

CHAPTER 8

The Bodies of the Trafficked

Helena Maleno

Introduction

This chapter arises from the concern about the sex trafficking victims in migratory transit through Morocco. Its objective is to show how Europe's southern border externalization and militarization policies affect the rights of women who are victims of trafficking and how the policies affect the control strategies that trafficking networks exert over the women's bodies. Human trafficking cannot be understood without the context of supply and demand, and it is within this framework that we situate the cross-border trafficking coming from sub-Saharan Africa, emphasizing two elements: feminization and long transit journeys.

This chapter is based on ethnographic research and an analysis of 356 in-depth interviews that took place between 2010 and 2013 with women who were victims under the control of a trafficking network. Criteria established by World Health Organization (2003) experts were followed in the fieldwork and the interviews. In the analysis we introduce excerpts from some of the women's narratives. Most of the interviews, conducted using an open-ended format, took place in Morocco, in the cities of Rabat, Nador, Casablanca, Tangiers, and Castillejo. Research also took place in Benin City in Nigeria's Edo state; it is the place of origin of at least 80 percent of the women trafficking victims in migratory transit.

The methodology consists of an interpretative exercise and of a process of listening to the women over an extended period. Utmost care was taken when it came to the issue of the women's safety during the period of contact; the relationship established between the researcher

and the women involved accompaniment and feedback that can last years (Cwikel and Hoban, 2005). The information gathered has been used for different reports, but also has served to be used in the empowerment of the women and of the organizations and professionals who intervene with them.

Working with sex trafficking victims^[1] in migratory transit countries, such as Morocco, where abortion, prostitution, and immigration are criminalized, behooves us to develop creative, long-term strategies where situations that affect the women's safety are totally guaranteed^[2].

We will examine the information obtained concerning the origins of the victims, treating as an endemic case the trafficking coming from Nigeria, in particular from Edo state. Later we will discuss transport and transit, defining geography as a space of risk and violence. The long stays in Morocco will be painted as waiting periods for the women, where infringement of their rights leads to victimization.

We will also write about the women in terms of border policies, and finally, in conclusion, explain the forms of resistance established outside of border controls and the control exercised by the traffickers.

Endemism at the Origin

Women, girls and adolescent trafficking victims who come from sub-Saharan Africa are inserted in the migratory flows that cross North Africa in hopes of reaching the European continent. In their narratives they mention the lack of work opportunities, poverty, and above all the search for better economic, social, and political conditions as well as access to basic rights as triggers for

their departure. Many of them come from countries suffering from conflicts or natural disasters or that have a slavery tradition.¹

Women, girls, and adolescents with low levels of education and high illiteracy have suffered tremendously from gender inequality, including constant violence, both intrafamily and sociopolitical.

Mary E., from Cameroon, was in an arranged marriage with a man 30 years her senior. She remembers each sex act as a rape. She had three children with her husband. One day, a man in the market offered her a trip to Europe, telling her she would have work and good opportunities there. She fled her husband in the nighttime and met up with this man; four other women were traveling with him (Interview with Mary E., 2010).

Many of them, single mothers and/or adolescents, were victims of sexual violence and had been subject to genital mutilation. Her conversations were filled with references to sexual abuse, polygamy, and forced marriage, as elements that prompted her to accept the proposal from the human trafficking network. In their conversations, life in Europe was idealized as an opportunity for personal development, at the economic and community level.

One main factor is that the victims come from populations where movement—both transnational and local—is part of the cultural identity of the community. Beauty, a Nigerian adolescent, explains that moving about is as natural as breathing. As a result, when they offered her travel to Europe, she thought it would be an easy thing to do. She could not understand that

¹ Such as that described by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC] (2006).

crossing borders could be complicated. Her family, her grandmother and her mother, constantly went from place to place in search of a better life (Interview with Beauty, 2011).

The feminization of poverty and migration has put women, girls, and adolescents in the sights of human trafficking networks; in the context of demand the victims find specific work niches, such as being caregivers and the growing cross-border sex market. Thus, human trafficking, whose victims are women, girls, and adolescents, has become endemic in many areas of their countries of origin in sub-Saharan Africa.

A large number of victims come from Edo state, in Nigeria, where they are found to be in transit to Morocco. In this Nigerian state, human trafficking has become one of the region's stronger economic resources, which has brought about a “normalization” of this international crime in the community.

Faith J. lives in Benin City. She has seven daughters. Three have gone to school, but the other four are illiterate. One of the pastors of a church they attend on Sundays proposed sending one of them to Europe. At first, she felt a bit of distrust. She knew that some women go there to be prostitutes, but the pastor explained that those who get sent would save the rest of the family, and that God would forgive everything. Faith at first thought of sending two of the prettiest, but one of her neighbors, whose brother was in Morocco, told her they liked younger girls in Europe. So Faith decided to send her youngest daughters, ages 13 and 15 (Interview with Faith J., 2011).

The case of Edo state deserves special attention. At the end of the 1980s, Edo state began sending women to Europe through the trafficking networks, with Italy and Spain being the major

entryways (Agbu, 2003). This has been underpinned for three decades by a social structure where polygamy is common, men often don't support their families, and family responsibilities wind up in the women's hands. For these single women and mothers of families, sexual exploitation is also seen as a factor of autonomy and mobility.

The traditional structure strongly contrasts with the economic intrusion of human trafficking into the area in an ethnic group that rejects prostitution in social terms. The trafficking networks, in the context of endemic trafficking, are seen by the women, girls, and adolescents as an opportunity to facilitate movement, recognized as a customary right, in a postcolonial context of the closing of borders and limits to the freedom of movement. Also, the traffickers represent the trafficking of human beings as an opportunity for community development.

The traffickers, during the ensnarement process, make use of the parents, relatives, friends, and acquaintances of the victims, and in many cases recruitment is also facilitated by leaders of the community, government officials and administrators, and representatives of religious organizations.

Trafficking is backed, on many occasions, by the family structure that transforms it into a sacrifice, the price to pay for the progress of the family and of the community. Other families and victims are deceived, being offered work in a hair salon, cleaning homes, or taking care of children. In any case, in the popular imagination, sending a daughter abroad puts the family in a position of higher status.

Voodoo, *gris-gris*, and *juju*, ceremonies tied to traditional beliefs, form part in the ensnarement of the victims in the beginning and are defining elements of trafficking networks coming from sub-Saharan Africa (Aghatise, 2005). The ensnarement is recreated in *juju*

ceremonies and operates at a spiritual level. This primordial ceremony will act as a form of control during the exploitation period. It also is the moment where, through the contract, victims are allowed to break taboos prohibited by tradition.

These ceremonies show the power that the group has over the victims, dictating their duties, but on the other hand protecting them and exempting them from all responsibility. Forgiveness for any individual actions is assumed by the community itself. Being a member of the group gives the individual physical and spiritual security. This is also how the trafficking networks operate, appropriating for themselves the role of the community and acting as the social structure for the trafficked women and adolescents, ensuring not only the transfer of the victim but also as a result control over her thinking (Mojeed, 2008). The mechanism of control of *juju* guarantees the fidelity of the victim and permits the network to control her without having to exercise physical control over her, as seen in Huqueleux (2008).

The psychological consequences of this control relationship are very serious, above all as time stretches on. The woman loses control over her life, and perceives as proper the roles imposed on her by the trafficking network controllers. The victims then feel shame, blame, isolation, fear, low self-esteem, and, above all, submission. The results of this control over women and adolescents manifest themselves through distress, behavioral problems, nightmares, a depressed state, shame and self-blame, and a loss of confidence in themselves and in others.

Tina is a Nigerian. She is a strong believer in *juju*; she also knows that being a prostitute in Europe and the debt they ask of her are exorbitant prices to pay. She knows she will not be able to leave the network until she pays the money they seek, and tries to justify her position and her beliefs. She explains that her mother took her to the local oracle. There she met a representative of the *madame*. The

oracle gathered pubic and armpit hair, bits of toenails and fingernails, and menstrual blood. All this was placed in a small bag that stayed in Nigeria. The oracle said a few words, and she made her oath. She convulsively explained that if someone does not fulfill the oath, then *juju* would be capable of doing anything in retaliation. She understands that whites do not believe in *juju*, but that does not mean that *juju* does not have power. For Tina to leave the network, she would have to betray *juju*, and she is not ready to do that (Interview with Tina, 2012).

Transport and Transit

For trafficking victims, borders and the migratory transit are places of violence. The women recount this situation with stories where time loses its power and is replaced by human rights infringement.

Precious, a Nigerian, sought asylum in Morocco. She did not remember how long she spend on her journey, only the names of the cities they took her through. But she did talk about rapes along the border, deaths in the desert, and the abortions. These events marred her personal history. When Precious sought asylum, it was denied because her story did not have dates or names (Interview with Precious, 2013).

Land transportation has become one of the most important routes used by trafficking networks coming from sub-Saharan Africa, because it is cheaper, more easily evades border controls, and allows more women to be moved at the same time.

The human trafficking networks share the roads with the migratory flows that cross from sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa. They also are the same routes for drug and arms trafficking;

this produces maximum-risk situations and manages to mix these three dangerous businesses. In this sense, the routes wind up objectifying the victims again, seeing them in their role as merchandise.

The troubled situations with respect to safety, or armed conflicts, that the migratory journeys cross, such as in Libya or the war situation in the north of Mali, cause the trafficking victims to be truly invisible in these war contexts, being more vulnerable to violence and forced disappearances.

Mary J. was taken by a trafficking network to Libya. When the clashes began, Mary and her 10 colleagues were hidden. The people from the network who had taken them to Tripoli abandoned them. She says that many armed men entered the house. They pushed them out; later, the rapes began. Some of these men fired shots at them; Mary and one of her friends were unharmed. They fled and were recovered by members of the network, who offered to take them to Morocco. Mary thinks every day about Libya and her lost colleagues (Interview with Mary J., 2013).

Long journeys are defined by the risks, where paradoxically the trafficking network turns into the guarantor for the security of the victims; during this time, security is undertaken by the *recruiter* or by the *guideman*.² The women, girls, and adolescents say the violence of the journey takes place during three important times: crossing the desert, border crossings, and the arrival in Morocco for the last stop before the trip to Europe. These spaces are seen by the women as the most complicated passages; their memories also involve their own bodies. This was shown by Beauty; when I met with a group of the women, at first she remained hidden, without talking,

² The accompanying person during the victim's journey

while five of her colleagues talked about the violence, shouting at the same time. In contrast, Beauty remained hidden in her shack. Suddenly, Beauty elbowed her way in. She remained silent, but began to take off her clothes. Her body was covered with scars. There were marks where she had been whipped, cigarette burns, and other scars where her skin had been burned. Her colleagues looked at her in silence as she began to put her clothes back on.

It is the bodily map of a migratory journey where institutional violence has equal or greater weight than the networks' violence. In their stories, the women talk about long journeys on foot, being transported in trucks that cross the desert, and above all, the colleagues who died as a result of violence. Their memories seem confused and distant, and victims talk about their own experiences in the third person (Carling, 2005).

In this sense, in the stories of the women, girls, and adolescents, sexual violence is the most traumatic because it involves their awareness of the trafficking network's control over them. Many of the victims explain their initiation into sexual exploitation during the border crossings, as merchandise paid to the security forces. Others are given to "road husbands" by the network; some of them who refused this arrangement talk about group rapes as a form in which the network exercises control, such as in the case of Lali, who arrived at a forested border with Morocco. The man who had brought her told her she would have to sleep with one of the bosses there, and that beginning then and during the entire time she was there that she would have to be the boss's woman. Lali resisted. So they took her to an area near the forest. Ten men raped her, one after another, until she screamed obedience. She remembers that when she returned, the man who would be her husband for that period was waiting for her. She was good with him, and he was pleasant with her during those four months. After him there were two more, one of them the father of the baby who was in her arms when she greeted us (Interview with Lali, 2013).

It is sexual violence and the control over the body that defines power over the victims, because it is not seen, but hidden, and it has important effects on the sexual and reproductive health of the women, girls, and adolescents. In the narratives, the victims differentiate between private violence and public violence, just as Laacher's research (2010) defines it. The first is living in the community itself, which is identified with the trafficking network. The women, girls, and adolescents speak of threats, being locked up, and insults, but also of beatings, whippings, or punishments such as having boiling water thrown on their bodies. In the framework of sexual violence they talk of rapes, sodomy, sexual torture, and kidnappings. The second is what is produced through the institutional context, defined by the infringement of basic rights that the trafficking victims suffer upon being considered migrants in an irregular situation. Such is the case of Laura, who describes how she was sleeping at five in the morning when the police entered her home again; this was her third detention. The Moroccan police took her away wearing the same clothing she was sleeping in. They took her to a bus and handcuffed her. There were many people with them, of different nationalities. Laura was bleeding because a short time earlier she had had a clandestine abortion. They were taken to a Tangiers police station and then were moved to Oujda, and in the early morning they were sent to the border with Algeria. She contacted someone from the network; they took her to Oujda again to send her again to Tangiers. Left behind were two rapes at the border. She told us in her conversations that she at least had someone who helped her to return home, and that there were other women who did not have the same luck and who wound up stuck at that border, which was a living hell (Interview with Laura, 2013).

The women, girls, and adolescents describe the rapes by the state security forces that take place at the borders as bribes, and talk of the clandestine situations they suffer through. The

most-mentioned spaces where this type of institutional violence occurs are in the desert, the forests, and above all during deportations, where the victims talk about group rapes. Raids also form part of the women's consciousness of violence. During the raids, they lose all their belongings, clothing, money, phone, and everything else of value they possess.

Stuck in Morocco

Once in Morocco, the women, girls, and adolescents suffer a tremendous social rejection, which manifests itself in widespread discrimination and racism, and minimal access to a few inadequate social services from agencies incapable of helping even their own citizens. The authorities are incapable of guaranteeing access to basic rights for trafficking victims.

The survival strategies that are undertaken highlight the gender issues involved in human trafficking. To have a *husband*,³ a *boyfriend*,⁴ to stay pregnant, or move about in a group with other persons, are seen as elements that guarantee certain protection against Moroccan institutional violence (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2005). There are two survival activities that the victims exercise, always decided upon by the network: begging and prostitution. Most beg in public places, what the women call *salam aleikum*. Completely covered and veiled, they scatter about in the cities, most of the time accompanied by a minor.

³ Form part of the network and establish an emotional link with the victim and is the father of some of her children.

⁴ Is part of the network and establishes an emotional link with the victim but is not a father of her children.

Patricia does *salam aleikum*⁵ in Tangiers and Tetouan. One day she was begging in Rincon, on the coast of Tetouan. Patricia has an asylum request. She was detained and spent four days in the police station, isolated. She called someone in her community to advise the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), but that did not help and she was dumped at the Algerian border. Every day they sent her to beg with a different baby, the child of other women in the network. She knows that it is risky; one of her colleagues was raped by three police when they detained her because she was doing *salam aleikum*. She says the streets of Morocco are not safe for them, that she tries to cover herself as much as possible, camouflaged as a Muslim but even so, she lives in fear every day (Interview with Patricia, 2013).

Others practice prostitution, be it with members of the trafficking network, people from other migrant communities, or the native population. It takes place in private spaces, and the women's bodies are exposed. The victims are aware that their survival depends on strategies tied to their gender and of the network that considers them to be merchandise. In the narratives there are cross-cutting references about the weakness of the legal system in Morocco, which the women see as incapable of protecting their rights. Vera, for example, was forced to dance nude in front of military personnel. She remembers it as one of the toughest parts of her migratory journey. She has a big rear end and they made her put on a very tiny thong and move her derriere

⁵*Salam aleikum*, an Arabic greeting that can be translated as “Peace be with you,” is used by the migrant communities in Morocco as the opening expression in the act of begging. The immigrants have adapted this Arabic word to be the name of their practice of begging during their migratory transit, giving it another meaning in their imaginations.

in front of the military personnel. She knows that she could never report this situation; she says that in Morocco it is impossible without documentation. She explains that when her colleague went to report a rape, they detained her and later expelled her to the border with Algeria. Vera does not have confidence in any Moroccan institution, including the hospitals, where she says she has seen the detention of migrants who were sick.

Taking advantage of the women's defenselessness against institutional violence, the trafficking networks present themselves to the victims as a guarantor, refuge, and migratory survival strategy during the journey.

At the Border

The Kingdom of Morocco has, until now, been incapable of taking on the protection of the rights of trafficking victims, who are primarily seen as irregular immigrants subject to a punitive and repressive foreigners' law, promoted by the European Union and its externalization policies for the borders with North Africa. What happens is that border control collaboration has drawn a European southern border defined by spaces of exclusion of laws, international and/or national. The bilateral agreements between European countries and North Africa and the recent Mobility Accord established between Morocco and the European Union places institutional relations above the legal framework that guarantees people's rights. The aforementioned is expressed in situations like that experienced by Fatu:⁶

⁶ See the European Commission (2013).

Fatu was in the Nador forest. She had heard talk of a new mobility accord. She was fearful. She asked whether it was true that once she arrived in Spain, they would return her anew to Morocco. She had previously suffered other returns, some at the border between Algeria and Morocco, and others from Melilla to Nador. In Algeria they had thrown her out in the early morning with her small son, and then the area bandits and later the military showed up; she gave her body to everyone, her way of protecting her child. In Nador it was the same; that time her son was older. The Guardia Civil [Civil Guard] turned them over to the Moroccan military and they did it right there, even the Spanish guards could see it. She told her son to close his eyes.

Thus, the militarization of the south has built borders that bypass the states' regulatory authority, and the international agreements signed by them. They are spaces of exception where the free circulation of goods, and a security perspective for the control of the borders, is evident (Cuttitta et al., 2008). Within this political context of Europe's southern border, the human being becomes objectified, and turned into merchandise circulating through the zones of exception. In the face of this, the states bring out their argument that the closure of borders is a strategy for fighting the mafias.

But far from the political debate, the border reality paints another picture. The border becomes permeable for those who generate benefits, and the human trafficking networks see an opportunity in that. The militarization strengthens the trafficking networks, who present themselves to the victims as a migratory strategy capable of escaping border controls, objectifying their victims just like the externalization policies. This is shown by Danny's story. She knows that she is merchandise. She has heard it from her fellow migrants, but she also

knows that she is merchandise. Her Senegalese “boyfriend” has told her that the migrations are a “business” and that Morocco profits from it, as well as the European Union and the organizations that help migrants. We speak about this, but she says that she has felt like merchandise for some time, since she became a woman and it does surprise her that the states can do this with them, because to be a woman is to be merchandise and if you are also a migrant woman, you know perfectly well that the entire world will take advantage of you (Interview with Danny, 2013).

But the networks do not only present themselves as an opportunity for migration; in the context of a major infringement of human rights, the trafficking victims come to utilize the networks as protection from situations of institutional violence that they suffer in border zones, as shown in the report edited by Lautier (2009). This is a perverse situation the network takes advantage of, at the same time coercing and controlling its victim in a “caregiving” space in the face of the violence they suffer from the militarized states. Fasi's story illustrates this situation; she obtained refugee status in Morocco. She had fled from her country, where she had seen her entire family die, including her children. It took her a while to figure out that the card issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) did not provide her with any protection. In the neighborhood one day she met a young Cameroonian woman who had come from her country and was being taken to Europe. The man who was taking her offered Fasi the possibility of going to Spain, although she would have to reimburse the expenses after the trip. Fasi accepted; it was her opportunity to leave the hell she was living in. They took Fasi to France; there she was forced to become a prostitute to pay off her debt. Fasi said she had always paid with her body: She had done so in her country, she had done so in Morocco despite being protected, and she was doing it in Europe (Interview with Fasi, 2013).

The control strategies not only have increased the power of the networks, but have damaged above all the most vulnerable victims who are the basis of the networks' "commerce," that is, the women and minors. To compensate for the effects of the militarization policy, the European states invest in assisting the immigrants, emphasizing the perspective of humanitarian assistance. Thus, the immigrant is not represented as a person who has basic rights, but rather as a beneficiary or user of humanitarian development aid projects, mostly faith-based. These are limited projects, given that the religious denominations by themselves cannot guarantee certain rights seen as necessary for trafficking victims. As has been documented by Women's Link Worldwide (2011), the migrant women need to resort to abortion, as happened with Estella; she had taken the abortion drug Cytotec two months before. She did not feel well. She did not want to go to the organization that helped her because it was from the church and she did not want to tell them what had happened. She also did not want to go to a Moroccan hospital, knowing that abortion is punished; no one explained her right to post-abortion care. Finally, she went to the hospital, nearly dead, with an infection from remainders from the placenta that stayed in her uterus. She says that God saved her because in these situations, she only has God (Interview with Estrella, 2010).

The right to sexual and reproductive health of the migrant women and adolescents, above all for victims of trafficking, becomes a key element, given that the lack of control over their own bodies is one of the factors that define them as merchandise. When their health deteriorates, there is little access to that right for migrant populations in transit, giving them a high incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, given the rapes and the lack of access to birth control and prophylactics.

There are also a large number of clandestine abortions decided upon by network controllers. Most of the pregnancy terminations take place using Cytotec, a medication whose principal agent is misoprostol; in most cases, the network forces the women to take it in elevated doses that are unsafe. This medication, taken in high, uncontrolled doses and during an advanced state of pregnancy, can have serious effects on women's health, inducing internal hemorrhages and even death. There have been documented cases of trafficked women who in a short period of time were forced to stay pregnant and then to abort because the situation of the network changed as a result of the woman being sold to another network.⁷

Mary J.'s story shows the network's strategies for absolute control over the women's bodies:

... we come to Oujda. There my *guideman* gave me a boss,⁸ who in turn gave me a man to make me pregnant. When I was pregnant my boss did not want to take care of me because they had detained the *madame*⁹ in Europe, so he sold me to another boss. The second boss made me abort, I took 31 pills twice and I was sick

⁷ This situation was made evident in the news about the dismantling of a sex trafficking network that brought Nigerian women into Spain using *pateras* (small boats). The majority of the victims were pregnant or the mothers of small children, assuring their permanent stay in the Schengen Area. In http://www.policia.es/prensa/20121230_1.html.

⁸ Forms part of the network and is in charge of keeping the victim in Morocco and making the last crossing of the victim to Europe.

⁹ Forms part of the Nigerian trafficking network and is the person who exploits the woman in the country of destination and is the person with whom the debt is contracted.

for 15 days. In a month, he gave me a new boyfriend to get me pregnant¹⁰ again
(Interview with Mary J., 2012).

With respect to maternity and the decision to become pregnant, this is mostly in the hands of the men, and therefore in the hands of the members of the network. They opportunistically decide when the victims should be pregnant and in many cases who will impregnate them. These boys and girls were born while the woman was under the power of the network; they are considered to be merchandise that belongs to the trafficking network, and therefore, the members of the network have the right to decide on the minors' future. These boys and girls, once they arrive in Europe, become an important element in pressuring, threatening, and blackmailing their mothers (Defensor del Pueblo, 2012).

The situation of these minors is much more vulnerable, as they lack legal registration in the countries of transit, creating circumstances that infringe on the minors' rights. During deportation proceedings, the mothers report a significant number of child kidnappings with no guarantee that their children will be reunited with them; thus the minors are seen by the kidnappers as an opportunity in the migration process (Castellano, 2013).

The networks can sell the minors to be sexually exploited. But the rights infringement does not end when they arrive in Europe, where they are directly connected with people who claim to be their parents, but in many cases are not. That legal connection upon entry, mainly with respect to the babies, lacks important data, which is why that after being registered by the

¹⁰ The pregnancies form part of the strategy of the traffickers for control of the women through sexual and reproductive health. In this way a connection with the network is established and the baby born of that pregnancy belongs to the network until the debt is satisfied.

police, many children are passed on to other adult members of the network and are easily moved around the European states.

The experience of Aida shows the dramatic aspect of these situations; she could not bear to think about her son. One day she lost him at the Algerian border, following a deportation. Because he was born as a result of a rape, it had been very difficult for her to accept the boy, to learn to love him, but she had. Enric was two and a half when he was taken. Aida thinks they used him as a means to get another woman across the border and dreams that her son is in Europe and that someday she will find him. Aida said that everything had passed through her body, that each border that she crossed passed through her body, in the form of sex, men, suffering, disease, and now loss. The loss of her son, lost at a border, who had been engendered through her body (Interview with Aida, 2012).

The victims who fall ill are abandoned as if they were defective. Seeing the women as merchandise, the network knows that the person sending money from Europe for her crossing will not be interested in maintaining the victim and getting her across. Many see that abandonment as a failure in their migratory journey, trapped in countries where they cannot survive by themselves, unable to realize their trip to Europe, with many knowing that they cannot return to their countries because of the rejection and stigmatization brought about by their situations and their illness.

The increase in human rights infringement in Morocco brings about the phenomenon of becoming ensnared during their migratory journey; the trafficking networks take advantage of this circumstance. Recruitment in the migratory process has increased, above all, for women forced to leave their countries because of war or a natural disaster, such as famine:

Aicha lived in the north of Mali. She had never left her town, but after the murder of her family she decided to go on the road with one of her sisters. They first went to Algeria and from there to Morocco. She tried to request protection in that country, and spent three days waiting in the doorway of the UNHCR in Rabat, but says she had no luck. There she found a man who said he could take her to Europe so that she could request asylum. This man, a Senegalese, told her not to worry about the money, that he would pay for everything and that when she found work and safety, she would pay him back. Aicha was taken to the north of Morocco and forced to prostitute herself, having to give the man who ensnared her all her money. She only hopes that she is sent to Europe as soon as possible (Interview with Aida, 2012).

Conclusions

Working outside the control of the networks and the control of the borders

The women, girls, and adolescents also display a great capacity for resistance, reconstructing themselves through various strategies to confront the violence they are subjected to by a system of border control that exports them as merchandise through trafficking networks.

In the face of the difficulty of protecting them in Morocco in a comprehensive way, it is necessary for them to receive support over time that addresses intervention as a process and not as a result, and that makes them be seen as citizens and not as users. Through networking with other migrant and native women, their empowerment is encouraged using various strategies. One of the most important is the gender approach, understood as an analysis of the social realities that

are the result of the biological differences between both sexes. An effort is made, through the subject of gender, to work on women's identity, represented in the collective imagination that they carry from their countries of origin.

A cross-border vision based on multiculturalism is paramount, given that it recognizes the rights of all peoples. Ethnocentrism is also found at the center of exploitation, when other cultures and religions are considered to be inferior. To have a global and discerning vision promotes respect for trafficking victims and prevents the violation of their rights. Many of them are found in situations of social exclusion; seen in a political context, this is a product of an economic system that survives thanks to strong social differences.

In relation to this vision breaking with ethnocentrism, issues of power should be brought to the fore. The women, girls, and adolescents who are trafficking victims are found in a situation where the power exercised over them is necessary for perpetuating their exploitation. This situation is exacerbated by Moroccan institutions, as the women's basic rights are constantly infringed. Therefore, it is important for the women to be placed in locations and engage in discourses that prioritize empowerment, and where confidence becomes a key element.

Taking into account that trafficking must be considered above all as an infringement of basic rights and that the victims of this crime must be protected, independently of whether they report the crime, the emphasis on rights is a basic element to work on. In Morocco, it is necessary for the authorities to understand that the rights of migrants, and in particular the trafficking victims who are part of migratory flows, are inviolable and universal.

Finally, in terms of time and how this plays out with trafficking victims, two elements must be singled out. The first is a temporal approach, that is, the stage of exploitation the person is in,

given that the situation is seen differently at the beginning of the ensnarement, during the migratory transit, or at the end with the payment of the accumulated debt owed to the network. The construction of the reference points of the victim necessarily vary depending on the time spent inside the trafficking network.

In terms of the girls and adolescents enmeshed in the trafficking networks, it is necessary that they be seen first of all as minors, and that an intervention be developed based on childhood protection and specialized treatment when it comes to trafficking victims. The approach to identify, and later work with, the minors requires specialization and has a different nature than work with adults.

We close with the narrative of Faith S., who tells us about the contradictions in her situation: She is an adolescent, 14 years old. She is angry, saying that there is a lot of racism in Morocco, and that she feels alone. She went to an association, where they offered to send her to a center for minors, but she did not want to be enclosed. She only wanted to talk because her family in Nigeria is threatened and she has to fulfill her contract, or at least that is what her mother says. She says she felt very bad when she went to the association; it was difficult for them to understand her English and the white woman talked to her from the other side of the table without looking at her, only at what she was writing on a piece of paper. She wanted to tell them a lot of things but they were not going to understand her, so she decided not to discuss them. She returned to the house where she lived with other women waiting to cross to Spain. There her handler was waiting; Faith says that he hit her a lot, but that at least he could understand her, give her food, and clothe her. Her handler explained that things were good, that soon she would cross to Spain and there she would meet her *madame*, and that then within a

short time she would be free and be able to chart her own life. Faith tells us that despite everything, those whom she lives with are like her family (Interview with Faith S., 2013^[13]).