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Trafficking in human beings in Spain: What do the data on detected victims tell us?

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Abstract

Although trafficking in human beings was criminalized in Spain in 2010, data on this phenomenon are scarce and incomplete, consisting only of cases formally identified by police as having a very clear bias to trafficking for sexual exploitation. In an effort to increase empirical understanding, in 2019 we undertook quantitative research by gathering information on cases detected during 2017 and 2018. A questionnaire was distributed online to 757 stakeholders who could potentially have come across victims of trafficking. The 150 responses obtained provide valuable information about the number of victims, their profile, the dynamics of trafficking and the types of exploitation they suffered. The number of victims detected during the research period ($n = 7448$) is far higher than those officially identified ($n = 458$), which indicates that official cases may represent only the tip of the iceberg and point to the necessity of adopting measures to improve the identification system. Findings also show differences in victims' profiles, victimization dynamics and forms of exploitation depending on the type of trafficking that could be taken into account when designing intervention and prevention programmes in this matter.

Keywords

Detected victims, forms of exploitation, trafficking dynamics, trafficking in human beings, victims' profile

Introduction

The real incidence of trafficking in human beings (THB) is still largely unknown. Originally associated with organized crime, THB was criminalized in most western countries in keeping with the mandate of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish

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Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000. In Europe, this commitment was renewed through the adoption of the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking and Directive 2011/36/EU. In accordance with the internationally accepted legal concept, THB refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over those persons, using means – except when the victim is a minor – comprising coercive, fraudulent or abusive trafficking provided that these conducts are undertaken for the purpose of exploiting the victims.

Although THB gained legislative attention two decades ago, obtaining reliable quantitative data on it remains a challenge. Scholars were quick to highlight the difficulty of measuring and quantifying it (Aromaa, 2007; Di Nicola, 2007; Kangaspunta, 2007; Laczko, 2005; Tyldum and Brunovskis, 2005; Weiner and Hala, 2008; Winterdyk and Reichel, 2010; Zhang, 2007). Even today the lack of standardized mechanisms for collecting data on THB is harshly criticized in the specialist literature (Cruyff et al., 2017; Farrell and De Vries, 2020) and by various bodies that regularly report on this phenomenon (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018; Eurostat, 2013, 2014, 2015; Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings [GRETA], 2020; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2018). The insufficiency of the data is due, in part, to the challenges that all researchers face when addressing this phenomenon, including those involved in distinguishing the concept of THB from others with which it has been associated, such as prostitution, migrant smuggling or slavery (Bales, 2017; Farrell and De Vries, 2020; Tyldum et al., 2005). It is also due to the hidden nature of the problem as a criminal phenomenon with a potentially high dark figure (Bales et al., 2015; Cho, 2015). Although this is true of all criminal processes, in this case, the hidden nature is accentuated by certain particularities: a lack of training enabling professionals to identify victims (Farrell et al., 2010; Macy and Graham, 2012; Villacampa and Torres, 2017; Wilson et al., 2006) and the difficulties victims have in recognizing themselves as such (Farrell and De Vries, 2020; Van Meeteren and Hiah, 2020; Villacampa and Torres, 2015) because they are often labelled as ‘illegal migrants’ instead (Dwyer et al., 2011; Van Meeteren and Wiering, 2019).

This scarcity of reliable quantitative data is compounded by the fact that those obtained are heavily oriented towards measuring trafficking for sexual exploitation, which is often identified with prostitution, leaving aside other forms of THB, such as labour trafficking, which can be even more prevalent (Defensor del Pueblo, 2012; Home Office, 2007; Kaye et al., 2014; Laczko, 2005; Ricard-Guay and Hanley, 2020; Tyldum and Brunovskis, 2005; Weitzer, 2014). Additionally, in the data compiled to date, more attention is paid to female victims, such that THB processes affecting men and minors are frequently left out of empirical analyses (Herbert, 2016; Ricard-Guay and Hanley, 2020; Weitzer, 2012). Furthermore, although there is a significant body of THB case studies, conducted mainly in Europe and North America, most use qualitative methodologies (Cockbain et al., 2018). The shortcomings in the existing quantitative data have prompted some authors to conclude that the available data are not very robust, have been acquired in a methodologically opaque way and overwhelmingly focus on the sexual

exploitation of victims (Andrees and Van der Linden, 2005; Cockbain et al., 2018; Cockbain and Bowers, 2019; Gozdziak and Bump, 2008).

Progress is being made on the collection of reliable quantitative data, especially at the European level, as evidenced by the publication of four comprehensive statistical reports in Europe (Eurostat, 2013, 2014, 2015; European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018), as well as the appointment of national rapporteurs to report on the scale and nature of THB in countries such as the Netherlands (2000) or the UK and Finland (2009). Nevertheless, various analysts of the phenomenon maintain that the collection of comparable quantitative data on victims that go beyond their age, gender or nationality remains an unresolved issue (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018; GRETA, 2020).

In addition to the opacity and bias of the official data, it must be borne in mind that the figures on victims of slavery and forced labour – common purposes in THB processes – estimated using proven methodologies such as those of the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2017) are one thing and the number of people identified through the criminal justice system as THB victims is quite another. Whereas according to the latest ILO estimate (ILO, 2017) around 40 million people in the world are victims of modern slavery, the number of identified THB victims appearing in the system is substantially lower (a total of around 11,500 annually identified victims; UNODC, 2018).

This mediocre situation with regard to the collection of reliable quantitative data at the international level is no better in Spain, where the present case study was conducted. The Spanish approach to THB has largely focused on its criminalization, neglecting the prevention of this phenomenon and victim protection. The crime of THB was introduced in the Spanish Criminal Code in 2010, definitively dissociating its prosecution from that of the smuggling of migrants, and reformed in 2015 to criminalize the use of certain abusive means, as well as to include THB for criminal exploitation and to force victims to marry amongst the possible purposes of trafficking behaviours. More recently, the 2017 Spanish State Pact on Gender Violence included the passage of a comprehensive and multidisciplinary law to combat only sex trafficking amongst the measures to be adopted by the end of 2022.

The available data in Spain focus almost exclusively on THB for sexual exploitation (Defensor del Pueblo, 2012; GRETA, 2018; Giménez-Salinas et al., 2009; Villacampa and Torres, 2015), although increasing efforts have been made to avoid this bias in recent years. The body responsible for quantifying THB victims and reporting that information to the European Union for the preparation of the statistics published to date is the Intelligence Center for Counter-terrorism and Organized Crime (Centro de Inteligencia contra el Terrorismo y el Crimen Organizado: CITCO). In addition to the data collected annually by the Public Prosecutor's Office (Fiscalía General del Estado: FGE) on investigative proceedings conducted for this crime since 2012 (FGE, 2019), CITCO is the Interior Ministry body responsible for centralizing the collection of police data relating to identified victims. It has collected quantitative data on sex trafficking since 2012, but not on other forms of trafficking until 2015 and 2016. The information it has compiled so far (CITCO, 2018, 2019) refers solely to victims formally identified by the police and includes only their gender, age, nationality and the Spanish region in which they were identified by type of trafficking suffered.

Such data are clearly insufficient to acquire a deep understanding of this phenomenon, not only because they are supplied exclusively by police sources, but also because they fail to provide information about other personal characteristics of the victims, how they are recruited, the dynamics used depending on the type of trafficking, or the different activities in which the victims are exploited. These are precisely the data that need to be collected to gain more quantitative information about victims (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018; GRETA, 2020) and they are what the case study presented here aimed to gather. Unlike most research carried out to date – based on qualitative research methods, focused on specific types of trafficking and normally not designed to measure the extent of THB at a national level – we obtained quantitative information on this phenomenon from primary sources, in particular from a victimization survey conducted through a variety of bodies.

Objectives

The present case study was undertaken to increase the quantitative knowledge available about THB in Spain. It aimed to include all victims detected by professionals who might have come into contact with them – police station staff, border police, labour inspectors, unions, healthcare workers and organizations that provide assistance to victims of crime and to migrants, amongst others – in the two years prior to the start of the research, that is, 2017 and 2018.

This approach was intended to be more comprehensive than those used to date in Spain, both because it was not limited to formally identified victims and because the goal was to obtain quantitative data that would make it possible to operate on a more advanced statistical level than the merely descriptive one used in most THB studies carried out to date (Cockbain et al., 2018; Cockbain and Bowers, 2019; Laczko, 2005). Data from the two-year period 2017–18 were used because the Spanish government had already provided the data up to 2016 used by the European Commission to prepare the most recent European statistical report. The aim of this general approach, involving all victims detected by the system in 2017 and 2018 in order to increase quantitative knowledge of THB, was four-fold: (1) to quantify the THB victims detected in this period and determine the degree to which they overlap with those formally identified; (2) to determine the victims' personal characteristics depending on the type of THB to which they were subjected; (3) to establish the different means used, depending on the type of THB suffered; and, finally, (4) to learn how victims are exploited in each type of THB.

Method

Given the difficulty of directly accessing THB victims to collect quantitative information, a database was built containing 757 professional bodies, units or organizations (BUOs) that might have had contact with them. The database was created using a purposive sampling system based on existing BUO databases that had been used in previous research conducted by group members on related topics (Villacampa and Torres, 2017, 2020). The original list was supplemented through a web crawl that made it possible to add bodies not in the initial databases, including some victim service providers

and certain agencies belonging to state law enforcement bodies, as well as unions, labour inspectors and healthcare professionals.

Next, an online questionnaire was developed and pilot tested with 15 respondents who had previous knowledge of THB. Following some adjustments to the first version of the questionnaire to avoid misunderstandings, the definitive version was sent to the 757 members of the invited sample, once they had been contacted by phone and email to explain the content of the research. The data collection instrument, which was approved by the University of Lleida Research Ethics Committee, consisted of a questionnaire developed with Google Forms. Because the case study sought to replicate in Spain the statistical analyses carried out at the European level, for its design we mainly considered the information on victims of each type of trafficking contained in these statistical reports (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018; Eurostat, 2013, 2014, 2015). These questions were supplemented with others about the responding BUO and the dynamics of the different types of trafficking.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first consisted of general questions, not based on a previous model, about the characteristics of the body, referring to its area of action and to whether it had detected THB victims in the period under study. The second, completed only by those BUOs that reported having detected victims and developed based on the aforementioned European statistical reports, consisted of questions about the victims' personal characteristics (gender and age) and the types of THB they had experienced. Finally, in the third part of the questionnaire, also partially based on these European models, respondents were asked to complete up to four individual sections depending on whether their body had detected THB victims for sexual, labour, criminal or other forms of exploitation (forced marriages, organ or blood donations, and forced pregnancies). It contained questions for each of the indicated types of THB concerning the activities for which the victims had been exploited, their nationality, and the dynamics of how the THB had been committed.

The database and questionnaire were developed in the first half of 2019. The data collection stage, consisting of contacting all the bodies in the invited sample, obtaining their consent to participate in the research, and collecting the completed questionnaires, took place in the second half of 2019. Finally, the data were processed in the first quarter of 2020 using the statistical software SPSS (version 26, 2019).

Sample

Although the invited sample consisted of 757 BUOs, the final sample consisted of 150 BUOs (19.82), made up of those bodies that ultimately answered the questionnaire. In addition to the difficulties of obtaining responses to online questionnaires, this difference may be due to the fact that, although the surveys were sent to all the regional offices of those BUOs that had more than one, these BUOs usually returned a single centralized response from their central headquarters.

By geographical region, most BUOs in the sample operated in Catalonia ($n = 84$), followed by Andalusia ($n = 15$), nationwide ($n = 11$), Madrid, the Balearic Islands and Navarre (each with $n = 5$), and Aragon and the Valencian Community (each with $n = 4$) (see Figure 1).

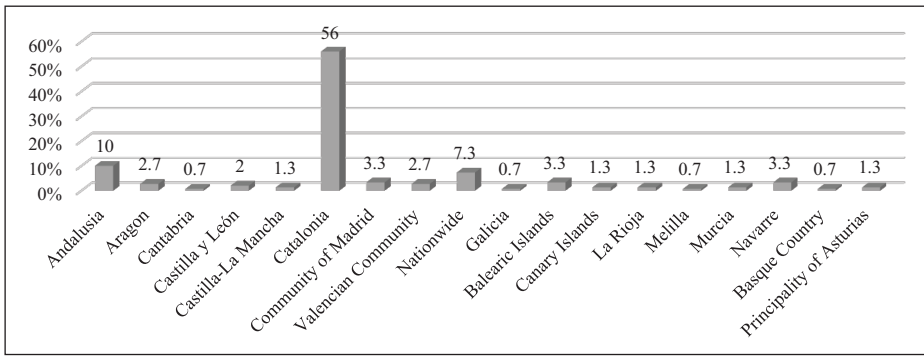


Figure 1. Autonomous community in which the surveyed BUOs operate (percent).

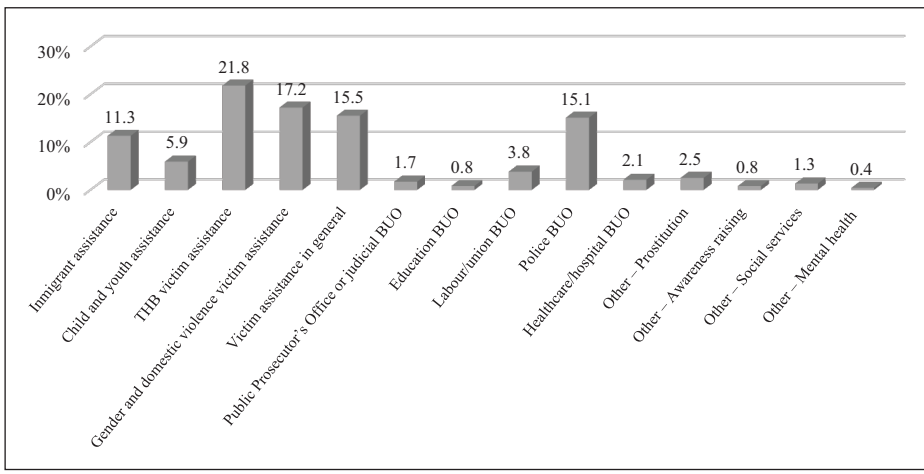


Figure 2. Area of action of the surveyed BUOs (percent).

Most of the surveyed bodies were dedicated to assisting THB victims ($n=52$), gender and domestic violence victims ($n=41$), or victims in general ($n=37$) or were police BUOs ($n=36$) or immigrant assistance bodies ($n=27$) (see Figure 2).

Of the 150 completed questionnaires, 44 percent ($n=66$) were completed by bodies that had detected victims and thus completed the entire instrument, including all or some of the four sections that made up the third part. In contrast, 51 percent ($n=77$) of the sample bodies indicated that they had not detected victims, and in 5 percent ($n=7$) of the cases the person completing the questionnaire on behalf of the body indicated that they did not know if it had detected victims. These bodies completed only the first part of the online form.

Of the 66 BUOs providing information on THB victimization, most completed the section of the questionnaire on the detection of victims of trafficking for sexual

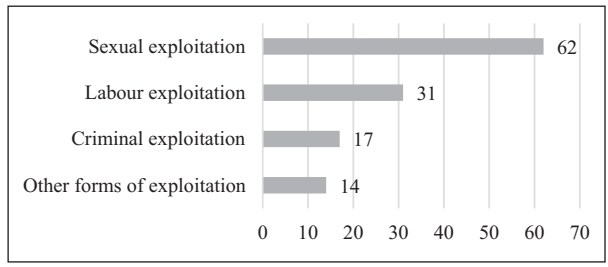


Figure 3. Online questionnaire sections completed and type of exploitation (percent).

exploitation, followed by those detected for labour, criminal and other forms of exploitation (see Figure 3).

This is not a large sample from a quantitative perspective, which is why we refer to this research as a case study. However, because each of the surveyed BUOs provided data on the total number of victims it had identified, the information supplied refers to a much larger number of people than the number of completed questionnaires. Nonetheless, the data provided may depend on the submissions of the surveyed professionals, which is a limitation of the research and means that the results should be considered with caution.

Results and discussion

The research results and discussion thereof will be presented in the same order as the four specific objectives stated above.

Detected victims versus officially identified victims

The first specific objective was to quantify the number of THB victims detected in Spain in 2017 and 2018 and compare it with the number of victims officially identified by the police in the same period.

The total number of victims detected by all the bodies in the sample was 7448 (3126 in 2017 and 4322 in 2018). Of these, 95.96 percent ($n = 7146$) were classified based on the type of THB to which they were subjected (sexual, labour, criminal or other forms of exploitation), and 4.05 percent ($n = 302$) were not. Table 1 shows the type of exploitation suffered by these 7146 detected and classified victims, indicating the gender and age of the victims for whom this information was available (6942 in all, comprising 6672 women and 270 men), as well as the percentage that each group of victims by gender and age accounted for in relation to the total number of people victimized by that specific type of THB.

The number of victims detected by the surveyed BUOs was substantially higher in 2018 than in 2017. This is due to the fact that several surveyed bodies that did not indicate figures for 2017 did so for 2018, probably because the 2018 activity reports had recently been prepared at the time they responded to the survey, making it easier to provide more accurate quantitative data for that year.

Table 1. THB victims detected and classified in Spain in 2017 and 2018.

Type of trafficking	Number of victims		Age	Women		Men	
THB for sexual exploitation	6610	92.50%	Adults	6054	94.24%	51	0.44%
			Minors	288	4.48%	31	0.48%
THB for labour exploitation	373	5.22%	Adults	157	44.10%	150	42.13%
			Minors	40	11.24%	9	2.53%
THB for criminal exploitation	54	0.76%	Adults	24	45.28%	19	35.85%
			Minors	3	5.66%	7	13.21%
THB for other forms of exploitation	109	1.53%	Adults	91	83.49%	3	2.75%
			Minors	15	13.76%	0	0.00%
Total	**7146**	**100%**	**Total**	**6672**	**96.11%**	**270**	**3.89%**

Because the victims were not individually identified, there was a risk that the detected victims reported by the responding BUOs might be counted twice. To minimize this, each regional office of each BUO was sent only one questionnaire. In cases where a single victim might be considered to have been detected in 2017 and 2018, the surveyed BUOs were asked to count them only in the first year. When the BUO understood that a single victim had been exploited in multiple ways, it was asked to count them only once, according to the form of exploitation considered most important in that case. Nevertheless, the possibility that some victims may have been counted more than once cannot be ruled out, which is a second limitation of this research.

Notwithstanding these considerations, the number of victims detected by the surveyed BUOs was much higher than the number of victims formally identified in the same two-year period. A comparison of the data on identifications reported by CITCO since 2013 (Table 2) with the number of victims detected in this study shows that, whereas a total of 458 victims were formally identified in 2017 and 2018, the respondents in the present study reported detecting 7448 victims in the same period.

The dark figure of crime found in Spain between the number of detected victims reported by the surveyed bodies and those officially identified by police forces, which have the exclusive power to identify them (due to the 2011 Framework Protocol for Protection of Victims of Trafficking of Human Beings), is consistent with the gap found in the international data between the number of people in situations of slavery (ILO, 2017) and the number of victims who access the system (UNODC, 2018). These findings are also compatible with what Silverman (2014) stated about the hidden figure of victims in the UK and with those obtained in a recent estimate by the Dutch National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings and Sexual Violence against Children (NRTHB) using a multiple systems estimation, which indicates that the number of existing victims may be four to five times higher than the number of identified victims (NRTHB, 2018). They also support what the experts have already indicated, namely, that the THB surfacing in the system may be only the tip of the iceberg (Aronowitz, 2009; Kangaspunta, 2015).

Although the numbers of actual and formally identified THB victims are generally quite different, in countries that implement identification systems enabling multiple actors to report victims the gap between detected and registered victims is narrowed.

Table 2. Victims formally identified by CITCO by type of THB.

Year	Type of THB					Total
	Sexual exploitation	Labour exploitation	Criminal exploitation	Forced marriage	Forced begging	
2013	264	0	0	0	0	264
2014	153	0	0	0	0	153
2015	133	134	0	0	0	267
2016	148	25	15	4	1	193
2017	155	58	1	3	3	220
2018	128	94	3	1	12	238
Total	**981**	**311**	**19**	**8**	**16**	**1335**

Source: The authors, based on data from CITCO.

This is evidenced by the fact that the number of victims detected in the present study is not too different from that registered in the 2015–16 period in countries that are more effective than Spain in victim detection precisely because they empower professionals other than law enforcement agencies to register them as well. This is the case with the 7071 victims registered in 2015–16 in the UK, the 2442 registered in the Netherlands (both countries have a national referral mechanism comprising public agencies and NGOs), the 1660 registered in Italy, where the identification is carried out by both public and private authorized bodies, or the 1515 registered in France, where labour inspectors are also competent to identify victims (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018). As supported by previously expressed opinions in other countries (Derencinovic, 2020), this suggests that modifying the regulation of the Spanish system for identifying THB victims to allow other types of professionals who might come into contact with them, in addition to specialized police units, to identify them could also help narrow the gap between detected and registered victims.

Personal characteristics of the detected victims by type of THB suffered

The second objective of this research was to determine the characteristics of the detected THB victims according to the type of exploitation suffered. To this end, variables such as the victims' gender, age and origin were analysed in relation to the type of exploitation.

Most of the detected victims in this case study were victims of sex trafficking (92.50 percent), followed by labour trafficking (5.22 percent). Even smaller percentages suffered from other forms of trafficking (0.76 percent were victims of THB for criminal exploitation and 1.53 percent of THB for other forms of exploitation) (see Table 1). These heavily lopsided percentages in the number of victims detected by type of exploitation suffered reflect the institutional approach to trafficking in Spain, which is highly focused on sex trafficking, to the detriment, until recently, of other forms of exploitation, resulting in a lack of awareness and professional training to detect other forms of THB. This bias has repeatedly been denounced in the academic literature (Giménez-Salinas

et al., 2009; Maqueda, 2009; Villacampa and Torres, 2015, 2017), underscored by organizations that report on Spain's approach to it (Defensor del Pueblo, 2012; GRETA, 2018) and evidenced by the CITCO data themselves (2018, 2019).

This marked orientation towards a type of THB is not exclusive to the Spanish approach, as can be seen in various international reports and academic papers that recognize that this type of trafficking may be being overemphasized to the detriment of other types that may be more prevalent (Derencinovic, 2020, who suggests that labour trafficking may be the main form of THB in Belgium, Georgia and Ukraine; European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018; Kragten-Heerdink et al., 2017; Ricard-Guay and Hanley, 2020; UNODC, 2018). However, in Spain the preferential focus on sex trafficking victims is even more pronounced than in other European countries, as not only the percentage of formally identified victims, but also that of detected ones is outsized compared to the most recent data at the EU level. These data place the percentage of sex-trafficked people at 56 percent (65 percent if the data from the United Kingdom are not included), compared with 26 percent who are labour trafficked (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018). This finding suggests the need to equip professionals who might come into contact with victims with the necessary training to broaden their focus and facilitate the detection of THB victims beyond those who are sex trafficked, because greater specialization and training for professionals increase their ability to detect victims of THB (Farrell et al., 2020).

With regard to the victims' personal variables analysed by type of THB, Table 1 shows, first, a clear prevalence of women in sex trafficking (94.24 percent women vs 0.44 percent men) compared with labour trafficking (44.10 percent women vs 42.13 percent men). In absolute terms, the percentage of detected female victims of THB (96.11 percent) is disproportionately higher than the percentage of men (3.89 percent), even compared with European data for the 2015–16 period, according to which 68 percent of victims were women (77 percent if the United Kingdom is not included) and 32 percent men (23 percent if the United Kingdom is not included) (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018). In the present study, an overwhelming majority of the victims were adult women trafficked for sexual exploitation (87.21 percent of the total number of classified victims), although the percentage of labour-trafficked women was hardly negligible. In fact, as far as the gender variable is concerned in relation to labour trafficking, most of the literature indicates that the percentage of men in relation to women is clearly on the rise (Cockbain et al., 2018; Cockbain and Bowers, 2019; Herbert, 2016; Jokinen et al., 2011; Rijken, 2011; Turner-Moss et al., 2014; Van Meeteren and Wiering, 2019). This change can also be seen in the latest statistical data published at the international level (UNODC, 2018), the European level (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018), the English level (National Crime Agency, 2019) and even the Spanish national level (FGE, 2019), although the proportion was reversed in 2018 according to CITCO (2019). The exception to this breakdown by gender of victims of labour trafficking is domestic servitude, where the percentage of women is again higher (Cockbain and Bowers, 2019). Its inclusion amongst the forms of labour exploitation in the present study may thus explain the more balanced categorization of the gender variable between sex and labour trafficking.

The breakdown by gender of THB for the criminal exploitation of the victims was also fairly balanced (45.28 percent women vs 35.85 percent men). With this as yet little studied form of THB, the existing research has not analysed the incidence of gender as an explanatory variable, although some analyses have focused on female victims (RACE in Europe, 2014; Villacampa and Torres, 2015). The division by gender for THB for other forms of exploitation, including forced marriage, was clearly lopsided as well. Here, too, the percentage of women (83.4 percent) and girls (13.76 percent) far outweighed that of men (2.75 percent), in keeping with the findings of previous research (Chantler and McCarry, 2019; Gill and Anitha, 2011; Villacampa and Torres, 2020).

As for the significance of the victim's gender in explaining the type of THB suffered, the results show that, in this case study, this variable has explanatory power. The contingency table between the variables 'type of THB' (restricting the analysis to sex and labour trafficking) and 'victim's gender by age' (obtained by recoding the gender variable and dividing it into minors and adults) did not show statistical significance – with regard to victims detected in 2017: $\chi^2(3, N=13)=0.929$; $\rho=0.819$; with regard to victims detected in 2018: $\chi^2(2, N=13)=0.453$; $\rho=0.797$. However, based on the table of the total number of THB victims detected and classified, pooling the two years and including all four analysed types of trafficking, the gender variable did show statistically significant percentage differences depending on the type of THB suffered [$\chi^2(3)=4.563$; $\rho=0.005$; Vc = 0.10], although the Cramer's V indicates a weak relationship. As part of the inferential analysis of the gender variable, an ANOVA test was also performed to locate the significant differences between the four detected forms of trafficking. The results showed that, although the relationship between the variable 'adult female victims' and the type of THB suffered was statistically significant [$F(3.100)=2.673$; $\rho=0.05$], this was not the case with the rest of the variables (that is, for minor female victims or minor or adult male victims).

In addition to this explanatory value, it was verified that gender can also have a predictive value with regard to the type of THB suffered. A multinomial logistic regression was performed considering the type of THB as a dependent variable, taking into account factors such as the mechanism used to recruit the victims or the means used for the trafficking, and the victim's gender by age as a covariate. The results show that the gender variable has good discriminant power with regard to the types of THB [−2 log likelihood = 109.5; $\chi^2(36)=78.59$; $p<.000$; Nagelkerke $R^2=.876$]. The likelihood of becoming a victim of labour trafficking as opposed to a victim of sex trafficking was 1.133 times higher in the case of adult men.

The victim's age was less relevant as an explanatory variable for the type of THB suffered. The bivariate association between the type of THB and the age variable was not statistically significant [$\chi^2(3)=5.488$; $\rho=0.266$]. Nor was the association between the type of THB and the variable 'victim's gender by age', as indicated above. The logistic regression performed did not produce noteworthy results with regard to age either. However, Table 1 shows that the percentage of underage victims – only 22 percent of whom were unaccompanied minors – was substantially lower than the percentage of adults for all forms of THB, in keeping with both the CITCO data (2019) and the European data for the 2015–16 period (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018). The two groups of victims were most lopsided in relation to THB for

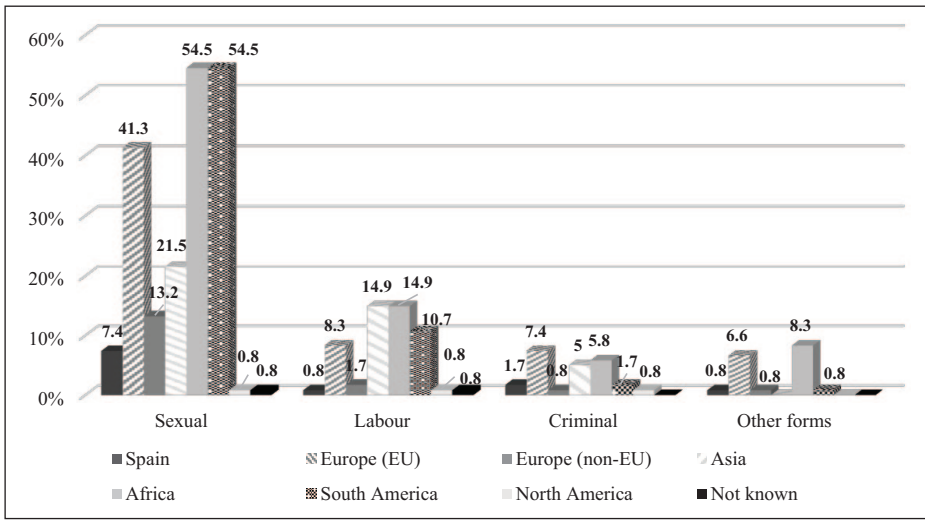


Figure 4. Victims' place of origin by type of THB (percent).

sexual exploitation (94.6 percent adults vs 4.96 percent minors). Minors accounted for around 13 percent of victims in other cases (86.23 percent adults vs. 13.77 percent minors in labour trafficking and 86.24 percent adults versus 13.75 percent minors in other forms of exploitation). Only in relation to THB for criminal exploitation did the percentage of minors increase substantially (18.87 percent vs 81.13 percent adults), which is consistent with previous research (Council of the Baltic Sea States and Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk, 2013; RACE in Europe, 2014).

Finally, the variable 'victim's place of origin' was also found to be statistically significant in explaining the type of THB suffered [$\chi^2(21, N=348)=38.76$; $\rho=0.010$; $Vc=0.193$], although the Cramer's V indicates a weak relationship. Figure 4 shows the victims' regions of origin by type of THB suffered. As can be seen, victims of labour trafficking are much more likely to come from Asia and Africa (specifically, North Africa) than are victims of sex trafficking, who are mostly from South America, Africa (sub-Saharan Africa) and Europe (Eastern Europe), as evidenced by previous European case-study research (Jokinen et al., 2011; Simon and Sourd, 2018; Rijken, 2011; Van Meeteren and Wiering, 2019). With regard to labour trafficking, the present findings differ from the official data in Spain, which indicate that its victims mainly come from Romania and Portugal (CITCO, 2019) and which report hardly any victims from North Africa or Asia, even though previous Spanish studies have pointed to the victimization of Moroccans (Giménez-Salinas et al., 2009), a finding also recognized by the FGE (2019). The present results regarding the provenance of sex trafficking victims are more consistent with those of the proceedings opened by the Prosecutor's Office (FGE, 2019) and with the police data (CITCO, 2019), in which the most common victim nationality is Romanian, followed by Nigerian. Third, most victims of THB for criminal exploitation were from Eastern Europe. This is consistent with the police data

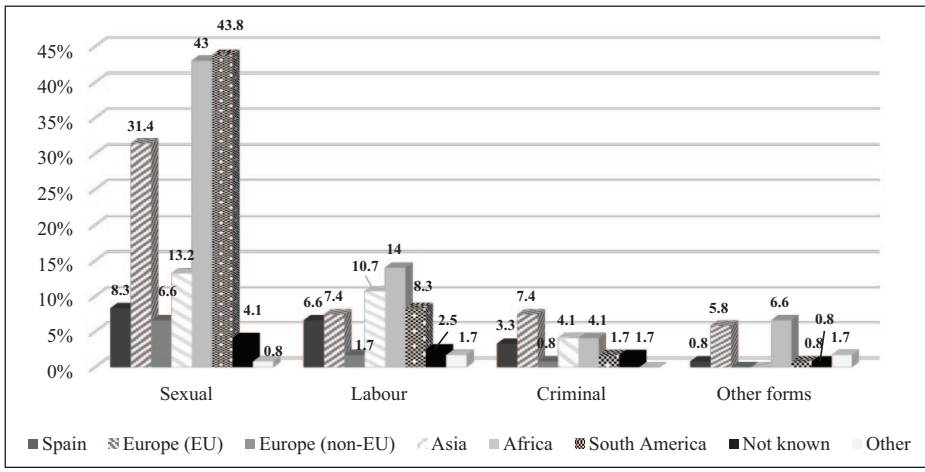


Figure 5. Victims' place of recruitment by type of THB (percent).

(CITCO, 2019) but not with previous studies on this type of THB in Spain (Villacampa and Torres, 2015), which pointed more to Africa and South America. Finally, victims of other forms of exploitation generally came from Africa or Eastern Europe, which is consistent with the results of earlier studies (Chantler and McCarry, 2019; Villacampa and Torres, 2020).

In conclusion, in relation to the victims' personal characteristics and the incidence of the type of THB suffered, the results of this research confirm those of previous inferential studies, insofar as it is the victims' gender and origin, rather than their age, that have explanatory power with regard to the type of THB to which they are subjected (Cockbain and Bowers, 2019).

Dynamics of commission by type of THB

The third research objective was to determine the dynamics of the commission of the THB, again by type of exploitation. To this end, for each type of trafficking, respondents were asked about the place of recruitment and the destination of the victims, as well as the mechanisms used to recruit them and the means used to traffic them.

The victims' place of recruitment was generally the same as their place of origin, as can be seen by comparing Figure 5 with Figure 4. Although statistically significant differences were found by type of THB [χ^2 (21, N=295)=44.5; ρ=0.002; Vc=0.224], here, too, the Cramer's V indicates a weak association. The present findings are not consistent with the latest data available in Europe, which suggest that a not inconsiderable percentage of victims are recruited on the continent itself (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018). In this case study, labour trafficking victims were mostly recruited in Africa (North Africa) – even more clearly here than when broken down by origin – and Asia, whereas sex trafficking victims were mainly recruited in South America, Africa (sub-Saharan Africa) and Europe (Eastern Europe). Victims of

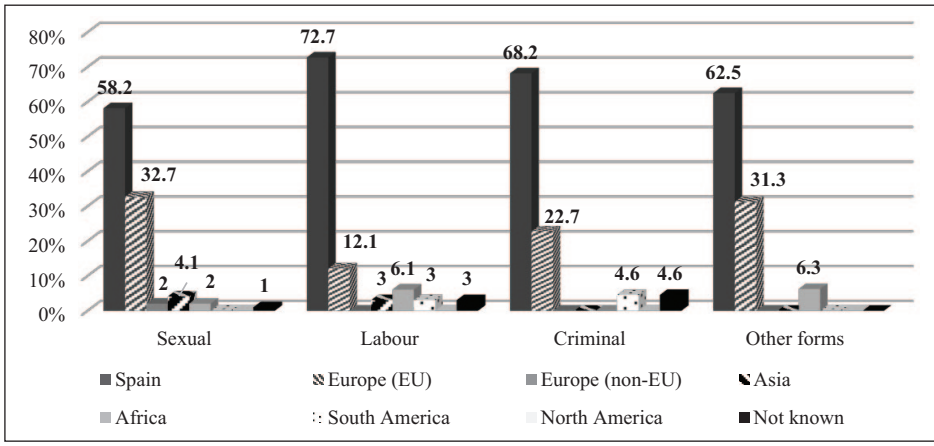


Figure 6. Victims' destination by type of THB (percent).

THB for criminal exploitation and for other forms of exploitation were mainly recruited in Eastern Europe and, in the latter case, Africa.

In short, the overlap between Figures 4 and 5 shows that recruitment generally occurs in the victims' places of origin as opposed to the places where they are exploited. This is further confirmed by another finding of this research, namely, that the main destination of the trafficked people is Spain, followed by other European Union countries (Figure 6), reinforcing the findings of previous research pointing to European countries as the destination (Kragten-Heerdink et al., 2017).

Second, the type of THB was also relevant in explaining the mechanisms used by traffickers to recruit the victims. Here, although the bivariate association between the type of THB suffered – including all four analysed forms – and the mechanism used to recruit the victims was not statistically significant [$\chi^2(15, N=120)=15.44$; $\rho=0.42$], it was significant when labour and sex trafficking were compared [$\chi^2(9, N=28)=26.046$; $\rho=0.002$; Vc = 0.421]. As can be seen in Figure 7, oral recruitment by family members, friends and acquaintances was the most common form for all types of THB, in keeping with the latest European statistics (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs, 2018) and previous research (Burke et al., 2020). The Internet is also used as a recruitment mechanism in sex and criminal trafficking, but not in labour trafficking, again in keeping with previous research (Burke et al., 2020; Latonero et al., 2011). In contrast, placement/temporary employment agencies are a form of recruitment used especially in labour and sex trafficking, although not in other forms of THB. In fact, the logistic regression performed shows that labour trafficking victims are 242 times more likely to be recruited by an agency than are sex trafficking victims (Wald = 3.763; $\rho=0.05$).

Finally, with regard to the means used to traffic victims, differences were also found depending on the type of THB, although the bivariate association did not prove to be statistically significant in this case when all four forms of THB were compared [$\chi^2(12, N=120)=16.043$; $\rho=0.189$] or when only labour and sex trafficking were compared [$\chi^2(20, N=61)=25.273$; $\rho=0.191$]. Nevertheless, as can be seen in Figure 8, the abuse

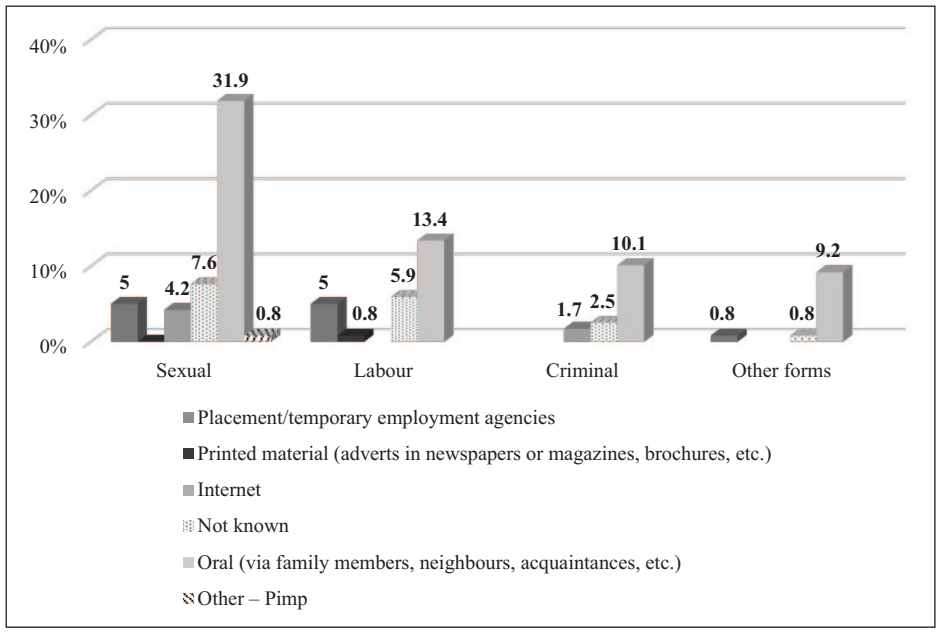


Figure 7. Mechanism used to recruit the victims by type of THB (percent).

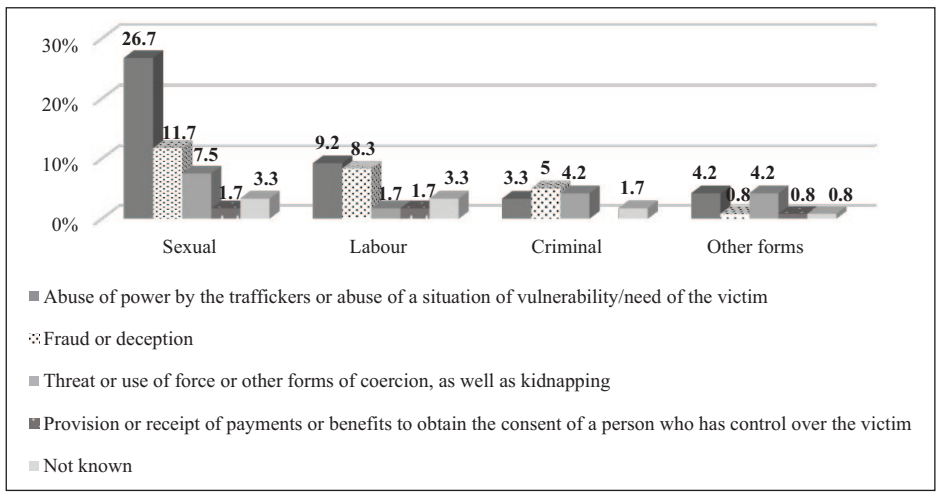


Figure 8. Means most often used by the traffickers by type of THB (percent).

of power or of a situation of vulnerability/need of the victim is much more prevalent in sex trafficking than in the other types of THB, which is why this form of THB is primarily abusive in nature. In labour trafficking, by comparison, fraud or deception are much more commonly used (Giménez-Salinas et al., 2009; Ricard-Guay and Hanley, 2020),

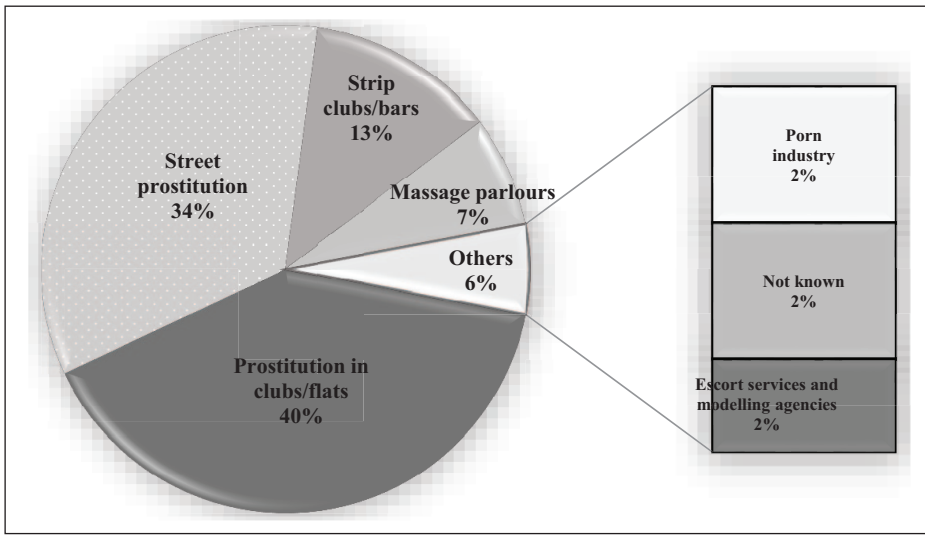


Figure 9. Activities in which victims of THB for sexual exploitation are exploited (percent).

making it a fundamentally fraudulent form of trafficking. Finally, in THB for criminal exploitation, fraud, deception and even threats are more frequently used than the abuse of power, and in the other forms of exploitation the use of threat or coercion was as prevalent as the abuse of power, which gives a more coercive nature to these two forms of trafficking.

Activities in which the victims are exploited in each of the analysed forms of THB

The final research objective was to determine how the victims are exploited in each type of THB. The detected sex trafficking victims were mainly exploited for prostitution in clubs or flats (40 percent), followed by street prostitution (34 percent) and exploitation in strip clubs and bars (13 percent) (Figure 9). Hardly any victims were detected in the porn industry. It is not surprising that the form of sexual exploitation that the professionals perceived as most prevalent was prostitution in its various forms, because it was precisely the wish to criminalize its practice that drove the criminalization of THB in Spain at the political level (Maqueda, 2009). However, given that pornography is considered to be an increasingly important industry worldwide in explaining the sexual exploitation of people (Humphreys et al., 2019), as evidenced by some European countries' efforts to uncover other forms of sexual exploitation (NRTHB, 2018), the fact that in Spain sex trafficking continues to be associated almost exclusively with prostitution may cause other forms of sexual exploitation of adults and minors to remain hidden.

Second, the detected labour trafficking victims (Figure 10) were mainly exploited in the farming/livestock industry (28 percent) and domestic service (28 percent), followed at quite some distance by exploitation in construction, the textile industry, catering and

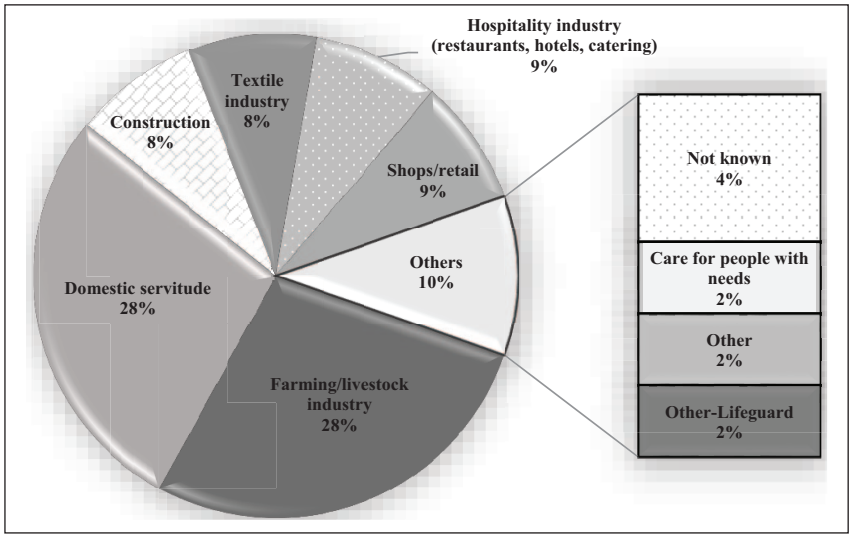


Figure 10. Activities in which victims of THB for labour exploitation are exploited (percent).

shops/retail. These results are consistent with those reported by the FGE (2019) and with previous case studies conducted in some European countries (Jokinen et al., 2011; Rijken, 2011) but not with previous qualitative research conducted in Spain, which hardly gave any importance to the agricultural sector in relation to labour exploitation (Giménez-Salinas et al., 2009).

To learn more about labour trafficking, the surveyed professionals were asked about the most common specific forms of labour exploitation. In general (Figure 11), these victims were exploited through payment of wages well below the norm (33 percent) and

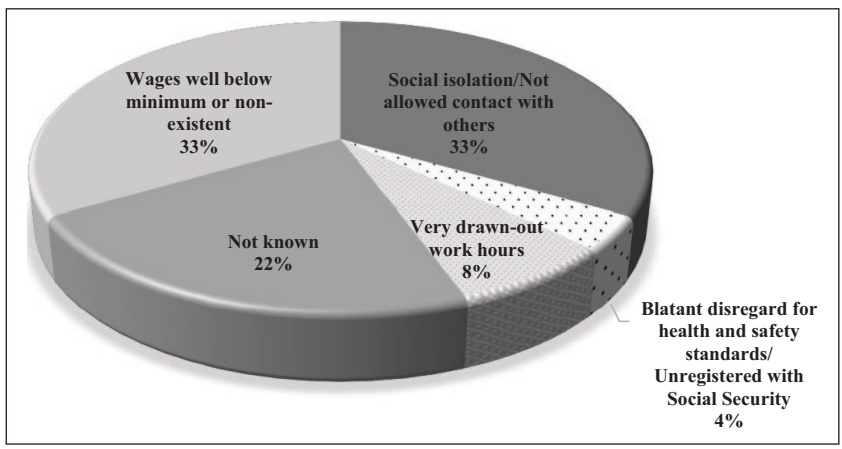


Figure 11. Most prevalent form of worker exploitation (percent).

through social isolation (33 percent). The next most frequently chosen response was that the respondent did not know what form this type of exploitation took (22 percent), indicating that not even the professionals closest to this form of THB and exploitation have detailed knowledge of it.

Third, the detected victims of THB for criminal exploitation were normally exploited by being made to participate in property-related street crime (31.4 percent) – which has been identified as a growing trend, closely linked to the activity of organized crime groups (Crocker et al., 2017) – and in forced begging (31.4 percent) (Figure 12). To a lesser extent, and in contrast with previous case studies (RACE in Europe, 2014; Villacampa and Torres, 2015), they were compelled to engage in behaviours related to drug trafficking, including both production or cultivation and as drug couriers or mules.

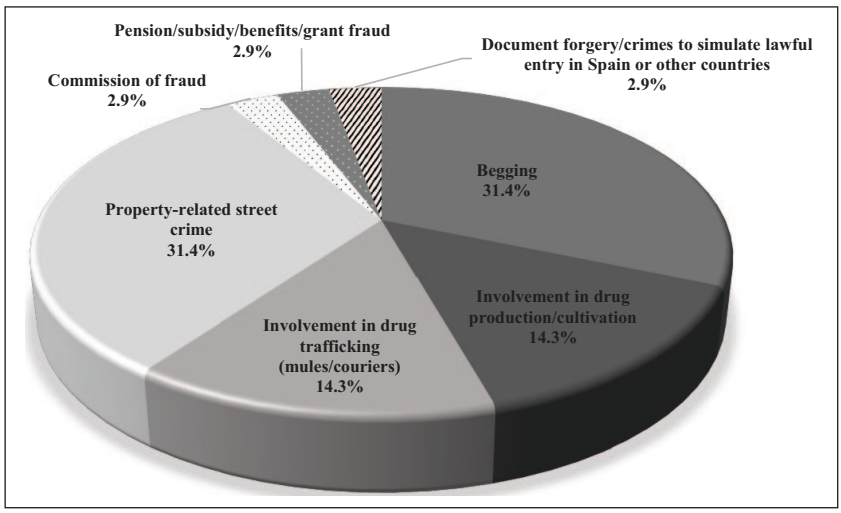


Figure 12. Activities in which victims of THB for criminal exploitation are exploited (percent).

Finally, the other detected forms of exploitation grouped in the fourth form of THB analysed mainly refer to forced marriage (78.6 percent). On a much more token level, they also include cases of forced organ donation (14.3 percent) and forced pregnancy (7.1 percent).

Conclusions

Much remains to be done in both Spain and other countries in the region in terms of compiling and statistically processing quantitative data to improve our knowledge of THB. This work should include the implementation of methodologies that not only lead to a unified collection of data that enables comparison at least at the European level, but also make it possible to obtain information about the victims' personal characteristics beyond their gender, age and place of origin, and about the ways in which this victimization process works (European Commission–Migration and Home Affairs,

2018). In short, in general, it should be possible to obtain data that enable the acquisition of a robust statistical knowledge of this phenomenon (Cockbain and Bowers, 2019) by using a model informed by evidence and theory and based on a universal definition of human trafficking (Bales, 2017; Farrell and De Vries, 2020). In addition, in Spain there is a need for the information to be obtained in a centralized way, through channels that go beyond the formal identification of victims by certain police agencies and, especially, to exploit the data statistically to get more out of them, especially in terms of designing suitable trafficking prevention and intervention tools (Farrell and De Vries, 2020).

In the meantime, despite its limitations, the case study presented here has sought to offer a more comprehensive overview of this phenomenon than that provided by the official victimization data, leading to the proposal of improvements for a victim-centred institutional approach to trafficking that might also be useful for other European countries. First, it has provided some evidence that the number of victims detected in the analysed time period may be much higher than the number of formally identified victims and closer to the numbers of those registered in other countries in the region, which is consistent with the literature (Kangaspunta, 2015; Silverman, 2014). In addition to reinforcing the idea that the identified victims may be only the tip of the iceberg, this finding suggests a need to transform the mechanisms for the identification of victims in Spain or, at least, for their registration or formal detection. That power should no longer be the exclusive prerogative of certain law enforcement bodies, meaning the current 2011 Framework Protocol for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking of Human Beings should be amended. Social work, healthcare and education professionals, as well as other professional groups that might come into contact with THB victims, should be able to become bodies empowered to register victims and, possibly, collect their data, as is already being done in some West European countries.

Second, with regard to the victims' measured personal variables, this case study suggests that disproportionate attention continues to be paid in Spain to the victimization of sex-trafficked women in terms of not only formally identified victims but also informally detected ones. This finding should prompt the implementation of training programmes to allow professionals to broaden their perspective, widening the focus of their attention to be able to identify victims of other types of THB as well, and not just women, as emphasized in the literature (Farrell et al., 2020).

Finally, despite the bias of the information about victims reported by professionals, depending on their personal perspective on the issue, this research provides some evidence that the victims' personal characteristics (especially their gender and place of origin, but not their age), are relevant in explaining the type of THB suffered. It also suggests that the dynamics used to commit this crime vary depending on the type of THB: labour trafficking is more fraudulent than sex trafficking – which is usually abusive – whereas other forms of exploitation more often use coercive means. The mechanisms used to recruit the victims and the geographical regions where they are recruited – which overlap with their places of origin – also vary depending on the type of THB. Finally, this case study has identified the various forms of prostitution as the most common activities for the exploitation of victims of THB for sexual exploitation; agricultural activity and domestic servitude as the most common activities for the exploitation of victims of

labour trafficking (in line with previous case studies – Jokinen et al., 2011; Rijken, 2011); and property-related street crime as the most common activity for the exploitation of victims of criminal trafficking. These differences in the victim profiles and the dynamics of the commission of the crime depending on the type of THB, as well as in the main activities in which the victims are exploited, could be taken into account, not only to further deepen our knowledge of the issue but also to design appropriate prevention and intervention programmes for each of the analysed types of THB.

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