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## Of madams, mentors and mistresses: Conceptualising the female sex trafficker in the United States

Eva Veldhuizen-Ochodničanová<sup>a,b,\*</sup>, Elizabeth L. Jeglic, PhD<sup>b</sup><sup>a</sup> Maastricht University, the Netherlands<sup>b</sup> John Jay College of Criminal Justice, USA

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## ABSTRACT

Sex trafficking constitutes a severe international issue, affecting 4.8 million victims worldwide, with those affected in the United States numbering in the thousands (Global Slavery Index, 2016). Despite this, little is known about the characteristics of sex traffickers, especially female sex traffickers. This paper aimed to increase our knowledge of female sex traffickers in the United States. 44 criminally prosecuted cases of sex trafficking involving female sex traffickers were examined, obtained through the Case Law Database within the Human Trafficking Knowledge Portal provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The study sought to explore characteristics of female sex traffickers in the United States with regards to the roles they hold, duties they perform and the makeup of their operations. Overall, findings demonstrated that women permeate the entire spectrum of sex trafficking crimes, from aiding and abetting to being ringleaders of sex trafficking rings.

## 1. Introduction

Sex trafficking is a growing global problem, constituting 53% of all human exploitation cases (UNODC, 2014) and affecting 4.8 million victims worldwide every year (Global Slavery Index, 2016). One of the reasons that sex trafficking continues to be able to grow at an unprecedented rate is what the United Nations (UN) calls a “widespread failure to identify traffickers and those who assist them” (UN.GIFT, 2014 p.1). According to the Vienna Forum to fight Human Trafficking, this is due, in part, to a deficit in knowledge about traffickers and their modus operandi (UN.GIFT, 2014). Consequently, anti-trafficking measures are frequently not grounded in factual evidence but rather based upon stereotypes and generalisations (Jones, 2014). One of the most prominent stereotypes that anti-trafficking measures perpetuate are gender-based generalisations – with the prototypical trafficker being perceived to be male (Jones, 2014; Broad 2015).

Despite the fact that UNODC’s Global Report on Trafficking found over a decade ago that women constitute the majority of traffickers in almost one third of the 155 countries surveyed, and over 60% of human trafficking convictions in Eastern Europe and Asia, there has been a significant lack of academic and media attention dedicated to examining these female traffickers (UNODC, 2009; Jones, 2014). Jones argues that human trafficking “like other crimes, has been myopically constructed, marketed and viewed through news reports, cinema, literature and criminal statutes as a heinous male-perpetrated offence against women and girls, rendering the female trafficker practically invisible” (p. 144). Gender based stereotypes of traffickers thus permeate both academic and public

\* Corresponding author. 524, Department of Psychology, John Jay College, West 59th Street, New York 10019, USA.

E-mail address: [e.veldhuizen.ochodnicanova@gmail.com](mailto:e.veldhuizen.ochodnicanova@gmail.com) (E. Veldhuizen-Ochodničanová).

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discourse.

Similar stereotypes of traffickers also exist in the United States (U.S.). Jones (2014) describes what he calls “female victim-male culprit reasoning” in the U.S., where women are often depicted as victims and males as aggressors (p.144). Consequently, sex trafficking, which frequently involves traffickers inflicting physical and sexual violence on their victims is interpreted as a male-perpetrated act (Reid, 2016). This reasoning is so ingrained in US perceptions of sex trafficking that even when faced with female-perpetrated crime, criminal procedures use exonerative constructions for female behaviour that are not used for the same conduct by males (Broad 2015). According to Jones, female traffickers’ behaviour is often interpreted as being the “offspring of a female’s lack of reasonable choice, rather than moral autonomy” (Jones, 2014, p. 154). For example, if a female trafficker was found to perpetrate violence against victims within a sex trafficking operation, it is likely that her behaviour would be interpreted to be the result of coercion or manipulation on behalf of a male trafficker involved in the same operation (Jones, 2014).

A second factor that adds to the absence of understanding of female sex traffickers’ crimes in the U.S. is that data and research is lacking. While some researchers and the UN have addressed female trafficking operations and female traffickers in general, these findings were centred on female traffickers from Asia, Africa, Australia, India, and Europe, and none described female traffickers in the U.S. Even where data is available, these are often only global statistics on numbers of female traffickers, and do not specify the precise role these traffickers held within the operation (Kienast et al., 2015; UN.GIFT, 2014; UNODC 2009). Despite this lack of data, academic articles concerning trafficking operations in the United States continue to perpetuate the “female victim-male culprit reasoning” model. For instance, in his footnotes, Crocker (2016) writes “Throughout this Note, victims ... are referred to with female pronouns, and traffickers with male pronouns. Certainly not every trafficking situation follows those gender norms— victims can be boys and men and traffickers can be girls and women; however, because the typical trafficking situation follows the male trafficker and female victim model, this Note uses the corresponding pronouns for simplicity” (p.756).

This lack of research, as well as over-reliance on gendered stereotypes has led to challenges in the prosecution of female traffickers in the U.S. and subsequent low conviction rates. This is evidenced in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), the anti-trafficking legislation used to prosecute acts of human trafficking in the U.S. It was developed based on the stereotype of female sex traffickers as non-agentic, passive bystanders or naïve partners and thus fails to capture the complexity of female sex trafficking crimes. For instance, there is a clear division in the TVPA between victims and perpetrators, which does not account for the possibility that some female sex traffickers may have started off as victims, but over time worked their way up through the ranks of the operation, leading them to become part of the sex trafficking scheme (Jones, 2014; Kienast, Lakner & Neulet, 2014). The TVPA does not specify whether these kinds of women should be regarded as victims or prosecuted as perpetrators, and if the latter, to what extent they can be held liable for the actions they committed whilst in their role as traffickers, making prosecution complex. Consequently, female traffickers are 16% less likely to be arrested and prosecuted for human trafficking compared to their male counterparts (Jones, 2014).

Given the growth of sex trafficking operations in the U.S., and a continued disproportionate involvement of females within trafficking operations, there is an increased need to gain an understanding of the role of female sex traffickers (Jones, 2014). This understanding would help limit gender-biased legislation and help to develop policy based upon fact, not stereotypes. This study aims to fill this existing gap in literature, by examining three aspects of female sex traffickers in the U.S.: a) the makeup of their operations, b) the roles and duties they undertake, and c) the relationship of female sex traffickers to their male counterparts.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Roles of women in sex trafficking operations

One of the only extensive literature reviews of female sex traffickers describes women as “involved in all stages of the organisations, from the recruitment over the supervision of prostitutes and finances up to the leading positions” (Kienast et al., 2015, p.138). However, there remains little research examining the roles of women within these operations. Some studies have distinguished the roles of female sex traffickers based upon the crimes for which the women were convicted. For example, Broad’s (2015) study of 71 convicted traffickers (of which 23 were female) in the United Kingdom differentiated between women convicted for “peripheral” offences such as arranging or facilitating the arrival of a victim to the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation and more the more “direct” offence of sexual exploitation of a trafficked individual. Others have examined the roles of female sex traffickers by their levels of agency, or degrees of independence from male traffickers, describing their roles as ‘supporters’, ‘partners-in-crime’ or ‘madams’ (Siegel and de Blank, 2010).

While Kienast, Lakner and Neulet (2015) made no discernible distinctions among female traffickers, describing only the range duties performed by women in sex trafficking operations. In general, the roles within sex trafficking operations can be categorized as subordinate or dominant as described below.

#### 2.2.1. Subordinate roles

Of the little research that has been conducted into female sex traffickers, the majority describes women as holding subordinate roles to their male counterparts within the operation (Aronowitz, 2009; Broad, 2015; Crocker, 2016). These roles can be broadly divided into three categories: recruiters; supporters and “bottoms”.

**2.2.1.1. Recruiters.** Several studies have found that the majority of women involved with sex trafficking are involved in the recruitment phase (Aronowitz, 2009; Kienast et al., 2015; Wijkman and Kleemans, 2019; UN.GIFT, 2008). Recruiters of female victims

are frequently chosen for their ability to establish trust with the those they are recruiting (UN.GIFT, 2008). As women are often perceived to be more trustworthy, innocent and caregiving than their male counterparts, this leads to women often taking on the role of recruiter within the operation (Kienast et al. 2015). Aronowitz (2009) further explains that among international female recruiters, there exists the concept of “Happy Trafficking”. “Happy Trafficking” is a scheme wherein certain sex trafficked victims are released, and sometimes rewarded financially for returning to their home countries and recruiting others. They lure potential new victims by recounting stories of their “wonderful” experience working abroad, hence accounting for the term “Happy Trafficking”.

**2.2.1.2. Supporters.** In their study of 89 court files from the Netherlands, Siegel and de Blank (2010) describe “Supporters” as traffickers who are subordinate to the leading female or male sex trafficker, and who execute orders of these higher-ranking traffickers either voluntarily or involuntarily. These women perform more indirect supporting roles such as managing and handling trafficking victims, guarding them, providing counterfeit identification documents, bribing law enforcement officials or renting hotels, brothels or nightclubs for sex trafficking purposes (Kienast et al., 2015; Siegel and de Blank, 2010; Wijkman and Kleemans 2019). Siegel and de Blank (2010) note that female sex traffickers who fall into this category are often emotionally dependant on a male sex trafficker.

Miccio-Fonesca (2017) furthermore adds that female sex traffickers in a supportive role may have familial ties to other male traffickers in the organisation, terming sex trafficking a “family affair”.

**2.2.1.3. Bottoms.** Potentially the only extensively researched role of female sex traffickers in the U.S. is that of the “bottom”, a name given to the highest-ranked female sex worker in a given U.S. operation. It may also be one of the most commonly performed roles by female sex traffickers: Roe-Sepowitz (2019) found that over half of the female sex traffickers in her sample held the role of “bottom”. The position of “bottom” is coveted among victims of sex trafficking and is considered a promotion, as it is the only form of status that most victims can earn, demonstrating that they have their trafficker’s trust and respect (Frank and Terwilliger 2015). Crocker states that traffickers “dangle the possibility of being the bottom like a carrot, often with additional promises that once a victim becomes the bottom, she can stop working as a prostitute” (Crocker, 2016, p. 139). This status is granted to those victims who earn the most money or have worked for the trafficker the longest.

Once promoted to “bottom” status, these individuals engage in a variety of organisational duties for the male trafficker including the collection of money, training of new victims, creating and posting internet advertisements, transporting victims and supervising them (Crocker, 2016). As part of their duties, bottoms may also perform a recruiting role. However, despite the initial promise of ceasing work in the sex industry, the bottom is still often required to engage in sex work herself and continues to be subjected to both physical and verbal assault from the male trafficker (Crocker, 2016). While both “bottoms” and “supporters” may be required to perform similar duties, the distinction between the roles lies in that “bottoms” are still considered sex workers, whereas “supporters” are often the family, romantic or business partners of the male traffickers working in a subordinate position to the male trafficker. In addition, while it appears that ‘bottoms’ are an exclusive product of domestic cases of sex trafficking within the U.S., ‘supporters’ are described as pertaining to both domestic and international cases of sex trafficking.

### 2.2.2. Partners-in-Crime

Some women involved in sex trafficking are considered to be Partners-in-Crime. These women are in a higher status in the trafficking operation than those in subordinate roles, and who appear to commit acts of sex trafficking on a voluntary basis in the context of a partnership (romantic, familial or business) with male sex traffickers. Siegel and de Blank (2010) state that women committing sex trafficking offences with a male partner can do so in one of three ways: 1) on the basis of an equal division of work and profit; 2) in the context of managing roles where males are relegated to the use of violence while women are the “masterminds” of the operation; or 3) in a more passive role wherein women mostly supervise and recruit victims while their male partners commit the more serious offences, such as committing acts of physical violence against the victims.

In her study examining 71 cases of sex trafficking, Broad (2015) found that 52 cases (74%) involved women who offended with their intimate partner. However, Broad points out that in almost half of these cases, women were categorized as victims of domestic abuse in their relationships, thus demonstrating that the male partner does often have control over their female counterpart and therefore could better be classified as a supporter, rather than a partner-in-crime.

### 2.2.3. Positions of leadership

Little academic research has paid attention to females in positions of leadership within sex trafficking operations. Indeed, what sparse literature exists focusses on ‘madams’ running international sex trafficking operations from Eastern Europe and Central Africa, especially Nigeria (Kienast et al. 2015; Manusco, 2014) and on ‘mamasans’ who run brothels in Southeast Asia (Molland, 2011).

In Eastern Europe, female sex traffickers in positions of leadership are described as “businesswomen”, running their operations independently with no family link between themselves and their victims (Kienast et al. 2015). In Ukraine, they constitute upwards of 60% of the total leadership of these operations, with the remainder being male sex traffickers (Denisova, 2001).

In Nigeria female traffickers, or “maman’s”, are said to play such a crucial role in the leadership of trafficking operations that it is described as a “business of women” by the International Bureau of Children’s Rights (2010). Men are described as taking on more supportive roles, such as surveillance roles, courier services and boyfriends of the “maman”.

Finally, Southeast Asian “mamasans”, generally from Thailand and Laos, are described more as owners of the establishments from where sexual exploitation takes place, and who evoke a family dynamic with their victims, rarely use force in their handling of these victims (Molland, 2010; Molland, 2011). To date, no studies were found describing women in positions of leadership in sex trafficking

operations in the United States. Indeed, [Miccio-Fonseca \(2017\)](#) in their study on juvenile female sex traffickers states explicitly that the “business of sex trafficking is run predominantly by males” (p.28).

## 2.2. Limitations to prior research

Overall, there is a lack of standardisation in research of female sex traffickers in general and little to no research on female sex traffickers in the United States. While there is some research concerning the so-called “bottoms” in U.S. sex trafficking operations ([Crocker, 2016](#)), the majority of research on female sex trafficking is based upon studies of sex trafficking operations in the Netherlands, the UK, Nigeria, Eastern Europe and Thailand, all with relatively small sample sizes. Indeed, the only true literature review that has been conducted on adult female sex traffickers, that of [Kienast et al. \(2015\)](#), relies on studies which do not solely focus on female sex traffickers. For example, one study included focusses solely on juvenile female sex offenders and does not mention sex trafficking crimes ([Wijkman et al. 2014](#)), while others focus on victims of sex trafficking ([Demir, 2010](#)) or women involved in street crime ([Gilfus, 1992](#)). Furthermore, none of the studies reviewed in [Kienast, Lakner and Neulet's \(2015\)](#) review were based on U.S. samples. Furthermore, while [Miccio-Fonseca's \(2017\)](#) study on juvenile female sex traffickers was based in the United States and did include a quantitative analysis, this analysis was based on a dataset of juvenile female sex offenders and sex trafficking victims, rather than on female sex traffickers specifically.

In addition, there is no standardisation in describing the roles in the existing research, with some distinguishing between the crimes female sex traffickers are convicted for, with others distinguishing between degrees of independence from male traffickers and yet others still making no clear distinction between their roles. Increasing clarity surrounding the positions of female sex traffickers is crucial if the U.S. is to ameliorate its policy surrounding their prosecution to one that is based on their true roles, not ones developed based on gendered stereotypes.

Therefore, there are three main goals of the current study. The first aim is to describe the operation characteristics of the sex trafficking operations in which women are involved. The second is to describe the different roles and duties that female sex traffickers undertake within their respective operation. The final goal is to analyse the relationship of female sex traffickers when pertaining to their male counterparts. As there is as of now a dearth of research on female sex traffickers, the goals of this study are of an exploratory nature.

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Sample

The current study analysed cases of sex trafficking, found through the Case Law Database within the ‘Human Trafficking Knowledge Portal’ provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, publicly available at: <https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld>.

This Case Law Database has been compiled through collaboration between various actors, including several universities (e.g. Queen Mary University of London, University of Michigan, University of Queensland) as well as other international organisations (such as the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI)) and NGO's (such as La Strada and Astra).

The Case Law Database aims to include all officially documented instances of trafficking in persons crime, where the definition follows that of article three of the UN Trafficking in Persons protocol: “Trafficking in persons” shall mean 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. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs” ([UNODC, 2009](#)).

All in all, the database contains information about 1499 criminally prosecuted cases of human trafficking worldwide. These include 1087 cases of ‘exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation’, 123 of which are cases concerning Domestic and International sex trafficking in the US, and 44 included adult female sex traffickers that form the sample for this study.

Cases verdict dates broadly ranged from 2003 until 2015, with a singular case originating from 1995. This instance was the only case not prosecuted under the TVPA, which was established in 2000 as the first federal law to criminalise trafficking in persons. Rather, the eleven sex traffickers prosecuted in this case were charged with Commercial Sexual Exploitation/Prostitution and Conspiracy to violate civil rights. The.

It must be additionally kept in mind that while the remaining 43 cases in this study were unilaterally prosecuted under the TVPA, this legislation has undergone nine amendments between 2000 and 2019 ([Polaris Project, 2019](#)). These amendments have included a broadening of those crimes that fall under the scope of the legislation, meaning that the cases included in the Case Law Database have undoubtedly changed in part over time. The database is therefore certainly not a complete picture of sex trafficking crimes in the United States, but rather a presents a snapshot of prosecuted cases of sex trafficking crimes involving female defendants in the United States over the past two decades.

### 3.2. Variables

All case summaries were coded by the first author based on the information provided in the case files, and categories of roles established by means of a hybrid inductive and deductive thematic analysis ([Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006](#)). Ten percent of the

cases was then coded by a second coder in order to assess Interrater Reliability.

Cohen's  $\kappa$  was run to determine the extent of interrater reliability. There was agreement between the two coders,  $\kappa = 0.671$  (95% CI, 0.420 to 0.912),  $p < .005$ . This coding lead to the development of the following variables.

### 3.2.1. Operation characteristics

Operation Characteristics involved five separate variables which describe the makeup of the operation in which the female sex traffickers were involved.

- 1) Location. Location was coded as a single binary variable divided into international cases and domestic cases. International cases were defined as cases where victims who were not citizens of the United States were trafficked into the United States for the purpose of sex trafficking. Domestic cases were defined as cases where (naturalised) citizens of the United States are trafficked into the national commercial sex trade.
- 2) Number of Victims. This variable was coded into four size categories: 'single victim' (one victim), 'small' (2–5 victims), 'medium' (6–10 victims) and 'large' (>10 victims).
- 3) Number of Sex Traffickers. This variable was also coded into four size categories: single trafficker, two traffickers, 3–6 traffickers and >7 traffickers.
- 4) Age Victim. As the precise age was often not given, this was coded as a nominal variable with three possible outcomes: exclusively minors as victims, exclusively adults as victims or both adult and minor victims involved in the sex trafficking operation.
- 5) Age Trafficker. Age of the female sex trafficker was coded as an interval variable.

### 3.2.2. Status women

The aforementioned thematic analysis yielded seven distinct roles within the present sample, and as such were coded into binary dummy variables, as absent or present. When possible, roles that were described by previous literature were deduced from the data. However, as so few studies to date exist for leadership positions of female sex traffickers, an inductive approach was taken for these to cluster thematically duties that women performed while taking account their hierarchy. Utilising this approach, four positions of leadership were established within this sample.

- 1) Solo Leader. Solo Leaders were women who ran sex trafficking operations alone, with no further members involved in the operation.
- 2) Ringleader. This variable refers to women who were described as being the sole leader in operations involving multiple sex traffickers.
- 3) Co-leader. This variable was coded present when female sex traffickers co-ran a sex trafficking operation alongside a second, male trafficker.
- 4) Madam. Madam refers to a female sex trafficker who wasn't an outright leader of a sex trafficking operation but did run brothels or other institutions from which trafficking victims were sexually exploited.

The three remaining roles of women in sex trafficking operations concerned non-leadership positions:

- 1) Recruiters/Smugglers. Recruiters and Smugglers were those female sex traffickers whose primary duty it was to ensure that victims were recruited and/or smuggled across international borders and state lines in order for them to reach the destination where they were to be sexually exploited, as described by Kienast et al. (2015) and Aronowitz (2009).
- 2) Aider/Abetter. Aiders and Abettors were derived from Siegel and de Blank's (2010) description of 'supporters'. These women did not themselves participate in the organisational side of sex trafficking, but did in some way aid the operation, for instance by concealing the operation from law enforcement, or facilitating contact between victims and traffickers. These women were often not charged with sex trafficking crimes, but rather being charged with, as the name implies, aiding and abetting.
- 3) Bottom. The definition for 'Bottom' was taken from Crocker (2016), in which a female victim of sex trafficking rises through the ranks of the operation until she becomes a male trafficker's "most trusted prostitute". Active participation in prostitution at the time of arrest was not regarded as a necessary prerequisite for female traffickers to be considered a 'Bottom', as occasionally their prostitution did cease when they acquired this rank within the sex trafficking operation.

Aside from these seven distinct roles, 'Leadership' was also coded separately as a binary variable, in order to see whether differences could be observed within the broader distinction of women holding either leadership or subordinate positions within the sex trafficking operations.

### 3.2.3. Duties

Aside from their principle role in the sex trafficking operation, the individual duties that women performed within their roles were also coded in this study. Once again, an inductive thematic analysis was performed, where similar duties were clustered under themes from which variables were derived. Each variable was coded as binary, with 'yes' meaning the women did perform said duty, and 'no' if she did not. A total of nine duties were described in the cases:

1. *Recruit*. Here, female sex traffickers recruited new victims into the sex trafficking operation for the purpose of sexual exploitation.



2. *Smuggle*. This involved duties that concerned smuggling victims across national (state) or international borders for the purpose of sexual exploitation.
3. *Prostitution*. Here, the female sex traffickers were themselves sex workers in the commercial sex trade.
4. *Arranging Clients*. This involved female sex traffickers organising clients for the purpose of sexually exploiting victims involved in the operation.
5. *Facilitating Contact*. This duty involved the female sex trafficker acting as an intermediary between the victims and higher-ranking sex traffickers. For instance, the female sex trafficker could speak the same language as the victim or was more trusted by the victim and was therefore assigned the duty of relaying the higher-ranking trafficker's wishes to the victim.
6. *Administrative Duties*. Administrative duties could be a) financial, such as collecting money from clients, b) commercial, such as creating and posting internet advertisements soliciting clients for the victims of sex trafficking, or c) organisational, such as arranging for drivers to bring victims to and from their 'appointments' at clients' houses.
7. *Control*. Control involved the female sex trafficker ensuring compliance from the victims, for instance through physical or psychological threats and intimidation, or guarding the location where the victims were kept.
8. *Mentoring*. This variable was coded as present when the female sex trafficker mentored the victims in how they should conduct sex work, from teaching them what to wear, communication with clients and the collection of money from said clients.
9. *Hiding Operation*. This involved any kind of active concealment of the sex trafficking operation from legal authorities, such as bribing police officers or lying to law enforcement officials in order to ensure the operation was kept running.

#### 3.2.4. Relationship with male

Finally, the present study also looked at the relationship female sex traffickers had to their respective male sex trafficker, if there was indeed a male trafficker also involved in the operation. Two variables were used to gauge this relationship. The first was *Proportion Women*. This variable looked at the proportion of women that were involved in the operation in contrast to the number of males involved. This included dividing the number of female traffickers by the total number of traffickers. Thus, if there was one female trafficker involved and two male traffickers, the variable would have been coded as '0.33', while if there were one female and one male trafficker involved, the variable was coded as '0.5'. It follows logically that if there were only women involved, the variable was coded as '1'.

The second was *Relationship Male Trafficker*, which was coded as a nominal variable with three outcomes: a) *none*, where there was no apparent relationship between the male and female trafficker aside from as business partners; b) *familial*, where the female sex trafficker was in some way related to the male trafficker and c) *romantic*, where the female sex trafficker was engaged in a romantic relationship with the male trafficker.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Operation characteristics

The final sample was comprised of 44 female traffickers: 24 (55%) of which were domestic and 20 (46%) which were international sex traffickers operating in the U.S. The international operations originated predominantly from South American countries ( $n = 9$ , 31%) and Asian countries ( $n = 7$ , 16%). The remainder consisted of three (7%) operations from Russia, one (2%) originating from Guam and another from Togo (2%).

#### 4.1.1. Size of operation

In terms of overall size of the trafficking operations involving women, the most frequently reported makeup of the operations included two traffickers ( $n = 21$ , 47%), with all but one of these operations consisting of one female and one male trafficker ( $n = 20$ , 46%). Approximately one third of all operations consisted of between three to six traffickers ( $n = 13$ , 30%), while 14% were large operations ( $n = 6$ , 14%), consisting of seven or more traffickers. Four operations involved only a single female trafficker ( $n = 4$ , 9%).

The number of victims for each trafficking operation was also assessed. Ten operations (26%) involved one single victim, while 11 operations involved between two to five victims (29%). Five operations involved six to ten victims (13%), while one third of the operations ( $n = 13$ ; 33%) involved ten or more victims.

#### 4.1.2. Age

An examination of the age of the victims of sex trafficking operations involving female traffickers revealed that slightly more than one third ( $n = 16$ , 36%) had only minor victims; slightly less than one third had only adults victims ( $n = 13$ , 30%) and approximately one third had both minor and adult victims ( $n = 15$ , 34%).

The age of the female trafficker was only reported in 18 operations (41%). Of those where age was reported, the mean age of the female trafficker was found to be 36 (range 21–63 years).

### 4.2. Role of female sex traffickers

Based upon the previous literature and the thematic analysis conducted by the authors, as outlined in section 3.2.2, seven distinct roles of women within trafficking operations were derived from the sample. All in all, twenty-two trafficking operations involved women in positions of non-leadership (52%) while in twenty operations (48%) women were described as having positions of

leadership within the sex trafficking operation. In two operations, the role of the female sex trafficker was not described, and thus excluded from the analysis. Each role will be illustrated with a brief example derived from the current sample.

#### 4.2.1. Solo leader

Four operations (9%) concerned women as Solo Leaders of the sex trafficking operation. An example of a solo leader is demonstrated by “Ms. O”, a thirty-five-year-old Russian national, who smuggled her eighteen-year-old niece from Russia to Hollywood, LA. Upon her arrival, Ms. O forced her to repay her smuggling debt through prostitution. She hid her niece’s passport, destroyed her plane ticket home and warned her not to go to the authorities on pain of being arrested for entering the country illegally. Ms. O’s niece was subjected to regular beatings, threats and rape by strangers, and all the money earned through prostitution was confiscated by Ms. O.

#### 4.2.2. Ringleader

A further four operations (9%) reported women as ringleaders of sex trafficking operations. One such operation involved three female ringleaders from Brazil. These three traffickers set up a pipeline for smuggling adult Brazilian women to the United States in order to force them into prostitution in Atlanta, Georgia. The victims were lured under false promises of getting them jobs as saleswomen. One of the ringleaders took sexually provocative pictures of the victims and threatened to send them to the victim’s families if they did not comply and work as prostitutes.

#### 4.2.3. Co-leader

Co-leaders were the most frequently reported leadership position of women in the sample, with eight operations (19%) involving female sex traffickers who co-lead the operation alongside a male trafficker. For example, “Ms. W” and “Mr. K” co-headed a sex trafficking operation which induced Chinese, Taiwanese and Fijian women into travelling to American Samoa. The women were promised work on arrival, but instead were locked in a brothel and forced to repay the traffickers for their travel expenses through prostitution. Victims were threatened regularly with physical violence and food deprivation by both sex traffickers. In addition, Ms. W threatened to hurt the victim’s families if they refused to comply. For the six months the women were imprisoned, they were forced to have sexual intercourse with around fifty to seventy customers, suffering multiple complications and injuries as a result.

#### 4.2.4. Madam

Five operations (12%) involved women as ‘Madams’ within a sex trafficking operation. In one operation, “Ms. L” ran a brothel in the Chinatown neighbourhood of New York City, where women from Thailand were forced to engage in commercial sex acts in order to repay their smuggling debts. The traffickers who smuggled the victims to the brothel “owned” these victims, and regularly returned to the brothel to collect money from Ms. L. Violence and threats of violence were used to keep the women under the control of the traffickers. Court documents reveal that Ms. L told one of the victims she would only be allowed to leave once she had engaged in commercial sex acts with 400 customers.

#### 4.2.5. Recruiters/smugglers

Recruiters and Smugglers were the least common reported category, with only one operation reporting a female with this as their exclusive role (2%). In this operation, two sisters and their mother were paid to recruit and smuggle women from Mexico to San Antonio. Their job was to coerce these women by buying them new clothes and giving them English lessons, promising them marriage or travel with American men. They told the victims they would not have to engage in sexual intercourse with these men. The recruiters then brought the victims to a fourth trafficker, who subsequently told them they would have to work as prostitutes for five years to repay their smuggling debts to the traffickers.

#### 4.2.6. Aider/abettor

Seven operations (16%) involved women whose primary role was that of an aider/abettor to another trafficker. “Mrs. C” demonstrates such an aider. Her husband, “Mr. C”, was the ringleader in an operation concerning between fifty to sixty South Korean girls and women, whom he kept imprisoned at his house and forced to work at his club in Texas. “Mrs. C” aided her husband in the supervision of the victims by for instance monitoring the video surveillance system that was installed to monitor the victim’s entries and departures at the house. She also worked at his club as a hostess. She was charged with aiding and abetting the employment of unlawful aliens.

#### 4.2.7. Bottom

The most commonly reported role in the sample was that of ‘Bottom’ (n = 14, 33%). “Mr. G” and “Ms. T”’s operation describes such a female trafficker. Ms. T was Mr. G’s “Bottom” and was in charge of the day-to-day affairs of the business, such as arranging appointments, training new recruits, handling finances and handling the thirty or so women in his trafficking operation. Mr. G is described as the “pimp” who focussed more on recruitment, retention and enforcement of the victims.

### 4.3. Responsibilities of female sex traffickers

An analysis of the dataset demonstrated that female sex traffickers often held multiple duties as shown in Table 3. The frequencies and percentages refer to the number of female traffickers out of the sample that performed these duties and are not mutually exclusive. The most reported duty of female traffickers was controlling the victim(s) (n = 26, 62%). This included controlling the victim through

physical punishment, threats of physical punishment and/or guarding the locations where victims were housed in order to prevent their escape. The next most frequent duty of female traffickers was administrative ( $n = 23$ ; 55%) such as managing the operation's finances, renting hotel rooms and organising internet advertising. The third most commonly reported duty was that of arranging clients ( $n = 21$ , 50%), such as managing responses to internet advertisements, taking phone calls with potential clients, or talking to clients in person. In 17 operations (40%), women aided in recruitment of victims, while in eight operations they smuggled the victim(s) across borders (19%). Twelve operations involved women who engaged in the commercial sex industry alongside victims (29%), while in eight operations women mentored other victims, teaching them how to solicit clients, how to comport themselves in the presence of these clients and how much to charge them (19%). In seven operations, women were described as actively concealing the operation from law enforcement.

#### 4.4. Relationship between male and female sex traffickers

The mean proportion of men to women in the operation was 0.56 (see [table 4](#)). Most operations that involved two traffickers constituted one male and one female trafficker, with one exception of two sisters who ran a sex trafficking operation alone. Four trafficking operations were run only by women.

Ten operations (26%) female sex traffickers involved romantically with a male trafficker within the operation, either as partner, girlfriend or wife. A further eight operations (21%) mentioned operations where the female sex trafficker had a familial tie to the male sex trafficker, such as a sister or mother. The majority of operations ( $n = 20$ , 53%) did not report a relationship between the male and female sex traffickers.

### 5. Discussion

This study examined the characteristics of domestic and international female sex traffickers in the U.S. using a large database of sex trafficking cases. Three main domains were examined, namely the makeup of the operations from which female sex traffickers operate; the roles and duties of female sex traffickers and finally their relationship to male sex traffickers. Overall, we found that female sex traffickers were operating at all hierarchical tiers of both domestic and international sex trafficking operations, they were fulfilling a wide spectrum of roles and responsibilities, and they operated both apart from and alongside male sex traffickers.

#### 5.1. Operation characteristics

In terms of operation characteristics, the resounding finding was that there is no one type of sex trafficking operation in which women operate. There was an almost equal split in the location of operations, with half being domestic and the other half international. In addition, there was an equal three-way split between female sex traffickers in minor-victim only operations, adult-victim only operations and operations containing both minor and adult victims. The number of victims within operations in which female sex traffickers were found also varied immensely. A quarter of operations consisted of a sole victim; a quarter containing two to five victims, a tenth contained six to ten victims and a third contained ten or more victims. These findings suggest that female sex traffickers may permeate the entire spectrum of sex trafficking operations. However, as this is one of the first studies to examine the operational characteristics of the operations in which female sex traffickers are involved more research with larger samples is needed to better understand how the characteristics of the operation and female traffickers intersect.

The number of sex traffickers within these operations did reveal that almost half of all operations were made up of one male and one female trafficker, while only about one tenth of the sample consisted of only female traffickers. These findings are in line with the work of [Siegel and de Blank's \(2010\)](#), who found that women working alongside a male trafficker were the most frequently reported type of female sex trafficker.

An explanation as to why female sex traffickers so frequently appeared in conjunction with a male trafficker is that this sample consists of prosecuted cases of sex trafficking and it has been theorized that the detection, investigation and prosecution of sex trafficking operations is influenced by law enforcements gendered stereotypes of female sex traffickers ([Jones, 2014](#)). Thus, it is possible that this finding may be more of a reflection of the type of cases law enforcement is more likely to detect and prosecute, rather than a reflection of the general structure of operations involving female sex traffickers.

#### 5.2. Roles and responsibilities of female sex traffickers

The results of this study support [Kienast, Lakner and Neulet's \(2015\)](#) finding that women are "involved in all stages of the organisations, from the recruitment over the supervision of prostitutes and finances up to the leading positions" (p.138) as we identified seven distinct roles in the sample including both leadership and non-leadership roles.

##### 5.2.1. Leadership positions

Half of the female traffickers in the sample had leadership roles within their trafficking operations including serving as a solo-leader, ringleaders, a co-leader alongside male sex traffickers and acting as a madam. While previous research has indicated that many women are coerced into involvement in sex trafficking operations, this high number of females in positions of leadership indicates that this thinking may be outdated. Indeed, it suggests that sex trafficking offences perpetrated by women could be at times an autonomous choice, independent of the presence of males, not as the commonly held stereotype in the United States goes that sex



trafficking crimes are the “offspring of a female’s lack of reasonable choice, rather than moral autonomy” (Jones, 2014, p. 154).

Interestingly, the overwhelming majority of women in leadership or co-leadership roles within sex trafficking roles were involved with international operations. One possible explanation for this finding is Jones’ (2014) suggestion that these differences rather than reflecting true differences between numbers of women in positions of leadership within sex trafficking operations, but rather reflect cultural ideations about femininity in the U.S. Jones suggests there is a “societal obsession” in the U.S. with recasting crimes committed by American females as non-agentic, where the woman has for instance been forced into committing the crime by a male accomplice (Jones, 2014 p.144). As such, domestic female leaders of sex trafficking operations may be detected or prosecuted at lower rates than their international counterparts. Alternatively, if female leaders are detected and prosecuted, they may not be prosecuted as the leaders of the operation but rather viewed as being coerced or victimized thus receiving lesser charges.

On the other hand, it is also plausible that the difference in figures reflect true differences between domestic and international female sex traffickers. For example, domestic female sex traffickers may themselves have internalised these cultural expectations of passivity and non-agency, and thus may indeed be less likely to assert themselves in a sex trafficking operation as leaders whereas within international operations female sex traffickers may not have been raised with these same cultural expectations. However, another plausible explanation is that domestic female sex traffickers enter operations for different purposes and in a different manner from their international counterparts. For instance, in one international case, three Brazilian women were prosecuted for setting up an international sex trafficking operation, trafficking impoverished young Brazilian women for the alleged purpose of obtaining them legal jobs in the U.S. The parents of one of these young women allegedly paid thousands of dollars for the women to take their daughter to the U.S. Once there, the three traffickers forced their victims into working in the commercial sex industry and confiscated the majority of the money the girls made. In this case it appears clear that the initial purpose of the female sex traffickers was to create and lead a sex trafficking operation for the purposes of economic gain. However, if we contrast this with a domestic case, such as the case of Ms. A and Mr. T, we get a rather different picture. Mr. T. recruited three minor girls between ages 15–17 to work in the commercial sex industry for him. Ms. A, who was involved in a romantic relationship with Mr. T, assisted in the running of his operation. She provided the girls with transportation, clothing, drugs and condoms and instructed them on the methods and pricing of their sex work. She also took payments from customers and directed them to the victims. Mr. T. kept all the money the three victims made.

Unlike in the international example, it is much less clear whether the initial purpose of Ms. A’s entry into the sex trafficking industry was for economic gain or whether Ms. A. was herself lured into the sex trafficking operation because of her relationship with Mr. T, and thus took on a subordinate role under the leadership of Mr. T. These two cases are of course only individual examples and not representative of domestic and international female sex traffickers as a whole, but they do illustrate how the different manners of entry and purposes of entry into sex trafficking operations may be part of the reason as to why international female sex traffickers are overrepresented in leadership roles in the current sample.

It is also noteworthy that of the four female ringleaders in the sample, three were female-dominated operations. One could reason that perhaps women deem other women more trustworthy than males, and thus choose to work with other female sex traffickers (UN. GIFT, 2008). However, it could also be that familial ties play a role in the formation of these female-dominated networks, as two of the four female ringleaders involved female traffickers who worked with family members. Having said that, given that there were only four cases involving female sex traffickers as ringleaders, it is important to note that no conclusions can be drawn from such a small sample. Further studies with larger sample sizes are needed in order to explore this potential finding.

### 5.2.2. Subordinate positions

The other half of the traffickers in this sample were involved in non-leadership roles such as recruiters and smugglers, aiders and abettors and “bottoms”. In this sample only one female trafficker was classified as a Recruiter or Smuggler, which is contrary to the findings from other studies which found that this is the most common role for females within sex trafficking operations (Aronowitz, 2009; Kienast et al., 2015; Wijkman and Kleemans, 2019). While for the majority of women in non-leadership roles recruitment was not their major function, 40% of the entire sample of female sex traffickers did perform some form of victim recruitment suggesting that recruitment may be part of a range of other duties they perform under a different role, such as bottom or even leader. This implies that there is a careful distinction to be made between duties and roles of female sex traffickers: the duty of recruiting victims does not seem to constitute an exclusive classification as a “recruiter”.

Almost all the females that engaged in aiding and abetting within the operation were either romantically involved with the male traffickers or had familial ties which is in line with Siegel and de Blank’s (2010) finding that female supporters within sex trafficking operations are often emotionally dependent on the male trafficker. It is also in line with Miccio-Fonseca (2017) who termed female sex trafficking a “family business” (p.30). For instance, in one case, Mrs. K was married to Mr. K, who ran a sex trafficking operation in which mentally ill American males were sexually exploited in the guise of “therapy”. Mrs. K. assisted her husband in many of the aspects of maintaining his operation by enforcing the house rules that her husband established such as forcing the victims to perform nude labour; carrying out punishments, such as the confiscation of the victims’ clothes and lying to law enforcement officials. During the court process, it was revealed that Mrs. K had a dependent personality disorder.

The role of “bottom” was almost the exclusive domain of domestic female sex traffickers, with thirteen of the fourteen “bottoms” observed originating from domestic operations. This is perhaps unsurprising, seeing as the role of “bottom” has been described as common among female domestic sex traffickers (Crocker, 2016). In line with Crocker’s findings, the eighty percent (n = 11) of these “bottoms” continued to be sold into the commercial sex industry as part of their duties. However, Crocker (2016) also suggested that bottoms may perform a recruiting role as part of their duties, while findings from this study demonstrated that only three bottoms did so. This finding indicates that more research is needed into the exact duties that a bottom performs within a sex trafficking operation.

The most commonly reported responsibility of female traffickers within the operations was one of control. Over sixty percent of

female sex traffickers performed roles which included controlling their victims to gain compliance through the use of physical or psychological punishment. In one case for instance, Ms. T., a Russian national, regularly punished her victim physically to ensure her compliance, including an occasion where the victim was beaten with a Teflon pot. To hide the victim's physical injuries, she was ordered to stay out of sight of others. Ms. T. additionally threatened to cause the victim's family in Russia physical and economical harm if she did not comply. This is contrary to the commonly held stereotype in the U.S. of females as exclusively victims and males as exclusively aggressors within sex trafficking operations (Reid, 2016), but somewhat supports Kienast, Lakner and Neulet's (2014) finding that women may be involved in the managing and handling of female sex workers, as well as guarding them in brothels. However, the study emphasises that these women's *modus operandi* for ensuring compliance is "usually emotional and based on manipulation" and that "female offenders are less willing to use violence than men", while the present study's findings lean more towards Jones' (2014) conceptualization such that "the female trafficker's ability to manipulate trust, and organize and employ violence-particularly against ... appears to rival that of male human traffickers" (p.157).

In line with previous findings, a large proportion of the female sex traffickers in the present sample reported administrative duties. For instance, Kienast, Lakner and Neulet (2014) found that "women can be involved in ... the financial aspects of the exploitation, but also in the making of administrative steps such as renting houses" (p.138). These duties were particularly common for women in submissive roles in the operation, while controlling roles were more common for leaders of the operations, implying that the duties performed by female sex traffickers differ depending on the nature of their role within the operation.

Finally, one third of the women in this sample continued to work in the commercial sex industry themselves alongside their victims, while a fifth also mentored victims in the duties they were expected to perform. This finding raises the question whether it is wise for the TVPA to hold such clear distinctions between victims and perpetrators, as it may be that despite performing some duties that may be akin to those of a sex trafficker, the label of victim may still be applicable to these women. Take the case of Ms. S. for instance, a domestic sex trafficker working under a pimp, Mr. D. Despite performing administrative, controlling and mentoring duties under a sex trafficking operation run by Mr. D., she was also expected to participate in the commercial sex industry herself and was beaten by Mr. D. when she did something against his will. It is thus very difficult to establish with clarity whether Ms. S. should be considered a victim or trafficker, as we do not know to what extent Ms. S. performed her responsibilities as sex trafficker autonomously, or out of fear of punishment from Mr. D.

### 5.3. Relationships between male and female sex traffickers

Half of the operations in the present sample did not report a relationship between the male and female sex traffickers while one quarter of the sample had a romantic relationship between the female and male sex trafficker, and a smaller percentage were family members. This contrasts Broad's study (2015), who found three quarters of her sample of female sex traffickers offended with their intimate partner. It is also interesting to note that of the cases in which one male and one female trafficker were in charge, half had no relationship between them, while one third were related countering the stereotype of the female sex trafficker being the "ignorant wife or girlfriend" of the male trafficker (Siegel and de Blank 2010). Rather, this finding suggests that it is perhaps somewhat irrelevant to examine the role of the female sex trafficker in terms of degrees of independence from the male sex trafficker, as most often there is no relationship with the male trafficker other than business associate.

### 5.4. Implications

The findings of this study have implications for policy, law enforcement and academia alike. First, by providing a data driven classification of female sex traffickers, the present study provides a platform from which further empirical studies of female sex traffickers can be launched. The importance of this data-driven approach was highlighted by Godziak and Bump (2008), who demonstrated in their literature review of 1500 articles concerning human trafficking that less than a third contained empirical studies, and those that did often relied heavily on anecdotal stories and interviews with 'key stakeholders'. This study therefore represents an important step in amending the lack of empirical analysis of human trafficking, and thus filling the global deficit in knowledge about human traffickers, and female traffickers in particular, which was highlighted by the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT, 2008).

Second, this study could be of use to law enforcement officials, in that it furthers our understanding of the different roles played by female sex traffickers. This understanding is necessary in order to facilitate law enforcement identification and apprehension of these traffickers earlier on in the process. Simply put: if the role of the female sex trafficker is correctly interpreted, we will be better able to apprehend and prosecute traffickers and as a result stop the cycle of recruitment and exploitation of victims of sex trafficking operations.

As the UN.GIFT report phrased it: "the more information that is known about actors at each tier of the trafficking hierarchy, interventions can be mounted earlier in the process" (p.10).

Finally, perhaps the most important implication of this study is that it highlights the need for policy change in the U.S. It appears clear from this study that the female-victim, male-perpetrator dichotomy does not hold true: victim-perpetrator lines are often blurred; and the roles designated by current policy are biased by cultural gender expectations in the U.S.

Future policy should thus be guided by evidence-based findings in order to ensure unbiased and fair prosecution of female sex traffickers.

#### 5.4. Limitations

This study is not without limitations. The source from which our data was extracted varied in both the quantity and quality of data available for each case. This had several implications. First, because the database only contains successfully prosecuted cases, we may be missing vital information from cases which escaped prosecution. As noted by Aronowitz: “police and court (official) statistics provide us with a good, but limited, picture of people who have been arrested on (suspicion of) human trafficking charges. This is only a limited picture, for it tells us nothing about those traffickers who have not yet come to the attention of the authorities” (2009, p. 51). The results found by this study are thus limited by the biases of what law enforcement officials have deemed worthy of prosecution. For instance, it could be that the true number of domestic female sex traffickers lies far higher than this study suggests, but due to the fact that law enforcement officials do not readily suspect females of being in charge of sex trafficking operations, it may be that they either escaped prosecution or were prosecuted as holding a lower role than their male counterparts.

Second, it may be that important information was missed since it wasn’t noted in the online database or during the court process, which could have skewed findings. For instance, it could be that the female traffickers engaged in more violence than the data suggests, but that victims did not mention this during court proceedings due to fear of persecution, and thus was marked as absent in the analysis of the present data. It is also plausible that more female sex traffickers had familial ties or romantic relationships than the data suggests, but that these were simply not uncovered by law enforcement, and again was therefore marked as absent in the current study. In order to minimise the possibilities of this missing data, each case from the UNODC database was supplemented with information from other online sources, such as press releases and court transcriptions. However, in order to combat this issue in the future, researcher could consider the use of different sources for data collection, such as conducting interviews with victims and traffickers alike in order to ensure that potentially important information is not overlooked.

Third, because the data focussed on prosecution primarily, it failed to consider the history of the traffickers, and thus we could not examine the path to offending that female traffickers took. This meant that it was impossible to draw conclusions as to the manner in which female traffickers entered the sex trafficking operation, which would have given an important insight into the dynamics of the role female sex trafficker in relation to the other traffickers in the operation. For instance, it could be that two female Partners-in-Crime took two very different paths to offending. One could have constructed the operation together with her husband as part of a joint scheme with an equal division of power, while the other could have been coerced into doing so by a boyfriend who threatened the woman with physical violence if she did not comply. However, because we did not have this information, both females would have been marked as holding the same role within a sex trafficking operation in the present study. This highlights a further need to conduct exploratory research in multiple modalities, for instance through interviewing sex traffickers themselves, which may provide more complete information than the data that the present study relied on.

#### 5.5. Further directions

The present study provides a platform from which future academic research on female sex traffickers can be conducted. The seven-fold classification of female sex traffickers requires further study with a larger sample in order for it to become a valuable tool for law enforcement and policymakers to employ in the detection and prosecution of female sex traffickers. In addition, several novel findings were highlighted by the present study that require further examination. For instance, it would be interesting to delve further into the exact relationship between female ringleaders and other female sex traffickers within the operation: whether female ringleaders are more likely to recruit other females to work for them or whether they are more likely to operate within a family-based network for instance. Finally, future studies should aim to replicate the current studies’ findings using other methods of data collection: through for instance interviews with the traffickers themselves, or perhaps police case files rather than court case information, as these may be more detailed or at least include details that to a court case may be superfluous, but could be highly informative for research.

#### Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest. This research has received no funding.

#### Appendix

**Table 1**  
Operation characteristics

Variable	N	% of cases
<i>Location</i>		
Domestic	24	54.5
International	20	45.5
<i>Size of Operation</i>		
<i>Number of victims</i>		
Single Victim	10	25.6
Small (2–5 Victims)	11	28.5
Medium (6–10)		

(continued on next page)

**Table 1** (continued)

Variable	N	% of cases
Victims)	5	12.8
Large (10+ Victims)	18	33.33
<i>Number of sex traffickers</i>		
1	4	9.1
2	21	47.0
3-6	6	13.6
>7	13	29.5
<i>Age Victim</i>		
Exclusively Minor(s)	16	36.4
Exclusively Adult(s)	13	29.5
Adult + Minors	15	34.1

**Table 2**

## Role of Female Sex Traffickers

Variable	N	%
Solo Leader	4	9.3
Ringleader	4	9.3
Co-Leader	8	18.6
Madam	5	11.6
Recruiter/Smuggler	1	2.3
Aider/Abetter	7	16.3
Bottom	14	32.6

**Table 3**

## Duties of Female Sex Traffickers

Variable	N	%
Recruit	17	40.0
Smuggle	8	19.0
Prostitution	12	28.6
Arranging Clients	21	50.0
Facilitating Contact	6	14.3
Administrative Duties	23	54.8
Control	26	61.9
Mentoring	8	19.0
Hiding Operation	7	16.6

**Table 4**

## Relationship to Male Trafficker

Variable	N	%
<i>Proportion Women</i>		
0.06	1	2.3
0.3	5	11.6
0.4	2	4.7
0.5	23	53.5
0.6	2	4.7
0.7	2	4.7
0.8	1	2.3
0.9	1	2.3
1	6	14.0
<i>Relationship to Male</i>		
Familial	8	21.1
Romantic	10	26.3
None	20	52.6

In 6 cases, data was unavailable as to the relationship of the male with the female sex trafficker.

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