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What are the risk factors for human trafficking among African women? A pilot study in Spain

¿Cuáles son los factores de riesgo de trata en mujeres procedentes de África?: un estudio piloto en España

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ABSTRACT

In April 2018, the Ödos Project was launched, a shelter pilot initiative for the care and support of migrant women with children promoted by a network of social organizations in Andalusia, Spain. This initiative is designed to offer women who show signs of being victims of trafficking the opportunity to abandon trafficking networks and to have an alternative migration process. This criminological study aims to develop an instrument with which to detect the risk indicators of women who are potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. To this end, risk assessment parameters have been established for shelter residents. To create an ad hoc instrument, a four-phase study was conducted using mixed methodology, which resulted in an improved quantitative pilot questionnaire based on qualitative methodology. The sample used for this study comprised 41 people. Reliability analysis confirms that the indicators used have high internal consistency. The implications of the results for the application of prediction tools in transcultural contexts will be discussed.

Keywords: Human trafficking, gender violence, risk factors, risk assessment tool, transcultural approach.

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RESUMEN

En abril de 2018 se gesta el Proyecto Ödos, un recurso pionero de acogida para mujeres migrantes con menores a cargo impulsado por una red de organizaciones sociales en Andalucía. Este recurso se articula para ofrecer a las mujeres con indicios de ser víctimas de trata posibilidades de llevar a cabo un proceso migratorio alternativo al itinerario de explotación del que proceden. El presente estudio criminológico pretende desarrollar un instrumento que permita detectar los indicadores de riesgo de aquellas mujeres que son potenciales víctimas de trata con fines de explotación sexual. Para ello, se han establecido parámetros que permitan la valoración del riesgo de las beneficiarias del proyecto. Para crear un instrumento *ad hoc*, se hizo una investigación en cuatro fases con una metodología mixta, que dio lugar a un cuestionario piloto cuantitativo mejorado a través de metodología cualitativa. La muestra utilizada para ello fue de un total de 41 sujetos. El análisis de confiabilidad confirma que los indicadores utilizados presentan una elevada consistencia interna. A su vez, se discutirán las implicaciones de los resultados para la aplicación de instrumentos de predicción en contextos transculturales.

Palabras clave: Trata de seres humanos, perspectiva de género, factores de riesgo, instrumento de valoración del riesgo, aproximación transcultural.

1. Introduction

Human trafficking is one of the most significant emerging criminal phenomena in a globalized world in which the gap between industrialized countries and third- and fourth-world countries is becoming increasingly evident (Villacampa & Torres, 2012). European border legislation prioritizes combating trafficking in persons. In this regard, bodies such as the Council of Europe understand that this 'struggle' must be based on the identification of the psychological, cognitive, and social circumstances of victims as well as their migration process, with the aim of reducing the risks of vulnerability and proposing preventive and assistance measures suited to the magnitude of this phenomenon (GRETA, 2018).

Gender theory and the victimological perspective form an umbrella under which to explain the existence of the phenomenon of trafficking, its normalization, and how it is perpetuated. Risk identification and assessment serve to detect evidence that allows for intervention/action processes to be carried out based on empirical data. Gender theory is based on the social construction of gender, in which sexist prejudices and the superiority of the masculine are built over the feminine (Corsi, 2003, pp. 117-138). The gender perspective

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involves focusing on human trafficking – specifically, situations of sexual or labour exploitation, organ trafficking, or forced marriage – as a reality that mainly affects women and girls because this is indeed the case. In accordance with Expósito (2012), the conceptualization of intersectionality refers to a phenomenon that has a special impact on those women for whom various categories of discrimination overlap and are influenced. In this context, power and vulnerability must be understood from the perspective of disparities based on gender, race, ethnicity, and poverty. Male violence endures as the most extreme outcome or manifestation of an accepted system of beliefs, attitudes, roles, and stereotypes based on inequality between men and women (Cobo, 2015; Crawford, 2006; Sassen, 2003).

The criminological literature supports the fact that the risk of victimization is not distributed homogeneously across the entire population but that there are persons, groups of persons, or situations that generate greater probability (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Specifically, it points to certain static factors such as age, race, or sex, and to other dynamic factors related to life habits, situational factors, or social relationships as an explanation of the special vulnerability of migrant groups (Tamarit et al., 2017).

Based on the complexity of the phenomenon (Defensor del Pueblo, 2012, 2013, 2018), this study aims to propose a risk identification tool adapted to women crossing Europe's southern border who are pregnant or accompanied by young children. The proposal arises in the context of the Ödos Project, a pilot initiative for migrant care and support set in motion in 2018 by a network of civil society organizations with the aim of facilitating a reintegration process and generating alternative support networks for women with children who are potential trafficking victims arriving in Europe through irregular border crossings to the southern coast of Spain. In this context, proper identification, and prediction of risk for victims of trafficking could enhance effective interventions and prevent future contact with networks, for various purposes established in penal laws (Article 177bis Spanish Criminal Code).

In Europe, data collected by the European Commission in its 2018 statistical report (Eurostat, 2018) demonstrate that, between 2015 and 2016, a total of 20,532 victims were registered (9,147 in 2015 and 11,385 in 2016) in EU member states (not including the United

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Kingdom). Of these, women accounted for 68%, and girls and boys accounted for 23%. In 2015 and 2016, females (women and girls) were 95% of registered victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation; males (men and boys) were 80% of registered victims of trafficking for labour exploitation; for other forms of trafficking, 68% were female victims, and 32% were male victims. In any case, the number of victims effectively identified by Spanish National Police's Illegal Immigration Network and False Document Unit (UCRIF, for its initials in Spanish) represents only 1.2% of the 13,879 at-risk persons detected in 2015, according to estimates by the Ministry of the Interior (2015 cit. in State Attorney General´s Office, 2018), in the hands of criminal networks linked to commercial sexual exploitation.

Currently, very few validated tools exist with which to analyse this serious problem, and those that do exist would be difficult to apply to migrant women who have arrived in Europe from sub-Saharan Africa (Save the Children, 2014). This article will describe the developing process of a risk assessment tool aimed at detecting potential trafficking victims, which relies on a pioneering experience in Spain for the care and support of migrant women from Africa.

Knowing the signs of trafficking is essential to infer how certain women and their children may become the victims of a crime, a form of violence, and serious human rights violations. Likewise, the signs of trafficking that may be present among a certain population are predictors of the behaviours they may engage in and the decisions they will make in the future, which makes it possible to forecast the situation of risk they may face.

The main objective of this study is to design an ad hoc risk assessment instrument to identify African women who are at risk of being trafficked and those who can remain outside networks of exploitation. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the risk factors identified in the literature to identify victims of trafficking for various purposes of exploitation.
2. To design a screening instrument that can distinguish between women who are at risk of being trafficked and women who may evade exploitation networks.
3. To provide a contrast to the subjective assessment performed by intervention professionals.

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The main contribution of this paper lies in examining the risk factors used and tested in the Andalusian context. In this sense, it seems fundamental to provide risk assessment tools to social entities working with trafficked women and girls. This paper even constitutes a novel contribution both in the field of research and in intervention with people in trafficking contexts.

2. Profile of the population studied: The Ödos Project

In Spain, the profile of identified trafficking victims fits with European standards. According to the 2018 Annual Report of the State Attorney General's Office, victims come largely from sexual exploitation (90%), and there was a total of 27 cases with a final sentence for the crime of trafficking under Article 177bis of the Criminal Code. However, in 2018, a total of 308 adult women from Africa were identified by state security forces as potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

As recognized by the State Attorney General's Office, the number of cases initiated is only the tip of the iceberg of the phenomenon (State Attorney General´s Office, 2018: 1235), suggesting that, out of 10,000 victims at risk of trafficking detected by the Centre for Intelligence on Counterterrorism and Organized Crime (CTCO, for its initials in Spanish) in 2017, only 155 cases were investigated by public prosecutors. These data highlight the obvious gap between judicial statistics and police data. In this regard, the obstacles hampering identification practices, in addition to difficulties involving detected victims' effective collaboration with legal proceedings (most cases are dismissed for absence or withdrawal of the complaint), are some of the factors that exponentially reduce the number of sentences for human trafficking.

As stated in the Human Rights Ombudsman's annual reports (2012, 2013), numerous organizations aiding victims call for identification processes to consider the context of victims and their situation, as well as the need for specialized assistance.

Because of their legal configuration, prosecution processes in Spain do not appear to provide an adequate and definitive response to victims of trafficking who 'either are not able

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to recognize their victim status and facilitate the cooperation required or do not know – at that precise moment – that they are going to be exploited (to them, the trafficker is at that point simply a benefactor facilitating their desire to migrate)' (State Attorney General's Office, 2018, p. 1236).

The gap between the objectives of existing legislation and the real options women possess for accessing social resources makes it necessary to implement resources that are alternatives to the existing ones. Thus, the Ödos network was created to provide a response to the protection needs of women reaching Spain by sea, through border posts not authorized for this entry, as it has been observed that a high percentage of those undocumented women refuse the existing care and support resources (Defensor del Pueblo, 2012, 2013).

Stays at the Ödos Project's shelter house are established, primarily, as a time for coexistence and rest as well as for physical and emotional recovery. Second, through structured individual and group interventions, the shelter is considered a context for the development of an intervention under the paradigm of good treatment, aimed at simultaneously working on three areas, i.e., providing information and advising on the resources available in the host society, creating awareness by each woman regarding her situation and that of her son or daughter, and generating motivation to undertake processes of integration (García- Navarro, 2018). This psychosocial process is also used to detect evidence of trafficking and prevent exploitation processes.

3. Methodology

A mixed methodology was used to fulfil the study objectives. A quantitative instrument was developed to detect risk factors, which has subsequently been contrasted with intervention experts and professionals via qualitative methods. Prior to the start of data collection, authorization was sought from the ethics committee of Universidad Loyola Andalucía, which granted final approval for data collection on June 22, 2018, thus ensuring compliance with the necessary ethical requirements.

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First, a literature review was conducted regarding instruments for the detection, assessment, and prediction of risk among victims of trafficking. Based on the literature review, signs were identified, and an initial instrument was generated. A first pilot phase was held from October to December 2018. Subsequently, the results of the validation of the instrument were contrasted with key experts in the field of intervention and research among trafficked women from sub-Saharan Africa; a qualitative method based on multiple contacts and interviews was used for these purposes. In April 2019, information was collected from professionals working at the shelter regarding the validity of the modified instrument for intervention. The information collected was used to improve the factors identified in the questionnaire. In this way, a second version of the instrument was generated. The revised instrument was administered again through a second post-pilot phase between October and November 2019. Once the final risk factors were defined, a quantitative method of collecting information was used.

4. Results

4.1. Phase 1: Literature review

First, to create the questionnaire, the key concepts related to the phenomenon studied were identified:

- *Trafficking in persons:* According to *the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, also known as the Palermo Protocol (2000), trafficking in persons is understood as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons using threat, force, or other forms of coercion. The legislation also cites among the means used for the purposes of exploitation, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, and abuse of a situation of vulnerability, as well as giving or receiving payments or benefits to obtain the consent of a person who has authority over another. Such exploitation may include

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the prostitution of third persons or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour, or slavery-like practices such as servitude or the removal of organs.

- *Smuggling of migrants*: The aforementioned document refers to smuggling as '*…the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident…*' (Palermo Protocol, Art. 3). The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Organized Crime, differentiates between payment to someone to facilitate an irregular border crossing and trafficking in persons. The former is an act committed against the State, whilst the latter (trafficking) is an act committed against persons.
- *Gender-based violence:* The means used to exploit victims are forms of violence used to obtain women's consent to be exploited based on the fact that they are women. Trafficking of women as a form of gender-based violence was addressed in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and at the Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen (1980), the Third Conference in Nairobi (1985), and the Fourth Conference in Beijing (1995). Subsequently, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women marked a turning point in defining gender-based violence as a series of acts that harm women for the mere fact of being women, including, among others, exploitation, trafficking in women, and forced prostitution (Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1994). Later, documents such as the Spanish National Strategy against Gender-based Violence of the Council of Ministers (2013-2016) reinforced the idea that trafficking in humans for the purpose of sexual exploitation is a manifestation of gender-based violence that transcends private spaces.
- *Vulnerability*: Castles and Miller (2009) refer to migratory phenomena as journeys with multiple dimensions, including the situation of vulnerability of the individuals who undertake them. Trafficked women of sub-Saharan origin come from highly

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degraded social structures whose configurations lead to high levels of violence and corruption that particularly harm vulnerable populations (Sassen, 2003; Women's Link Worldwide, 2011b, 2014). Thus, the contexts of origin of most victims become sites of inequality that lead to systematic rights violations, perpetuating the conditions that put women in situations of vulnerability and social exclusion (García- Navarro, 2018). As Sassen (2003) points out, the phenomenon of trafficking is linked to socio-economic dynamics in poor countries that experience the steady worsening of living conditions for the population in general and for women and girls in particular (Sassen, 2003).

Based on these theoretical parameters, to create the initial instrument, a review was also carried out of the Guidelines for the identification of victims of trafficking in Europe (2013), the Protocol for the early detection of trafficking situations among persons at border crossings of the Interior Ministry of Argentina (n.d.), and the indicators document of Defence for Children-ECPAT Netherlands based on the report by Save the Children (2014) on the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors in Europe. These documents were selected for the relevance of their contributions to the detection of human trafficking.

4.2. Characteristics of the instrument: initial indicators

The original questionnaire consisted of 32 items divided into five scales:

1. H scale: Historical or trafficking indicators: six items on the migration journey and the debt owed for the trip, as well as on the group of origin, and one subjective evaluation item.
2. E scale: Exploitation indicators: eight items related to past situations of exploitation that could influence a particular propensity towards situations of sexual or labour exploitation, organ trafficking, or forced marriage, and one subjective evaluation item.
3. V scale: Indicators of violence, abuse, or neglect: three items addressing evidence of physical or sexual violence or neglect and marginality and one subjective evaluation item.

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4. C scale: Behaviour indicators: 10 items on addictions or aggressive or sexualized emotional reactions of women in contact with professionals at the humanitarian centre, or self-harm.

This questionnaire was designed with a scale regarding the presence or absence of each item on the four scales as well as an evaluation of low, moderate, or high on the final risk assessment scale.

4.3. Phase 2: Administering the instrument in the pilot phase

For the development of the first instrument of indicators, data were collected from the 20 women who had experienced the intervention between 18 April 2018 and 30 November 2018. The descriptive results include the following: 40% of the sample came from Côte d'Ivoire, 25% from Guinea Conakry, 15% from Cameroon, 10% from Congo, 5% from Morocco, and 5% from Mali. The mean age was 30.5 years; the minimum age was 21 years, and the maximum age was 41 years. The average number of children was 1.40, with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 3. The average length of stay was 75 days.

To ensure the appropriate psychometric guarantees of the questionnaire used, the internal consistency of the scales used was measured. The reliability data of the indicators yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.629, meeting the minimum criterion required but raising doubts regarding reliability and validity (the minimum criterion is above 0.7). In the item-total statistics, the items that negatively influenced the reliability of the instrument were identified, which was the case for items H3, H5, E6, V1, V2, V3, C4, C6, and C10 as well as the qualitative indicators OC-H, OC-E, and V4, which appeared to be useless to distinguish between increased or decreased risk within the scale. The reliability results of the items are shown in Table 1. With regard to the subjective assessment of risk by professionals, in many cases the risk was considered 'moderate' (40% of cases), followed by a low assessment of the probability of future exploitation (25%) and a high-risk assessment (5%). Regarding the assessment of the risk of imminent flight, no case was considered high risk, with half of the

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cases considered low risk and 20% moderate risk; the option was not considered in the remaining 30%.

Table 1.
Pilot instrument indicators according to reliability

Item-total statistics	Scale mean if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
H1. Another person (other than their family) paid for the trip and/or obtained the visas	471.25	.307	.606
H2. She and/or her child lack a passport or other identity documents	486.20	.449	.629
H3. She and/or her child have false documents	476.60	.074	.645
H4. She and/or her child have a lot of cash	476.05	.183	.621
H5. She and/or her child are part of a group of people from the same nationality or ethnic group	461.50	.007	.648
H6. She and/or her child speak a different language	486.30	.557	.629
E1. She and/or her child show signs of having been sexually exploited	451.80	.535	.566
E2. She and/or her child show signs of labour exploitation or begging	466.80	.656	.555
E4. She and/or her child show signs of marriage for convenience	471.25	.612	.568
E5. She and/or her child incurred a large debt to pay for the trip	437.25	.643	.545
E6. She and/or her child have received phone calls from unknown or unidentified persons	466.20	.041	.650
E7. Members of their family in the country of origin have been blackmailed or threatened	437.25	.401	.588
E8. Members of her family in the country of origin rely on her financially	456.50	.354	.597
V1. Effects of physical violence	456.75	.038	.655
V2. Effects of sexual violence	437.25	.145	.631
V3. Signs of neglect or marginalization	481.50	.211	.619
V4. Signs of psychological violence	412.70	.272	.681
C1. Addiction to drugs or alcohol	481.50	.402	.606
C2. Fear of commitment to intervention	481.20	.218	.619
C3. Violent reactions or outbursts of anger against others	486.25	.383	.629
C4. Appears frightened	486.05	.013	.630
C6. Lack of hope for the future	486.35	.059	.630
C7. Eating or sleeping disorders	486.35	.296	.629
C8. Hyperactivity or personality disorder	481.40	.399	.606
C9. Flirting, acting, or dressing in a provocative manner	486.30	.557	.629
C10. Stealing, lying, threatening, or abusing other people in the shelter	486.35	.139	.630

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Based on the results obtained, it was deemed necessary to improve the internal consistency of the instrument through a qualitative phase of expert validation.

4.4. Phase 3: Expert validation

First, the results of the pilot phase of the instrument were shown to three national experts. These experts addressed signs of trafficking in persons contained in various national and international instruments that are considered essential for the recognition of potential victims of this serious human rights violation and the assessment of the risk of exploitation of women and girls. Among the instruments that provide signs of trafficking applicable to victims of sub-Saharan origin, it is necessary to highlight the indicators developed by the *Euro TrafGuid* Project (2013), whose aim is to make known best practices in the detection and identification of victims of trafficking in EU member states. Equally illuminating are the indicators of the Spanish Network against Trafficking in Persons, a platform composed of groups working to stop trafficking in persons in Spain, as well as the indicators developed by Women's Link Worldwide, an organization that specializes in working with trafficked women that has developed, among others, studies, and descriptive reports regarding trafficked women of sub-Saharan origin, noting the existence of specific signs among this population group.

Once the key literature had been identified, the need to assess the indicators used to date among the population of sub-Saharan women comprising the sample was identified. In view of the idiosyncrasy of this population, it was necessary to deepen the literature review to enable us to generate signs that were as specific as possible for the sample of women arriving at the Ödos shelter. In addition to the evidence contained in the aforementioned instruments, we examined studies and reports such as Castaño and Pérez (2017), who describe the reality of sub-Saharan women during time spent waiting in Morocco to be transferred to Spain by traffickers. The report underscores the situation of the children of these women as well as their own level of vulnerability due to being in contexts of their mothers' forced prostitution and other types of human trafficking. Likewise, Manzanedo, Ferré, Castaño, Buades and Iglesias (2016) describe the situation of migrants waiting in

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Morocco before being transferred to Spain, emphasizing trafficking risks as well as the serious human rights violations committed against those migrants. Maleno (2012) delves into the reality of sub-Saharan women with signs of being trafficked on arrival in Morocco and deals with the purchase and sale of their bodies and sexuality as clear signs of the trade they are victims of.

Along the same lines, a Doctors Without Borders report (2013) describes the violence suffered by sub-Saharan women before crossing to Spain and its consequences for their physical and mental health. The report highlights the control to which women are subjected and the forms of coercion used to control women who are moved along trafficking routes through various enclaves in Africa. No less informative are the data provided by organisations specialized in elucidating the specific situations of sub-Saharan women and the trafficking contexts they face. In its 2014 report, Women's Link Worldwide details the reality of Nigerian women who are trafficked for sexual exploitation throughout sub-Saharan Africa and remain in Morocco until their traffickers move them to Spain under inhumane conditions. In its 2017 report, the Spanish Commission for Refugees describes the reality of trafficking by providing up-to-date data on trafficked sub-Saharan women, and the Red Cross does the same in its 2014 report, which addresses the living conditions of this population.

Finally, through research on trafficked women of sub-Saharan origin by, we gained access to a study that traces and compiles information regarding the situations faced by these women. The study addresses trafficking from a psycho-emotional perspective, collecting women's narratives and descriptions of their migration process and their experiences and differential elements in relation to migrant women who are not immersed in trafficking networks. This study made it possible to distinguish and identify patterns that are common among a large percentage of victims, which were identified as specific signs in this population group.

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4.5. Phase 4: Validation using information from professionals at the shelter

Based on the information gathered in the literature review and the contrasting responses from the nine professionals responsible for direct intervention at the Ödos shelter, it was considered necessary to make modifications that resulted in the final indicators with which the second test was administered, thus improving the clarity of the instrument and its understanding by the professionals responsible for completing the questionnaire. It was also indicated that administrators should complete the instrument at the beginning and the end of the women's stay at the shelter.

4.6. Instrument characteristics: Final indicators

The questionnaire developed to assess risk is intended to be a dynamic instrument that can be modified over the course of the time that women spend at the shelter. For this reason, it was thought that the instrument should be completed at least two times: at the beginning of the stay and at the end of the stay. The instrument has a mixed or professional structure, combining the factors identified in the scientific literature with the experience of direct intervention professionals. It is designed to be completed by such professionals and can be expanded if they deem it relevant to include new items suited to the intervention based on the sheltered population and its characteristics.

The final version comprises 42 items divided into four modules, or scales, and a risk assessment scale:

1. *H scale: Historical or past indicators*: 13 items regarding the migration journey and the debt incurred to carry out the trip, in addition to the consequences for the family of origin. The H scale indicators were adapted from those specified in the aforementioned documents and modified based on the observations of female workers at the Ödos shelter. A high degree of overlap was identified between the routes of most women using this facility and descriptions in specialized reports

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describing the routes of trafficked sub-Saharan women (Women's Link Worldwide, 2014). This overlap made it possible to select for this study, among others, signs referring to the countries of origin and transit as well as the fact of having stayed in Morocco before crossing to Spain.

2. *E Scale: Signs of exploitation*: Eight items regarding past situations of exploitation that could influence a special situation of vulnerability.

   The E scale allows for a focus on the signs suggesting exploitation. The fact that women do not refer to a migratory project planned by them and aimed at improving their lives or the fact that they were transported by unknown people planning a trip for them are among the factors identified in the literature review (Women's Link Worldwide, 2014) as well as by direct intervention professionals, which allowed us to select these factors for the development of this instrument.

3. *M Scale: Mother-child relationship:* 10 items regarding signs based on the observation of mother-child relationships.

4. *C scale: Behavioural/emotional indicators*: 12 items regarding women's behavioural or emotional reactions in interactions with humanitarian shelter professionals.

   The M and C scales include the areas of family, indicators related to the mother-child bond, as well as the behaviour of adults. These areas are essential in that trafficking, as a form of violence, abuse, and repeated coercion can cause harm that could have psycho-emotional and behavioural consequences (Echeburúa & Guerricaechevarría, 2011; Farley, 2004; Mufti, & Finn, 2013). Based on the findings regarding the consequences of these forms of violence for trafficked women, it was deemed necessary to include indicators related to behavioural and emotional aspects based on Arruabarrena and Paul (1994) as well as to possible situations of risk among children. Drawing on these parameters, professionals identified as specific signs unstable behaviours and decisions in relation to children that appear to be directed by third parties.

5. *RA scale: Final risk assessment*: one structured item of professional assessment by staff regarding the given woman's risk of joining trafficking networks. As part of the

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approach of this research, it was deemed essential that the instrument provide a section on qualitative risk assessment by professionals. The main reason for structured risk assessment tools is the establishment of a set of guidelines to guide practitioners' assessment by indicating the aspects calling for particular attention. This approach can be very useful in the therapeutic setting, where assessment is used to design intervention practices (Buruma, 2004).

4.7. Phase 4: Second post-pilot administration

To verify the reliability of the final instrument, data were collected from 21 women who had gone through intervention procedures from April 2019 to November 2019. The descriptive results include the following: 38.1% of the sample came from Côte d'Ivoire, 42.9% from Guinea Conakry, 14.3% from Morocco, and 4.8% from Cameroon. The mean age was 27.7 years; the minimum age was 19, and the maximum age was 40. The average number of children was 1.38, with a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 2. The average length of stay at the shelter was 58.6 days.

To ensure the appropriate psychometric guarantees of the questionnaire used, the internal consistency of the scales used was measured. On this occasion, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the indicators was 0.971. This result allowed us to confirm that the overall reliability of the instrument was improved. The results are shown in Table 2.

Revista Española de Investigación Criminológica
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www.criminologia.net
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Table 2.
Pilot instrument indicators according to reliability

Item-total statistics	Scale mean if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
H1. Creation of false expectations for recruitment purposes	64.75	.112	.961
H2. Countries where migration journey began	64.45	.748	.957
H3. Giving birth in Morocco or in transit countries	63.60	.748	.957
H4. Routes and enclaves	64.10	.454	.958
H5. Entering the country by unauthorized border-crossing points	65.15	.284	.958
H6. No documentation certifying their affiliation or birth	64.30	.556	.957
H7. No identity card	64.45	.478	.957
H8. She and/or her child use false data	63.55	.916	.956
H9. Unaware of how the journey was financed	64.70	.382	.959
H10. The migration journey was organized by third parties	64.90	.384	.958
H11. Carrying a lot of cash	64.40	.281	.960
H12. She and/or her child speak a different language	63.95	.531	.957
H13. She and/or her family incurred a very high debt to pay for travel expenses	64.95	.334	.959
E1. She and/or her child show signs of sexual exploitation	63.85	.612	.957
E2. She and/or her child show signs of labour exploitation or begging	63.80	.610	.957
E3. She and/or her child show signs of organ removal	63.60	.768	.956
E4. She and/or her child show signs of marriage of convenience	64.05	.370	.959
E5. Receiving calls from strangers who pressure or control her	64.15	.401	.959
E6. Family members depend on her financially	64.20	.376	.959
E7. She lacks a clear migratory plan	63.90	.623	.957
E8. She did not know the person who transported her or who awaits her in the destination country	63.95	.639	.957
M1. Insecure/disordered bond between mother and child	63.70	.623	.957
M2. Search for adults other than those referred to	63.55	.916	.956
M3. Family presence destabilizes the child	63.65	.812	.956
M4. Inconsistent parenting style	63.55	.916	.956
M5. Information about the child is unclear, contradictory, or unknown	6.55	.782	.956
M6. Attitude of reluctance to address issues relating to the child	63.55	.916	.956
M7. Behaviour involving physical, psychological, or verbal violence towards the child	63.55	.916	.956
M8. Woman refuses services aimed at addressing the basic needs of the child	63.75	.666	.957
M9. Child protection behaviours are conditioned by instructions from third parties	63.55	.916	.956
M10. Inability to prioritize the child's needs	63.70	.748	.957
C1. Changes in mood with no apparent cause	63.60	.748	.957

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Article 5, Volume 18(2) (2020)
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Item-total statistics	Scale mean if item deleted	Corrected item-total correlation	Alpha if item deleted
C2. Violent reactions or outbursts of anger against others, self-harm, or suicide attempts	63.55	.916	.957
C3. Appears pressured by third parties	63.70	.670	.957
C4. High levels of anxiety are observed	63.70	.753	.956
C5. Appears very sad	63.60	.748	.957
C6. Is not very communicative	63.60	.748	.957
C7. Has difficulty retelling her migration history	63.70	.753	.956
C8. Decision making regarding the child is conditioned by pressure from third parties	64.00	.520	.957
C9. Reluctance to get involved in intervention practices	63.55	.916	.956
C10. Sleep disorders	63.80	.606	.957
C11. Eating disorders	63.80	.849	.956
C12. Sexualized behaviour when not appropriate	63.55	.916	.957

Once the improvement of the instrument was confirmed, the results of the indicators were compared with regard to the presence or absence of risk and contrasted with the final risk assessment for joining networks of exploitation. In most cases, the risk score estimated by professionals was low (50% of the cases); in total, 90% of cases were deemed of average risk or below.

5. Discussion

Interest in human trafficking and processes of detection that provide effective protection for victims has grown in recent years. To our knowledge, virtually no empirical instruments exist that are applicable to trafficked African women with children. This absence of instruments led us to draw on studies that, while not specific to the population under study, provided us with a basis for approaching it. In this same vein, the study of reports issued by different entities and institutions on the realities of trafficked women provided us with knowledge about this population.

Based on the literature review and direct experience with the population studied, this research enabled the development of a pioneering empirical instrument for African populations. This study also made it possible to understand the special characteristics or risk factors of women caught in networks of exploitation.

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Following a four-stage validation process, this instrument's internal consistency and applicability to the Ödos shelter were enhanced. To this end, an exploration was carried out of the contributions of women, their narratives and experiences, and the signs provided to us by national experts regarding the processes of trafficked women of African origin. These signs were then contrasted with the observations of professionals at the Ödos shelter, which ensured the validity of the instrument and its practical applicability. The areas that seem to best predict contact with trafficking networks are those relating to historical or migration route factors (H1, H9, H11, and H13) and those relating to past experiences of exploitation (E4, E5, and E6). In particular, 'carrying a lot of cash H11' and 'creation of false expectations for recruitment purposes H1' were mentioned by professionals, thus increasing the degree of reliability of the instrument. This point is particularly critical for the purposes of this research, as it implies that such areas should be considered in depth in future research. The Protocol of Palermo indicates that being deceived is one of the clearest signs presented by victims of trafficking. Our findings are consistent with the indications described by current trafficking legislation.

This study thus makes it possible to verify the potential of the instrument to predict who among the population studied will become victims of trafficking; however, the instrument must be applied by different organizations to increase its validity. We are aware of the limitations of the sample, which prevent the generalization of the results of a project that began as an initiative focused on the southern border of Europe. One such limitation is that we have no evidence regarding the pattern of predictors based on empirically contrasted risk assessment tools focused on African women who arrive via the Southern European route. Thus, there is a need to extend the research to other shelter institutions, thereby increasing the number of individuals to whom the instrument is applied, so that the first results obtained can serve as a guide to be generalized to larger samples and different intervention contexts.

Based on the findings, we consider this tool useful for detecting indicators of the risk of being trafficked among African women. The literature review, the contributions of experts on the topic, professionals specializing in direct intervention, and the experiences of the women themselves are methodological tools capable of providing useful information for the

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purposes of this research. Given the complexity of this crime, this study focuses on trafficking as a serious human rights violation that requires conducting research on tools apt to protect victims, as well as on areas such as risk assessment and recognition of specific signs that may present the populations studied.

Nonetheless, we must highlight the lack of agreement between the items that constituted the questionnaire and the final subjective assessment scale shaped with the aid of professionals. The differences between the assessment performed with this final scale and the risks identified through the instrument demonstrate that professionals may not have a realistic perception of risk. This limitation would justify further training of the professionals working in shelters as well as the promotion of institutional networks to give shape to a guide of best practices in the detection and monitoring of these cases.

By way of conclusion, it seems to be corroborated that the correct detection and systematisation of information from potential victims of trafficking can serve to prevent this crime. Likewise, it will be useful to guide the intervention protocols of social organisations as well as public social assistance services and legal resources to address specific problems of violence and rights violations that are particularly prevalent among women from sub-Saharan Africa.

As a final goal, the systematisation of information through risk detection tools can serve to manage the intervention resources of both non-governmental and governmental shelters, improving the prevention of future violence and promoting an adequate standard of living for potential victims of trafficking.

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