taken by the refugee. Danger level is measured by the number of migrant deaths reported by the IOM – the higher the number of deaths, the more dangerous the pathway is. My hypothesis is that the stricter the border controls of the destination country are and/or the more dangerous the migration route to that country is, the greater the female refugees' risk to victimization. I hypothesize that this is because the stricter

border controls are and the more dangerous the route is, the more likely the refugee is to utilize the service of smugglers. Thus, these two risk factors relate to the use of smugglers and are therefore strictly interaction variables. In other words, these variables do not *directly* increase an individual's risk for exploitation alone. Rather, level of border control and danger level of the migration route increase a female refugee's potential of utilizing smugglers which in turn increases risk to trafficking victimization.

The fourth and last variable relating to the migration process is who the female refugee is travelling with, or the refugee's **travel companions**. My hypothesis is that those travelling without an accompanying adult companion – those travelling alone or only with children – are at the greatest risk of being trafficked for sexual exploitation. For example, this categorization would include two females under the age of 18 who are travelling together, for they are both

considered children. Such a grouping lacks the protection of an accompanying adult. However, this is not to deny the risk of other travel companion groupings. My hypothesis only serves to highlight who among female refugees should be considered the *most* at risk to sex trafficking victimization. While female refugees travelling without a man but with other women are also at a higher risk of being sex trafficked than a woman travelling with her husband, those who are travelling completely alone or only with children are the easiest targets. Even a group of women can provide a level of protection to one another which an unaccompanied female does not have. Similarly, a woman travelling with only children lacks a protection unit since she is the one looking after the children – a vulnerable population in the refugee context – and not the other way around. It is this lack of a protection unit along the migration route that makes female refugees travelling alone or only with children the most vulnerable to trafficking.

Destination conditions.

Lastly, the third set of independent variables entails the refugees' destination conditions. The first variable is **refugee camp settlement**, whether that be in the first country of entry or final destination. Refugee camp settlement includes staying at least one night within the barriers of a UNHCR-designated camp for individuals fleeing from their home country and determined to be refugees. My hypothesis is that female refugees who settles in a refugee camp are at a higher risk of being sex trafficked than those who do not settle in a refugee camp. The literature acknowledges refugee camps to be sites of exploitation, especially sexual exploitation, for female refugees. More importantly, as explained in the introduction above, findings illustrate a high prevalence of female victimization and exploitation within the camps. Since sex trafficking is a form of sexual exploitation, it follows that refugee camps would serve as a site of sex trafficking victimization, which is

why I hypothesize that female refugees in a camp are at an increased risk. From this, it is important to look at which conditions within refugee camps contribute to risk of victimization. These are strictly interaction variables, for if a refugee does not settle in a refugee camp, the following variables do not increase risk. The next and last two variables only increase risk for female refugees who settle in a refugee camp.

The second variable relating to destination conditions is the **level of monitoring/oversight** within refugee camps. This is measured by the presence of humanitarian workers and/or state authorities within and/or around the camp. State authorities entail local or state police from the country in which the refugee camp is located. A high level of monitoring/oversight entails the presence of both humanitarian workers and state authorities both within and around the camp every day and at all times of the day, with increased patrols at night. This is proper

oversight for a refugee camp. A low level of monitoring/oversight involves the presence of humanitarian workers or state authorities for a limited time frame, and not all day, every day. This constitutes a lack of *proper* oversight. A complete lack of monitoring/oversight would involve the absence of any humanitarian workers and/or state authorities within or around the camp. I hypothesize that a low level or complete lack of monitoring/oversight at the camp increases female refugees' vulnerability to sex trafficking.

The third variable is **proper accommodation**, which involves no overcrowding and the provision of gender-separated latrines and showers within the camp based on the UNHCR (2015) recommendations. Overcrowding is measured by the average camp area per refugee based on the number of refugees present and the size of the camp. The UNHCR (2015) recommends at least 45 square meters per person in a refugee camp.

Hence, if there is less than 45 square meters per refugee in the camp, then the camp will be considered overcrowded. If there is overcrowding in the camp and/or gender-separated latrines, then the camp does not provide refugees with proper accommodation. My hypothesis is that lack of proper accommodation heightens female refugees' risk to sex trafficking victimization. The literature acknowledges these as risk factors for the SGBV victimization of female refugees, and since trafficking is one form of SGBV, I hypothesize that this finding applies to trafficking risk as well. Overcrowding and non-gender-separated latrines decrease physical barriers of protection in place for female refugees. Additionally, overcrowding results in a lack of resources available to refugees, which in turn increases insecurity and vulnerability. This insecurity can lead to female refugees accepting offers of transport, employment, or 'survival sex,' which is often how trafficking begins.

These are the theorized conditions which contribute to female refugees' vulnerability to sex trafficking. While not all of them are strictly interaction variables, all of them do interact to an extent to increase vulnerability. For example, a single, impoverished, 17-year-old female refugee who travels alone along a dangerous route with the help of a smuggler before reaching a refugee camp with poor conditions is at a far greater risk of sex trafficking victimization than a single, 17-year-old female refugee travelling with other women and who does not settle in a refugee camp. While any one of the above conditions can contribute to increased vulnerability, it is the combination of multiple factors which puts a female refugee at the greatest risk. The following section examines each of these factors in depth, explaining their relevance to and role in a theory on the issue of the sex trafficking of female refugees.

Risk Factors: A Theory

Since what the literature does recognize about the connection between trafficking and forced migration is that the very conditions that lead to forced migration also cause trafficking and contribute to vulnerability, this paper will examine the conditions beyond the home country and the initial stage of the refugee condition and forced migration process. The following examination will investigate conditions related to the migration journey and destination of the refugees, since the literature acknowledges that the victimization of female refugees spans all aspects of the refugee condition. In the following, I examine how the refugees' demographics play a role in increasing the risk of trafficking victimization and will begin at this point.

Individual Demographics

Refugees' individual demographics as risk factors transcend all stages of the migration process. This means that the

following variables – age, economic status, and marital status – heighten female refugees' risk to sex trafficking whether that is during their migration journey or once they reach their destination country. These are underlying factors which contribute to this population's vulnerability in flight and in settlement and are therefore crucial to understand first and foremost before looking at the conditions specific to the migration stage and the destination.

Age

As indicated in the literature review, it is widely accepted that age is a risk factor for sex trafficking. This acceptance results from a range of case studies which find data to support age as a risk factor. For example, a case study on sex trafficking victims in India illustrates the relevance of age as a source of vulnerability to victimization (Silverman et al., 2007). India serves as a pertinent case study because it is a major destination country for sex trafficking (Silverman et al., 2007; Simkhada, 2008).

As such, the findings in this study demonstrate the significance of age as a condition of vulnerability to trafficking. Of 160 victims identified, ranging in age from 8 to 29 years old, only 8.8% were older than 21 at the time of trafficking, while 72.5% were 20 years old or younger, and the ages of 18.8% were unknown (Silverman et al., 2007).

Although it is clear that age is a necessary consideration for understanding vulnerability to trafficking, it is important to explain why this variable applies to female refugees, especially. While there are not specific studies on the age of female refugees and trafficking victimization, there are available case studies on sex trafficking in general which correspond to refugee destinations such as Turkey (Demir & Finckenauer, 2010). In 2018, Turkey hosted 3.7 million of the total 25.9 million refugees, which is the largest number of refugees hosted by any country (UNHCR, 2019a). With such a large number of refugees within

its borders, a sex trafficking case study in Turkey is both applicable and important to understanding how the age variable might affect the refugee population. According to Demir and Finckenauer's (2010) findings, although victims' ages range from 16 to 49 years old, 64.7% of the 430 interviewed female victims of sex trafficking were younger than 26. In both case studies (Demir & Finckenauer, 2010; Silverman et al., 2007), the majority of the victims in each case do not exceed their mid-20s. Thus, age is a demographic that cannot be ignored when assessing vulnerability to trafficking victimization, especially in the case of the refugee population since almost half of all refugees are those under the age of 18 years old (UNHCR, 2019a). Similarly, international organizations such as the European Union, UNHCR, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), and Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) support these findings by recognizing that adolescent girls are among the most vulnerable of female

refugees and require greater protections (Yazid & Natania, 2017). In applying all of the above the findings to the refugee population, it would follow that those refugees who are in their teens and early 20s are most at risk for sex trafficking victimization.

Poverty Level

Poverty is yet another variable generally accepted among the literature to be a risk factor to sex trafficking victimization. Poverty disproportionately affects females globally, with women and their children constituting 70% of the world's poor population (Clark, 2003; Demir, 2003). According to Clark (2003), traffickers target vulnerable populations and exploit conditions of poverty and forced migration. Moreover, Ray (2015) notes that it is the intersection of multiple factors such as poverty and conflict which make women more vulnerability to sex trafficking. This makes economic status relevant to the refugee population since poverty exasperates

the already vulnerable status of forced migrants. Those who are poor, especially those like refugees who have no other choice but to flee their home country, are in desperate situation and it is this desperation that traffickers target and that place poor refugee women at heightened risk.

In regard to sex trafficking victims, 63 of 77 survivor-victims of trafficking in India reported poverty to be a root cause of their victimization and anti-trafficking personnel and NGOs further instilled this conception (Ray, 2015). Poverty increases risk to sex trafficking through individuals' inability to pay a debt which forces them into debt bondage. Debt bondage is both one of the main ways through which human smuggling turns into human trafficking (Askola, 2007) and one of the main mechanisms of trafficking, in which the victims becomes indebted to the trafficker (McSherry & Kneebone, 2008). For example, Syrian refugee women describe instances whereby smugglers pressured

them into ‘transactional sex’ or ‘survival sex’ to pay for their journey when they did not have enough money requested by the smugglers (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2019; Freedman, 2016). According to Brunovskis and Surtees (2017), this constitutes human trafficking. Such can also lead to women being forced into sex work to pay their ‘debt’ upon arrival to their destination country, which one woman by the name of Suki was forced to do (McSherry & Kneebone, 2008). This also applies to the experience in refugee camps, in which refugee women are often forced to sell themselves whether through trafficking or ‘survival sex’ in order to earn money to buy food and medicine (Bartolomei et al., 2014; Brunovskis & Surtees, 2019).

Marital Status

Demir and Finckenauer’s (2010) sex trafficking research in Turkey also provides context for the relevance of marital status as a risk factor. According to their findings, 56.8% of the 430 interviewed victims were

single, 30.9% were divorced, and 2.6% were widowed, while 8.0% were married (Demir & Finckenauer, 2010). Only 1 of the 430 subjects of this study was a national of Turkey, while the rest were foreigners of thirteen different nationalities trafficked to Turkey. Thus, these findings are not skewed by the demographics of Turkey’s society as a whole, thereby illustrating the relevance of marital status in patterns of trafficking victimization. Similar to the findings in Turkey, in India 53.8% of the 160 identified victims were single and 1.9% were widowed (Silverman et al., 2007). However, in this study only 3.8% were found to be divorced and 31.1% were married. Nevertheless, given that the majority of victims were single at the time of victimization in both case studies, it is clear that marital status, especially in regard to being single, is a relevant risk factor that needs to be explored.

This is supported by the research on the sexual and gender-based violence

(SGBV) victimization of refugee women. Interviewed refugee women in Australia acknowledge the heightened risk of single women and widows to sexual abuse and harassment, rape, and forced marriage, and report frequent targeting and experiences of such SGBV (Bartolomei et al., 2014). According to these women, they are targeted because single women are often isolated due to the stigma surrounding such a marital status and because it is known that they are alone, which makes them an easy target (Bartolomei et al., 2014). It is believed that single refugee women are the most vulnerable due to their poor economic status, lack of professional skills, and lack of family support (Yazid & Natania, 2017). International organizations such as the EU, UNHCR, UNFPA, and WRC also recognize that single women, whether travelling alone or with children, are among the most vulnerable of female refugees and require greater protections (Yazid & Natania, 2017). Thus, marital status is also relevant to the

variable of travel companions which will be discussed in the following section. Female refugees that are single, divorced, or widowed are more likely to be travelling alone or only with children.

Migration Conditions

The migration routes taken by refugee women are sites of exploitation. Traffickers, like smugglers, are common along these forced migration pathways, such as the Balkan route (Mandic, 2017), often transporting women along paths through conflict regions (Ray, 2015). In addition, research indicates a high prevalence of SGBV, including sexual assault, abuse, rape, and abduction experienced by refugee women during flight (Krause, 2015; Freedman, 2016). This violence is experienced at the hands of a number of sources, including the smugglers that transport them in this stage of migration (Freedman, 2016). Lastly, Brunovskis and Surtees (2017) identify trafficking

occurrences *en route*, or during this migration journey of refugees.

Use of Smugglers

Although the exact number of smuggled migrants and refugees is unknown, it is recognized that migrants and refugees often use the help of smugglers to complete their journey (IOM, 2017b; Mandic, 2017). As Yousaf (2018) explains, for refugees, “seeking help of smugglers to cross international borders might seem the only option to flee violence” (p. 212). For example, many refugees from Eritrea and Ethiopia utilize smugglers to facilitate their movement out of their home countries to host countries around the region (Amnesty International, 2013). While the relationship between refugees and smugglers is often positive and does not entail exploitation (Mandic, 2017), the use of smugglers increases the risk to exploitation and trafficking. For example, research on SGBV experienced by female refugees includes multiple reports of female refugees

experiencing rape and assault by smugglers and being coerced into paying for their journey with sex (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2019; Freedman, 2016). This victimization by smugglers is found to be a factor that increases the risk to refugee trafficking (Wilson, 2012). Due to the close connection between smuggling and trafficking networks, smuggling may become trafficking through the use of debt bondage, threats, and/or violence to coerce them into forced prostitution upon arrival at their destination (Askola, 2007; Yousaf, 2018). For example, there are a number of reports of refugees from Eritrea and Ethiopia eventually being sold to traffickers and extorted by the smugglers that they paid for transport (Amnesty International, 2013). In all, the use of smugglers by female refugees is likely to increase the risk to sex trafficking victimization and should therefore be a consideration in understanding their vulnerability.

Danger Level of Pathway

The Balkan Route is a common route for refugees, especially for those from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, but it is also known to be a deadly route (UNHCR, 2019b). It runs from the Middle East to the European Union through Turkey to Greece by sea, and then through the Balkan States by land (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2017; Brunovskis & Surtees, 2019). Travelling by sea from Turkey to Greece requires these refugees to cross the Mediterranean, which has accounted for at least 14,500 migrant deaths from 2014 to 2017, with the rate of death of migrants crossing at 2.1% in the first six months of 2017 (IOM, 2017a). Thus, it is historically a dangerous route. It also continues to contribute to migrant deaths today. As of October 2019, there has been 71 migrant deaths along the Eastern Mediterranean route, which includes travel from Turkey to Greece (IOM, 2019). Moreover, those who survive the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean still face

dangers on the journey by land through Europe. Between January and June of 2017, 21 deaths were recorded along the Balkan land route in Europe, which is an increase from 12 in 2016 (IOM, 2019a). According to the IOM (2019a), this indicates that conditions are more dangerous since the number of deaths increased despite a decrease in the number of migrants travelling on this route.

For routes such as the Balkan Route, the use of smugglers by refugees is common. Transnational human smugglers transported over a million migrants along this route in just an 18-month period (Mandic, 2017). Also, the Balkan Route requires the passage through multiple border crossings, and as Mandic (2017) notes, each new border crossing requires the refugees to utilize new smugglers. Thus, the more dangerous and complex the pathway, the more reliance there is on smugglers to assist refugees on their journey, increasing the risk of being trafficked.

More importantly, the Balkan Route is understood by organizations such as the Budapest Group to be the most prominent route used by organized crime networks for acts such as smuggling and trafficking (Morrison & Crosland, 2001). The Eastern Mediterranean route, which is the sea portion of the Balkan Route, is acknowledged by the UNODC as a popular site for smuggling in recent times, as well (2018a). In 2015, there were “more than 850,000 irregular border crossings; making the Eastern Mediterranean route the main entry point to Europe for irregular migrants and refugees” (UNODC, 2018a, p. 151). According to Europol, more than 90% of irregular migrants are smuggled along their journey to Europe (UNODC, 2018a). This would mean that approximately 765,000 migrants and refugees were smuggled along the Eastern Mediterranean route in 2015. While the number of irregular border crossings dropped to just over 182,000 in 2016, this amount was still higher than the

other two main smuggling routes to Europe: Central Mediterranean and Western Mediterranean (UNODC, 2018a). Furthermore, 7% of the 2,385 migrants and refugees who responded to a 2015-2016 IOM survey experienced trafficking or another form of exploitation while travelling along the Eastern Mediterranean route (UNODC, 2018a). This illustrates that smugglers and traffickers still utilize the Balkan Route.

Additionally, both the European Union and the Balkan states themselves are destinations for trafficking in women (Morrison & Crosland, 2001). These states are located within Western and Southern Europe and Central and Southeastern Europe. In 2016, the main forms of exploitation and profiles of detected victims in the regions of Central and Southeastern Europe, and Western and Southern Europe are females trafficked for sexual exploitation (UNODC, 2018b). These regions encompass the transit and destination countries of the

Balkan Route. Lastly, there are reports of trafficking for sexual exploitation and cases of refugees being forced into prostitution in countries along the route (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2017). Hence, this route is not only a common journey for refugees and a dangerous pathway, but also a site connected to sex trafficking. As such, the Balkan Route serves as an applicable case study for explaining the relevance of the danger level of the pathway as a risk factor.

Level of Border Control

As illustrated in the literature review, it is widely acknowledged by the literature that greater border control increases the need for smugglers. This variable is important to include because most transit and destination countries, especially in Europe, have implemented policies to increase border control and reduce migration (Askola, 2007). Such policies and the subsequent border closings alter the available migration routes open to refugees, limiting safe and legal routes for refugees to enter their

destination countries, and forcing them to find new ones (Freedman, 2016). This in turn leads to dangerous journeys and the use of smugglers, both of which are relevant risk factors to trafficking as illustrated in the preceding sections. Closing borders does not successfully stop migration but it does increase migrants' demand for smugglers in order to circumvent the new policies and closures (Askola, 2007; Freedman, 2016; Gallagher, 2002). The implementation of stricter border controls thereby increases migrants' vulnerability to trafficking victimization (Chuang, 2006).

The Balkan Route again serves as an example to exhibit the relevance of the level of border control as the tightening of border control among transit and destination countries in 2015 and especially in March 2016 increased experiences of trafficking. For instance, Croatian border restrictions forced refugees and migrants to go on uncertain, less travelled paths to avoid pushback at the border (Amnesty

International, 2019). Stricter border controls such as this can increase the danger level of the Balkan Route (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2019; Mandic, 2017). This in turn increases the need for and cost of smugglers. The heightening of border controls led to an increased cost of about 33% in the services of smugglers to facilitate refugee movement along the Balkan Route due to the fact that the journey became riskier (Mandic, 2017). This increased cost increases debt to smugglers, thereby heightening the risk of trafficking victimization through debt bondage and forced transactional sex, as explained in the section on economic status. Mandic's (2017) findings support this since refugees reported instances of trafficking to pay off debt to smugglers, and refugee experiences of human trafficking were more common following the Balkan Route closure. Therefore, the level of border control along a female refugee's route is a relevant risk factor for sex trafficking victimization.

Travel Companions

Who a female refugee is travelling with is an important consideration in determining her vulnerability to sex trafficking victimization. As Freedman (2016) and Krause (2015) reveal, refugee women who are travelling alone or only with children are particularly vulnerable to SGBV and exploitation along their journey. The EU, UNHCR, UNFPA, and WRC also view women travelling alone or with children, and children travelling alone to be among the most vulnerable of refugee women (Yazid & Natania, 2017). One woman interviewed for Freedman's study explained that as a widowed woman alone with no husband and travelling with two children, she faced increased insecurity on top of those that she faced as a forced migrant fleeing from war at home (Freedman, 2016). These women who are travelling without any travel companions or with only children are at the greatest risk for SGBV victimization because they are

viewed as easy targets (Bartolomei et al., 2014). While this does not apply directly to trafficking victimization, given that sex trafficking is considered a form of SGBV, it still exhibits the relevance of travel companions as a factor for considering the vulnerability of refugee women to sexual exploitation.

This factor is important because there has been an increase in the number unaccompanied migrant women (Demir, 2003). This is also the case with refugees in particular. According to a UNHCR representative interviewed for Freedman's (2016) research, a larger number of refugee women are travelling alone or only with children.

Destination Conditions

Whether exploited or not along the journey to the refugees' destination countries, female refugees still face risks of exploitation once they arrive to their destination. Destination countries are a site of vulnerability to both SGBV and sex

trafficking victimization. For example, one study finds female migrants and refugees to be vulnerable to SGBV upon arrival to the European Union (Freedman, 2016). Similarly, in Australia, which is one destination country, some refugee women "experience further risks and ongoing human rights abuses, including gender related violence" (Bartolomei et al., 2014, p. 49). Moreover, Brunovskis and Surtees (2017) identify occurrences of trafficking upon arrival in formal refugee settings like refugee camps.

Refugee Camp Settlement

While refugees' destinations as a whole serve as sites of exploitation, refugee camps within those countries are a place of increased vulnerability for female refugees. Refugee camps are the most common forms of settlements for refugees (Krause, 2015). This makes it all the more important to look at the risk factors associated with refugee camps. Living within a refugee camp makes refugee women particularly vulnerable

(Bartolomei et al., 2014; Yazid & Natania, 2017). According to both refugees and aid workers, there is a high rate of SGBV that occurs within the camps (Krause, 2015). In 2013 there were 37 cases of sexual assault and rape, and 120 cases of physical assault and denial of resources in Uganda's Kyaka II camp (Krause, 2015). In the same camp, there were 38 reported cases of SGBV from January to March of 2014 (Krause, 2015). However, these statistics do not account for unreported instances, and as interviewees indicate, many victims do not report assaults, so the actual number of cases of SGBV is likely to be much higher (Krause, 2015). One official notes that rape is so common within the camps that most of the female refugees in camps could be resettled under the Women at Risk (WaR) program, which targets those at risk of SGBV in refugee camps (Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001).

More importantly, refugee camps are not only sites of rampant sexual violence

against women but are also "hunting grounds for traffickers" (Ray, 2015, p. 308). One example which illustrates refugee camps as a site of trafficking victimization is the trafficking of refugees from the Shagarab Refugee Camps in Sudan to the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, with many of the victims being younger women (Amnesty International, 2013). Sex trafficking victimization within camps is likely given the high rates of sexual violence, the existence of general human trafficking in this setting, and, as Freedman (2016) notes, the existence of sex worker networks within camps.

Refugee Camp Oversight

Inadequate monitoring, protection, and security is identified as a factor contributing to the risk and vulnerability to trafficking within refugee camps (Brunovskis & Surtees, 2017). Such inadequate monitoring includes insufficient law enforcement and limited protections, which increases risk to SGBV victimization

(Krause, 2015). The law enforcement and protections come from humanitarian workers and state authorities, such as local police, who patrol the camp. Often times, the humanitarian workers are UNHCR staff members. This is relevant because at large accommodation centers like refugee camps throughout Europe, it is common for there to be minimal oversight and support (UNHCR, 2019b). This expands beyond Europe, too. For the Shagarab Refugee Camp trafficking example, Amnesty International acknowledges lack of oversight and proper protection of the refugees as a contributing factor (2013). According to the Amnesty International report on the issue (2013), the refugees within the Shagarab Refugee Camps do not feel protected within the camp, an increased amount of Sudanese authorities were not sent to the camp until violence sparked between refugees within the camp and local tribes, and there is no mention of any other oversight besides that of the Sudanese authorities.

Refugee Camp Accommodation

Overcrowding and the lack of adequate gender separation of latrines and showers within refugee camps create conditions of inadequate and improper accommodation, which in turn exasperates the vulnerability of female refugees to SGBV, including sex trafficking. In the European refugee camps of study in Freedman's (2016) research, it is lack of proper accommodation that forms situations of insecurity for the female refugees. This poor accommodation includes the sharing of facilities such as wash rooms between men and women, which increases female refugees' vulnerability to SGBV (Freedman, 2016). Moreover, one risk assessment reveals female refugees to be at a heightened risk to SGBV due to overcrowding, lack of access to resources, close proximity of male and female showers and latrines, and insufficient lighting (Kwiringira et al., 2018). The variable of overcrowding is relevant because in Greece – a major transit

country for refugees – refugee camps are often overcrowded. For instance, in one refugee camp in Greece there are approximately 12,000 refugees despite only being planned to host 2,500 (Yazid & Natania, 2017). In addition, there is severe overcrowding on Samos, which is one of the Greek islands used for sheltering refugees (UNHCR, 2019b). Within the center on this island there is double the intended capacity of refugees (UNHCR, 2018). Such overcrowding contributes to victimization, with approximately 174 refugee survivors of SGBV reporting experiencing SGBV after arrival in Greece (UNHCR, 2018).

Discussion

The larger data limitations associated with answering the question of what conditions contribute to the vulnerability of female refugees to human sex trafficking victimization includes the limited research on the sex trafficking of female refugees specifically, and the difficulty with accessing the target subject population given

the underground nature of trafficking. In addition to these larger limitations, I also had personal limitations for conducting research, including the lack of proper funds and time to conduct a study in order to gather data to answer the research question. Given these limitations, I could not test my hypotheses, and as such, the sole purpose of this paper was to create a theoretical framework for answering the research question. From this established framework, the next step for future research is to re-approach this question, following the theory outlined here, but with the purpose of collecting data on refugees in order to detect female refugees who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation and what factors contributed to their victimization. An interview or survey study of female refugees in a refugee camp along the Balkan Route could provide beneficial data on their age, economic status, marital status, and whether or not they were/are victims of sex trafficking. In determining whether an

individual was/is a victim of sex trafficking, it is important to ask questions that do not explicitly ask whether the individual is a victim of trafficking since current victims of trafficking might not answer truthfully. However, due to the underground nature of sex trafficking, the data from a refugee camp would still be limited, especially if the victims of sex trafficking did not end up back at a refugee camp. Thus, it would be important to add another level to the study by perhaps questioning females found at brothels within major cities along the Balkan Route. This would mirror the study conducted at the refugee camp, albeit with the addition of a question aimed at determining whether an individual at the brothel could be designated as a refugee.

In addition, since most detected victims are found within their country of origin (UNODC, 2018b), female internally displaced persons (IDPs) could be just as vulnerable as female refugees, if not more so. Research on the vulnerability of female

IDPs to sex trafficking and the conditions that contribute to such vulnerability is therefore an important discussion for future research, as well. These are just two points for further discussion on sex trafficking and forced migration, but the possibilities for future research are endless.

Given that the UNHCR is tasked with the protection of refugees and IDPs, the organization should put more emphasis on studies such as the ones I outlined here with the aim of reducing the vulnerability of refugees and IDPs. Studies on the sex trafficking victimization of these vulnerable populations could result in updated recommendations for the UNHCR, especially as it relates to refugee camps. For example, if there is concrete data to back up the hypotheses that lack of proper accommodation and oversight increase risk to sex trafficking victimization, then perhaps the UNHCR would alter their recommendations for and enforcement of accommodation and oversight policies at

camps. Changes made at the refugee camps could then decrease the conditions of vulnerability there, thereby reducing the occurrence of sex trafficking victimization at that particular site.

Conclusion

Female victims of sex trafficking make up 62% of all human trafficking victims, which is the highest percentage other than male victims of trafficking for forced labor at 22% (UNODC, 2018b). Furthermore, there are approximately 12.4 million female refugees worldwide (UNHCR, 2019a). It is this prevalence of female sex trafficking victimization and female refugees as a global population, especially in relation to the status of female refugees as a vulnerable population, that makes the question of what conditions and risk factors contribute to vulnerability of female refugees to sex trafficking victimization an important and relevant one to ask.

Upon finding patterns among the literature on sex trafficking and the sexual exploitation of female refugees, I establish a model for examining risk factors to the sex trafficking victimization of female refugees. This model follows the conception that victimization occurs at each stage of the migration process and as such, conditions of vulnerability related to each stage need to be assessed. Additionally, this paper acknowledges that underlying demographics such as age, economic status, and marital status heighten one's risk to victimization, subsequently examining demographic as a contributing factor to the vulnerability of female refugees. Once these factors are established as pertinent to answering the research question, the paper then looks more closely at the conditions of vulnerability specific to the migration journey and arrival/settlement in the destination country. The conditions associated with the migration journey which this paper examines include the use of smugglers, the danger level of the

migration route, the level of border control at the destination, and who the refugee is travelling with. As for the destination conditions, this paper first establishes refugee camps as sites of increased vulnerability, and then I examine two variables relating to refugee camps – oversight and accommodation. Utilizing related studies and data on female sex trafficking in general and the sexual exploitation of female refugees more specifically, the relevance of each independent variable is explained, thereby establishing a theoretical framework to base future research on.

In this theory-building paper, I weaved together multiple fields of study and risk factor models in order to create this unique framework which follows a holistic, human security approach and which focuses explicitly on the female refugee population in relation to sex trafficking. This bridges the gap in the literature relating to the sex

trafficking of female refugees and the risk factors associated with it. Doing so is meant to bring attention to the issue and address the need to prevent such victimization by looking at *why* female refugees might fall victim to human sex trafficking. The goal of this is to then alter current policies and practices and implement new ones which tackle the factors found to contribute to the vulnerability of female refugees to sex trafficking victimization. This framework is useful both for answering an unanswered question and for achieving the goal of policy change. Moreover, it should be followed because it addresses both underlying demographics and conditions throughout the migration process, which gives a fuller picture of risk and vulnerability than other frameworks. It also acknowledges the unique risk factors associated with the refugee experience that general sex trafficking victimization frameworks neglect.

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