

# Comparative Criminology: **TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS**

## Ranking Regions/Countries as Most Likely for Trafficking in Persons

In this section, we examine the findings and conclusions of studies regarding trafficking in persons, largely collected by the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The findings of these recent studies regarding the prevalence of trafficking in persons in certain countries, including the main origin countries as well as the main transit and main destination countries, are enlightening in several ways. The majority of trafficking in persons cases are for the purpose of sexual exploitation (77%), followed by those for the purpose of labor exploitation (23%). More than 60% of the victims are female, and more than 30% are minors (mostly girls), as shown in Figure 12.2.

Van Dijk synthesized some of the data from the UNODC published in 2006,<sup>57</sup> as well as a study by Kristina Kangaspunta regarding the prevalence of trafficking in persons in the year 2002.<sup>58</sup> As shown in Table 12.3, the top five countries with the highest frequencies of trafficking in persons for country of origin (starting with the highest) were Russia, Ukraine, Thailand, Nigeria, and the Republic of Moldova (notably, the United States did not make the top 10 countries of origin). The top five main transit countries (those through which trafficked persons were sent) were (starting with the highest) Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and Italy. Finally, the top five destination countries were (starting with the highest) Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, and the Netherlands. Notably, the United States ranked 10th in destination countries.

As with data collected through official sources, this information may be more a reflection of the investigative activities of

the police, or lack thereof, than of the extent of such crimes. This may be due to various reasons. First, not all countries are committed, or able, to conduct investigations or prosecutions of such cases. Second, trafficking in persons is not criminalized in some countries, so prosecutions of these crimes may be designated as something other than trafficking. Van Dijk maintains that if governments are not forthcoming about such crimes, the international media can be a helpful resource. Further, since trafficking in persons is a transnational crime, "reports on cases of human trafficking coming from destination countries often provide information about where the victims were recruited and through which countries they were transported."<sup>59</sup> Thus, while some countries, such as countries of origin or transit, may not acknowledge such criminal activities, information obtained from destination countries can be useful.

### THINK ABOUT IT

1. What are some of the problems associated with collecting accurate data on trafficking persons?
2. What are the ramifications of not having accurate data on trafficking persons?

**TABLE 12.3**

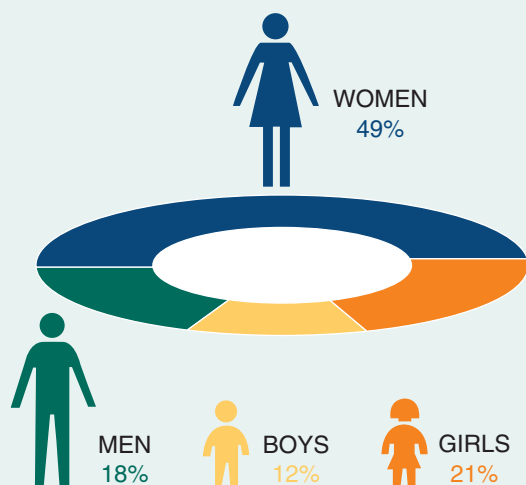
Most Frequently Cited Countries of Origin, Transit, and Destination of Trafficking in Persons (2002)

	MAIN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN	MAIN TRANSIT COUNTRIES	MAIN DESTINATION COUNTRIES
1	Russian Federation	Albania	Belgium
2	Ukraine	Bulgaria	Germany
3	Thailand	Hungary	Greece
4	Nigeria	Poland	Italy
5	Republic of Moldova	Italy	The Netherlands
6	Romania	Thailand	Israel
7	Albania	—	Turkey
8	China	—	Japan
9	Belarus	—	Thailand
10	Bulgaria	—	United States
11	Lithuania	—	—

Sources: Kangaspunta, K. (2003). Mapping the inhuman trade: Preliminary findings of the database on trafficking in human beings. *Forum on Crime and Society*, 3, 81–105; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2006). *Trafficking in persons: Global patterns*. Vienna, Austria: Author.

**FIGURE 12.2**

Victims of Trafficking in Persons, by Age and Gender, 2011



Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2014). *Global report on trafficking in persons, 2014*.