

Introduction

Russia is a vast and beguiling country which captivates, holds and repeatedly lures back those who study it. This land is often stereotypically seen in the West as one of snow, glistening golden onion domes, icons, repressive troubles, dramatic upheavals, Orthodox priests with long beards, informers, secret police, suffering, communalism rather than individualism, country dachas and vodka. Whilst there is something suggestive in each of these images, realities are always more complex.

Like many states in the world today, the Russian Federation has been experiencing patterns of migration which have made important socio-economic and political impacts on the country itself, on its 'near abroad' and globally. Although many do find employment that suits them and which is quite legal and non-exploitative, thousands of Russian citizens have been trafficked out of their homeland into different forms of unfree labour across the world, whether into prostitution, construction or begging. Some foreign citizens have also been trafficked into Russia, and others may arrive legally and freely from other states but subsequently find themselves in work situations in which they lack a legal contract and are underpaid, unpaid or trapped in jobs that are semi-legal, underground or which involve forced labour in debt-bondage, much like those who are trafficked. Some Russians have also been trafficked within Russia's borders or have merely migrated within their own country looking for work in another region but then found themselves deceived and unexpectedly ended up in forced labour.

Brief stories to be discussed in later chapters highlight these three migration trends in different directions. Elena's tale is that of someone trafficked out of Russia. She was unemployed and living with her grandmother in a rural area of Kursk oblast which a journalist described as a place of 'mud' and 'no work'. An acquaintance said 'go to Guseinov, he will help you'. She did so and Guseinov promised her a good salary as a waitress abroad. His wife Tamara accompanied Elena to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where they spent a happy first evening in a hotel. So far, Elena did not suspect that anything was amiss. The next day Tamara took

her to an apartment and introduced her to its owner. Elena was handed over and found several other 'girls' already there.¹ They were forced to work in prostitution, eventually servicing ten to fifteen men a night. They were constantly locked up and, if they broke a rule, were beaten.

Siarkhon Tabarov's story is one of trafficking into Russia from Central Asia. He saw a television advertisement from a local job agency in Tajikistan offering a good job in Russia. Siarkhon signed a document and travelled with other Tajiks to Rostov. The employer took their passports, drove them into the mountains and then made them walk to a remoter area. These migrants were then told they would be quarrying by hard labour. Siarkhon and the others immediately refused but were bullied and told they would be deported if they did not comply. The men worked for eighty-five days with no pay. They lived in an abandoned refrigerator truck sleeping on filthy mattresses. Any protest was met with a denial of food.

Sergei's ordeal is one of slavery and forced labour within Russia. At forty-three years old, he travelled in 1996 from Murmansk to Makhachkala in Dagestan looking for work. When he got off the bus, a stranger approached and offered to set him up in a job in a brickworks. Subsequently Sergei was kept against his will as a forced labourer for an astonishing eighteen years. His documents were taken away, and he was given only old clothes and some food. He tried to escape, was caught and was then put to work herding cattle. Sergei was finally freed by the organisation Al'ternativa, which has set itself the goal of discovering and releasing slaves.

Many different adults and minors tell stories of enduring entrapment in a variety of predicaments. What each has experienced in common is deception, degrees of illegality and invariably threats and coercion, which often result in a form of unfreedom. Whilst many may attempt to resist and take action to get out of their situation, others have reported a lack of agency or felt limited capacity for initiative due to control or possession by another or by others. Outcomes can vary, depending upon several factors far more complex than the restrictive 'either/or' duality around which discussions of 'agency' versus 'victim' often pivot. Then again, many arrivals who are not trafficked are well treated and enjoy the success that they sought. It matters very much who employs them, just as it mattered who a serf's landholder was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries or who a slave's owner was in medieval Russia. Much also depends upon how individuals handle themselves, what decisions

¹ I use the terms 'girl' or 'woman' as cited in the original source.

they make, how they attempt to execute them, which relationships they have built or lack, and how they negotiate their realities. Migration processes and unfree labour predicaments are complex, and understandings of them should be nuanced. I use the term 'unfree labour' as an umbrella concept under which 'forced labour', 'bonded labour', 'slavery' and 'serfdom' are subsumed. These terms are unpacked below and will be found throughout the book. What is evident is that those in unfree labour situations are unable to enjoy citizenship rights, even when in their own countries. They do not possess what I call 'enabled citizenship'. Reference will also be made to work situations where there is some form of exploitation, such as non-payment or underpayment of wages, but which may not merit the label 'unfreedom'.

Objectives and Guiding Questions

This is a book about the politics, policies, social impacts and perceptions of migration flows out of, into and within the largest country in the world that end up either in some form of unfree labour or in exploitation along a continuum which at its worst end may merit the label 'slavery'. It sets out to provide an interdisciplinary case study about the politics in Russia surrounding issues of human trafficking, migration and labour exploitation, as well as their associated narratives, expert assessments and public appraisals. It offers a macro-picture of the dynamics of particular migration flows, the nature of press coverage about them and their impact on society, politics and policy. Scrutiny of the outflows does not discuss departures from Russia to study or to live and work elsewhere that do not involve the process of human trafficking. The outmigration of professionals into their specialist fields or of students falls outside this book's scope. Examination of inflows concentrates on migrants from Central Asia, particularly from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, whilst acknowledging that others have also arrived from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine, Eastern Europe, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Vietnam and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The latter cluster will be mentioned only in passing as space requires more detailed focus on those from one region.

Discussion is concerned with how the historical, socio-economic and political context of Russia has shaped these migration flows since the protracted collapse of the USSR. It looks at why and how patterns of human trafficking developed and examines which social and political actors attempted to forge 'human trafficking', or '*torgovlia liud'mi*' in Russian (literally, 'trade in people'), into a recognised social issue requiring

attention on legal and political agendas. It asks how they went about it, with what success and who opposed them. The media are central to the construction of news, so analysis asks how the Russian press covered these initiatives and explores the types of stories that newspapers relayed to readers about the trafficked and their traffickers. Other central themes include how experts in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and women's groups assessed developments in society and explained their own aims in trying to bring about change. A key question is how experts' views diverged from those of the public concerning the significance of both human trafficking and labour migration for their country and for its citizens. Crucially, discussion looks at how economic needs and social attitudes have affected Russia's policies on incoming labour migrants. It again asks about the role of the press and how it has portrayed the lives of labour migrants from Central Asia and exposed the problems, hazards and exploitation they may face. Opinions, beliefs and narratives are powerful elements within social fabrics globally and particularly on questions of migration. Analysis therefore scrutinises what the Russian public thinks about labour migrants from elsewhere on Russian territory and looks at the more specialist reflections of experts upon the recent history of migration policies and their implications for migrants. The study asks about the impacts that the processes of human trafficking and labour migration have made on the Russian Federation and how they have shaped the narratives circulating in the media, in politics, in NGOs and in wider society.

Migrating out for Work, But Trafficked

The first migration flows to be examined are those in which individuals left Russia for work in other states. The trafficked were promised good remuneration by those who recruited them and arranged their passage. Instead, however, upon arrival in a foreign destination, the workers found themselves trapped in a situation of forced labour, generally in a job not of their choosing. This is an example of human trafficking, not smuggling. In the early 2000s, thousands of Russians, like Elena, found themselves trafficked into brothels far-flung across the world. There were flows into Eastern Europe, particularly to Hungary, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Routes to Western Europe took them to Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Spain, the UK and Ireland. Another route went into Scandinavia. From the Russian Far East streams flowed to the PRC, Japan and Thailand. Through Azerbaijan and Armenia, the flows went to Turkey and to the UAE. Others reached Israel, the United States of America and Canada. Other East European

women, particularly those from Moldova and Ukraine, found themselves in similar situations.

The reasons for the growth in trafficking out of Russia were several. The 'push' factors of factory closures, sell-offs and job losses in the 1990s in a context of 'wild capitalism' (*dikii kapitalizm*) caused workers to seek employment elsewhere. In a labour force segmented in some sectors by gender, those women who had not already lost their jobs were likely to be concentrated in low-paid work. They, like unemployed men, had an impetus to leave with the aim of earning more.² Travel abroad was not restricted as it had been in the USSR and so, with borders much easier to cross, opportunities for migration appeared greater, horizons widened and hopes and expectations grew. Moreover, the 'pull' factors which promised well-paid jobs and the lure of the West tempted workers into solving their problems by leaving Russia, if only for a short time. The emotional factor of the desire to escape narrow social worlds also contributed to the flow from small towns and rural areas, spurred by the hope of exciting adventures in new places and, for some, of finding a Western husband, with the rosy expectation of a more comfortable life. Indeed, since the Gorbachev era, television programmes, soap operas and films had been popularising notions of better lives elsewhere. Underpinning all these factors were the survival needs of earning money to support oneself and possibly one's offspring or parents back home. Together, however, these all required migration, not trafficking. During this period, there were vast opportunities for organised crime to establish transnational networks in human trafficking or for entrepreneurial individuals to make occasional opportunistic deals for their own benefit, such as selling an acquaintance. Facilitating factors for crime outweighed inhibitors.

To many Russians looking for work, foreign countries looked promising. The US government in 2004, however, estimated that 600,000 to 800,000 men, women and children were trafficked across borders every year, of whom 80 per cent were women and girls and as many as 50 per cent minors.³ Figures from the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the mid 2000s estimated that there were 12.3 million people in the world trapped in 'forced labour, bonded labour, forced child labour, and sexual servitude at any given time', and other estimates gave a range of

² Some argued that women suffered worse unemployment than men, and others contested this. See Sarah Ashwin and Elaine Bowers, 'Do Russian women want to work?', in Mary Buckley, ed., *Post-Soviet Women: From the Baltic to Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 21–37; and Sue Bridger, Rebecca Kay and Kathryn Pinnick, *No More Heroines? Russia, Women and the Market* (London: Routledge, 1996).

³ Cited in US State Department, TIP Report 2006, www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/index.htm.

from 4 million to 27 million.⁴ In 2012 the ILO gave an increased global figure of 20.9 million in forced labour, an estimated 3 out of every 1,000 persons worldwide, of whom 11.4 million (55 per cent) were women and girls and 9.5 million men and boys (45 per cent).⁵ By 2014, however, all global estimates had increased. The Global Slavery Index issued by the Australian Walk Free Foundation put the global estimate at 35.8 million, which in 2016 it increased to 45.8 million in 167 countries.⁶ Inevitably there have been criticisms and queries about the methodologies of data collection and the estimates reached, but no international organisation has disputed the gravity of the problem. It was one from which, structurally, the new Russian Federation could not be immune and into which some of its citizens would be drawn.

Migrating in for Work, Freely or Trafficked

The second process to be discussed concerns patterns of arrival from Central Asian states which may, or may not, result in labour exploitation with varying degrees of deception. At its worst, this process can result in unwelcome forced labour in Russia, as endured by Siarkhon Tabarov, thus sharing similar experiences of entrapment and exploitation with those trafficked out. Often those who end up in forced labour arrive legally and independently, seeking work. If they do not fully understand the law or if existing regulations make it hard for workers to behave entirely legally regarding registration or the length of their stay, then they risk getting sucked into illegal forms of help which will take advantage of them. Labour migrants may turn to people offering quick solutions to their plight, sometimes members of their diaspora already in Russia who may trick them and ask for payment for services that could have been obtained much more cheaply and officially, if only the migrant had known how. Labour migrants are especially vulnerable to unfree labour situations in periods when in Russia there are labour shortages in given sectors or locations and when in nearby states there are prevailing hardships, unemployment or lower wages. Sometimes ‘intermediaries’ or ‘middlemen’, known as *posredniki*, channel migrants into forced labour situations for their own reward. Even migrants with legal documents may find their ‘legality’ queried

⁴ US State Department, TIP Report 2006.

⁵ ILO, ‘New ILO global estimate of forced labour: 20.9 million victims’, ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/news/WCMS_182109/lang--en/index.htm. The ILO volunteered that the methodology had been ‘revised and improved’, giving ‘a more robust figure’.

⁶ The Walk Free Foundation’s Global Slavery Indexes for 2013, 2014 and 2016 are at www.walkfreefoundation.org/resources.

and challenged by those in authority in a confusing 'grey' area between 'legal' and 'illegal', in which they may be required to pay a bribe anyway. Russian experts and specialists on migration have put forward various recommendations for ending labour abuse, and policies have changed over recent years in different ways. Some hate crimes against migrant workers with darker skins have also been evident in society, as across Europe and in North America, so xenophobia is one factor affecting policies.

Migrating Within, But Trapped in Forced Labour

A third process is that of Russian citizens, like Sergei, who become trapped in forced labour, or *prinuditel'nyi trud*, in their own land. This often comes about not because, like foreign incoming *gastarbaitery*, as Russians like to call the guest workers, they need to acquire permission to work for a specified time period, but merely because they need a job, are tricked in the recruitment process and subsequently find themselves in unfree labour. They may be duped, sold or even drugged and kidnapped. Of course, Russia is not alone in having problems of forced labour. Most states of the world, to varying degrees, have forms and patterns of unfree labour within their borders. The sheer size of Russia, however, and the remoteness of much of the land mass, makes it especially ripe for unfree work situations to develop, drawing in those living in poorer parts and willing to travel to other regions for employment. There are tempting economic opportunities for those wishing to exploit the vulnerable, the marginalised or the unsuspecting living within the state's own borders as well as those arriving from poorer countries in the 'near abroad' or further away.

Geographic expanse and the changing nature of border regimes are just two of many relevant factors in fluid pictures of migration and exploitation. It is worth underlining that today's Russian Federation, as shown on the map, has a massive territory of 6.59 million square miles, roughly one-ninth of the world's land. It spans more than 6,200 miles from the European continent in the west to the Pacific Far East and stretches over eleven time zones. Russia extends to the Arctic in the north, possesses nine major mountain ranges and is about 10 per cent swamp. Its land mass is almost twice the size of the USA. Given Russia's expanse, it was most unlikely that the country would have escaped contemporary problems of unfree labour in this globalised world. Russia shares land borders with fourteen states, the highest world figure, which makes it unsurprising that leaders and peoples have always had a deep sense

of being surrounded and of being geo-politically vulnerable.⁷ Given its numerous borders, it was also unlikely that the dynamics of migration, whether in or out, would be unaffected by changes and continuities in adjacent states and those beyond them.

Before 1991, Russia was formally known as the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, or RSFSR, and was one of fifteen republics that made up the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or USSR. This Soviet Union was a massive state of 8.6 million square miles, one-sixth of the world's habitable land. It was situated both in Europe and in Asia, as is Russia today, and its republics shared borders with Finland, Norway, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Turkey, Iran, the PRC, the Mongolian People's Republic, the DPRK and Afghanistan. According to the last Soviet census of 1989, it had 286.7 million people. Just over half of these, namely 147.4 million, were in the RSFSR, which was the largest republic.⁸ The USSR finally collapsed after a protracted process of social and political change under Mikhail Gorbachev.⁹ By 2013 the population of the Russian Federation had dropped to 143.3 million and had increased a little by 2016 to 146.5 million.¹⁰ With such a diversity of neighbours in the 'near abroad' of former Soviet republics and beyond, routes out of Russia for traffickers are multiple and varied, providing several opportunities for exit routes which can be switched when necessary. The border with the PRC alone runs for just over 2,600 miles.

Although the USSR as a political system collapsed more than twenty-five years ago, different linkages have persisted over this territorial space despite new state borders. Not only are there relatives, friends and remembered colleagues elsewhere, there are also more general 'connections' of shared histories, memories of holidays and of favourite Soviet movies, songs, actors and singers. There is a haunting sense of shared cultural threads and of Moscow as a magnet, whether for a special visit

⁷ This figure includes the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and its borders with Poland and Lithuania.

⁸ Goskomstat SSSR, *Naselenie SSSR 1988: Statisticheskii Ezhegodnik* (Moscow: Finansy i Statistiki, 1989), p. 8. In 1959 the population of the USSR was 208.8 million and in 1979 it reached 262.4 million. The corresponding figures for the RSFSR were 117.5 million and 137.4 million.

⁹ See Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Stephen White, *Gorbachev and After*, 3rd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, 4th edn (London: Routledge, 2008), chs. 1–2; Mary Buckley, *Redefining Russian Society and Polity* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993); and Mary Buckley, 'The disintegration of the USSR: a complex protracted process', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2008, pp. 251–264.

¹⁰ Federal'naiia Sluzhba Gosudarstvennoi Statistiki (Rosstat), *Demograficheskii Ezhegodnik Rossii: Statisticheskii Sbornik* (Moscow: Rosstat, 2013), p. 21. Rosstat's updates are at www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/en/figures/population.

from afar, for study in a prestigious institution or as a cultural centre. Memories span borders, such as recollections of every New Year's Eve when El'dar Riazanov's 1975 comedy film *Irony of Fate (Ironiia Sudby, ili s legkim parom)* would be screened and delight millions. Although perceptions of what the USSR was now vary across its former constituent parts and peoples, there are nonetheless lingering senses of familiarity and commonalities, stronger in some states than in others. This particularly applies to attitudes within Central Asian states regarding the appropriateness of their labour flows into Russia, which pre-date current borders. For Russia's part, having to cope in 1989 with the loss of empire in Eastern Europe and then in 1991 with the USSR's own final implosion, the image that its leaders liked to project on the world stage of their country as a '*velikaia derzhava*', or great power, was seriously undermined. Moreover, these events generated an identity crisis for leaders and citizens and spawned reflection and soul-searching as to what remained of the Russian national idea. The hasty formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimikh Gosudarstv), or CIS, on 8 December 1991 in a meeting between Boris Yel'tsin and the leaders of Ukraine and Belarus, was an attempt initially to hold the Slavic republics together by some loose inter-state links and to deal with issues emerging from the disintegration of the USSR. It quickly widened on 21 December through the Alma Ata Protocol to include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, but achievements were limited.¹¹ The setting up of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) of the most committed states of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan came into force on 1 January 2015. There had been a prior history from the mid 1990s of attempts at effective customs union, but declarations outweighed successes.¹² Armenia's membership of the EEU quickly followed on 2 January and that of Kyrgyzstan in August 2015. Both the CIS and EEU are relevant to the topics of human trafficking and labour migration not only because citizens across them experience these processes but because agreements have resulted in shared plans for anti-trafficking initiatives and have also defined the requirements of labour migrants entering Russia.

¹¹ Moldavia (as Moldova was formerly known) was an associate member up to 1994. Georgia joined in 1993, then left in 2008. Turkmenistan and Ukraine did not ratify the agreement. See Mark Webber, *CIS Integration Trends: Russia and the Former Soviet South* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1997).

¹² Rilka Dragneva and Katarzyna Wolczuk, 'Russia, the Eurasian Customs Union and the EU: cooperation, stagnation or rivalry?', Chatham House briefing paper, August 2012.

Conceptualisations and Definitions

'Human trafficking' is not synonymous with 'slavery', and these two concepts should not be conflated. Rather, human trafficking is a process which is highly likely to end in some form of labour exploitation which in its severest form may constitute what many academics and experts do define as 'slavery', although both terms for some scholars are either unsatisfactory, controversial or both. Political leaders, lawyers, those in NGOs and many academics in their research, however, do use these concepts and apply them. In so doing, they generally follow the definition of human trafficking adopted in one of the three Palermo Protocols, the 'Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children' (the anti-trafficking Protocol), which supplemented the United Nations (UN) Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime, or Palermo Convention, which the General Assembly approved in 2000 and which came into force in 2003. In this Protocol, human trafficking is portrayed as a process that involves 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons' which is 'by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, or the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability'. Integral to this definition is 'control' over another person 'for the purpose of exploitation'.¹³ Trafficking from Russia has generally involved recruitment through deception about paid employment to be provided later and elsewhere and does not usually involve payment in advance by workers for the costs of their transit. In covering travel costs, the trafficker later claims an inflated debt for these upon the worker's arrival elsewhere, which leaves the trafficked person in a predicament of debt-bondage. As a consequence, the process of human trafficking is most likely to result in the undermining of personal security, human rights, dignity and the self-esteem of the target workers, unless they manage to escape. Regional organisations such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU) have followed UN definitions and adopted policies, recommendations, directives and

¹³ The text of the 'Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children' can be found at www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolTraffickingInPersons.aspx. In 1949, the UN General Assembly approved the Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. It described trafficking as an 'evil', endangering the welfare of the individual, family and community, and stated that the consent of the trafficked person was irrelevant to the prosecution of the exploiter. The 1949 Convention created no monitoring body and was not widely ratified. See www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/TrafficInPersons.aspx.

strategies on the prevention of human trafficking, the rehabilitation of those affected by it and the prosecution of the traffickers.¹⁴

In legal terms, human trafficking is conceptually distinct from smuggling. The latter occurs when an individual pays a person in advance to transport him or her to a particular destination, generally arriving in another state illegally and without the promise of a job from the smuggler. The initial agreement in legal terms involves consent, although it may indeed be a coerced form of consent if the migrant is trying to flee a war zone or repressive state or get out of a dire economic situation. The UN Protocol 'Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air' defines smuggling as 'the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident'.¹⁵ The informal agreement between client and smuggler, however, may also involve deception and share some of the characteristics of trafficking. Sociologists have contested the sharp distinction between them, cautioning that the lines in reality may be blurred. Smuggling may not always involve a straightforward deal, and smugglers may let down their clients in transit or otherwise place them at risk. This became starkly evident in cases of migrants smuggled across the Mediterranean sea from Libya to Italy and of Afghans, Iraqis and Syrians smuggled from Turkey to Greek islands.¹⁶ News reporters often confuse these legal concepts and talk about 'traffickers' when they mean 'smugglers'.

Other than 'human trafficking', key terms referred to in this book are 'forced labour', 'bonded labour', 'slavery' and 'serfdom'. These four categories of labour, which in some ways overlap, are all different forms of 'unfree labour'. In 1930 the ILO's Convention on Forced Labour defined that term in Article 2.1 as 'work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty' and for which the person had

¹⁴ For details, see OSCE, 'Combating trafficking in human beings', www.osce.org/secretariat/trafficking; Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) annual report, www.humanrightseurope.org/2015/04/anti-human-trafficking-unit-publishes-annual-report/; the EU Directive of 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/legislation-and-case-law-eu-legislation-criminal-law/directive-201136eu-e; and 'EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings (2012–2016)', ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/new-european-strategy-2012-2016.en.

¹⁵ See www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/smuggling-of-migrants.html.

¹⁶ Tom Kington, 'Children among 400 lost as migrants sail to Europe', *The Times*, 15 April 2015. Smugglers on more than one occasion tossed their passengers overboard.

not offered themselves ‘voluntarily’.¹⁷ This Convention depicted ‘forced labour’ as synonymous with ‘compulsory labour’. The term gained more widespread coinage after the ILO set out to gather statistics on validated reports of its existence. A more recent unpacking of the concept from the ILO in 2014 led to a more nuanced definition: ‘forced labour refers to situations in which persons are coerced to work through the use of violence or intimidation, or by more subtle means such as accumulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities’.¹⁸

‘Bonded labour’ and ‘debt-bondage’ are terms which refer to a mechanism through which forced labour can be economically compelled and today are frequently used in connection with instances of human trafficking. For example, in much of the human trafficking out of the Russian Federation in the 1990s and early 2000s, women and girls may have responded to newspaper advertisements offering highly paid work in another country as a waitress, nanny or dancer, been unable to pay for their fare there or to provide appropriate documents and so become indebted to the recruiter who offered to cover the costs of their travel and arrange the necessary paperwork. Trafficked persons committed themselves later to pay back the money out of future wages. Invariably, however, they found themselves trapped in prostitution against their will instead of working in waitressing. Not only were they deceived, but now they were stuck in situations of ‘bonded labour’ in which they were already in debt, or in ‘debt-bondage’. Work in debt-bondage thus became an insecure and unfree form of security for money owed, a debt which could be unfairly inflated or increased through an imposed system of fines for minor transgressions or for breaking arbitrary rules set by the captor. What the ILO refers to as ‘subtle’ means of coercion such as ‘accumulated debt’ may also be accompanied by violence, threats and debasement. Many analysts would deem the predicament of forced labour and debt-bondage to be tantamount to ‘slavery’, even though the workers are not legally ‘owned’ in a more classical sense of slavery.

There is a huge scholarly literature on what constitutes ‘slavery’ with discussions revolving around questions of the role of the master, the powerlessness of the slave, property rights, relations of production, the nature of the society, outsider status, kinship ties and physical

¹⁷ The ILO’s ‘Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)’ is available at www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C029. For the ILO’s ‘Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)’, see www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::P12100_ILO_CODE:C105.

¹⁸ ILO, ‘The meanings of forced labour’, www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/news/WCMS_237569/lang-en/index.htm.

movement.¹⁹ The nature of the relationship between master and slave can vary across slave systems and within them. In the past, different forms of slavery were legal, such as in ancient Rome, the southern states of the USA or medieval Russia before serfdom. 'Slavery' today, however, or what some feel more comfortable describing as 'unfree labour' or 'forced labour', is illegal and refers to the control and coercion of a person by violence, or threats of violence, and their economic exploitation to the advantage of the coercer. The slave may receive no wages or just subsistence. Slaves usually lack the freedom to walk away from their predicament or may be deterred from doing so out of fear of the consequences.

At the international level, there have been various treaties, conventions and general recommendations specific to slavery and forced labour aimed at prevention. Multilateral treaties included the 1904 International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, the 1910 International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, the 1921 International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children and, under the League of Nations, the 1933 International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age. In 1926, also under the League of Nations, a Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery was signed in Geneva, and in 1930 the ILO adopted a Convention Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour.

How, then, has the concept of 'slavery' been defined? Article 1 of the Convention of 1926 saw slavery as 'the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised'. According to Article 2, 'the slave trade includes all acts involved in the capture, acquisition or disposal of a person with intent to reduce him to slavery; all acts involved in the acquisition of a slave with a view to selling or exchanging him; all acts of disposal by sale or exchange of a slave acquired with a view to being sold or exchanged, and, in general, every act of trade or transport in slaves'.²⁰ A Protocol of 1955 amended the League of Nations Convention and also in 1956 refined the definition of slavery. This Supplementary Convention referred more broadly to 'slavery, the slave trade, and institutions and practices similar to slavery', regretting that they had not been eliminated. It called for their 'complete abolition' whether or not they were covered by the 1926 definition of slavery. Article 1 now included 'debt bondage', 'serfdom' and 'any institution or practice' in which a woman 'without the right to

¹⁹ Relevant references are in footnotes 1 to 3 in the next chapter.

²⁰ See 'Slavery Convention' at www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/SlaveryConvention.aspx.

refuse' was given in marriage, transferred by her husband to another person or liable upon the death of her husband to be inherited by another person.²¹

Other international documents are pertinent too. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the UN General Assembly championed 'freedom from fear and want' as well as the 'dignity and worth of the human person' and 'the security of the person'. Article 4 held that 'No one shall be held in slavery or servitude' and that 'slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms'. Article 5 specified that 'No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment', and Article 16 maintained that marriage could be entered into only with free and full consent of those of 'full age'.²² The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights echoed in Article 8 the ban on slavery and added that, 'No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour.'²³ With different emphases, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights referred in Article 1 to 'the right to self-determination' and in Article 7 to 'the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work'. This included remuneration, fair wages, a decent living and safe and healthy working conditions, equal opportunities in promotion and periodic holidays, rest, leisure and reasonable working hours.²⁴ Both Covenants were adopted by the General Assembly in 1966 and came into force in 1976. More detailed consideration is given to minors in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in force since September 1990. Its Preamble, citing the earlier Declarations of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and 1959, holds that children require 'special safeguards and care' because of 'physical and mental immaturity'. Article 35 requires states to 'take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form', and Article 36 calls for protection against 'forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare'.²⁵

Kevin Bales has persuasively argued for the need to view slavery not just legally but with recognition of its complexities and evolving nature.

²¹ See 'Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery' at www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/SupplementaryConventionAbolitionofSlavery.aspx.

²² UN, 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights', www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html.

²³ Available at www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ccpr.aspx.

²⁴ Available at www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx.

²⁵ The text of 'The Convention on the Rights of the Child' is at www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/pages/crc.aspx.

He contends that today a 'new slavery' exists in which the people are merely 'disposable', set in a situation distinct from the legally owned slaves of the past.²⁶ Any traditional responsibilities of an owner to a slave are lacking in this post-modern context in which illegal control is maintained through coercion and violence. Bales views 'slavery' sociologically as a patterned relationship between humans, one that can take 'various forms' and 'achieve certain outcomes'. The different forms are themselves set in cultural, religious, social, political, ethnic, commercial and psychological contexts. He portrays the core attribute across forms as 'a state of control' which is 'based on violence or its threat' and a 'lack of payment beyond subsistence'. Integral to the core in Bales's analysis is 'the theft of labor or other qualities of the slave for economic gain'.²⁷ More recently Jean Allain and Kevin Bales have argued that 'exercise of control' over a person is tantamount to possession and that 'possession is the *sine qua non* of slavery'.²⁸ Here they are keen to stress that the situation is *de facto* one of 'ownership' and 'property', even if not formal legal ownership of the person.

Serfdom is another form of labour considered 'unfree' and banned by international law. Legally it is distinct from 'slavery', although some historians perceive it as similar in some respects. It was common across feudal Western Europe and constituted a form of legal bondage in which the peasant worked for a lord, was permitted subsistence farming on certain fields and in return received protection. Serfdom was thus a legal, economic and social relationship. Serfdom developed later across Central and Eastern Europe, including parts of Russia but excluding Siberia. Unfree labour in nineteenth-century Russia, however, was not only about work on landed estates. There was also *katorga*, or penal servitude, a form of forced labour integral to Peter the Great's modernising project. Subsequently in the USSR a system of labour camps, or Gulag, was established in which prisoners laboured on projects for the construction of Soviet socialism.²⁹ Prisoners of war (POWs) constituted another category of unfree labour, common across states. Some historians have also cast the collectivisation of agriculture in the USSR in the same light.

²⁶ Kevin Bales, *Disposable People: New Slavery in a Global Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

²⁷ Kevin Bales, *Understanding Global Slavery: A Reader* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 8–9.

²⁸ Jean Allain and Kevin Bales, 'Slavery and its definition', Law Research Paper No. 12-06, Queen's University, Belfast.

²⁹ The word 'Gulag' is a shortened form of its formal title of 'Glavnoe upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei i kolonii', which can be translated as 'Main administration of corrective labour camps and colonies'.

Theoretical Approaches

There are several ways in which scholars have approached the study of the topics of human trafficking, forced labour and slavery. Historians have produced a literature on developments in different parts of the world with chronologies, descriptions and analyses of patterns of slavery, its consequences and campaigns to end it. Historians also make clear different types of slavery in the past, as in the work of Richard Hellie on Russia which identifies eight categories of slave.³⁰ More recently, John Picarelli has underscored the importance of recognising the differences between chattel slavery, indentured servitude, peonage and today's 'unfree labour', which he hesitates to call slavery.³¹

Social scientists have adopted various frameworks to studying human trafficking with emphases on different bundles of independent variables. Some embed human trafficking within studies of migration and focus primarily on the dynamics of the 'push' and 'pull' factors involved in the wider process of the 're-forging' of states and societies. Socio-economic factors and historical context are crucial to making sense of these.³² Others offer what they call 'a global perspective' in multi-disciplinary anthologies discussing trafficking across continents.³³ Some come at it very much from the prism of 'slavery', an old form of labour exploitation in contemporary contexts. Bales, cited above, prefers to refer to a 'new slavery' of more easily disposable people. Approaches overlap and converge on many points. Those who scrutinise human trafficking from a human rights perspective, such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International and the American Bar Association (ABA), begin conceptually from 'violations of human rights'. Nonetheless, human trafficking can result in a 'contemporary form of slavery', and so a human rights perspective can echo aspects of the previous approaches. Moreover, most approaches incorporate some discussion of human rights violations in the trafficking process. Jennifer Suchland, however, has questioned the utility of focussing on violations of human rights, arguing that this

³⁰ Richard Hellie, *Slavery in Russia 1450–1725* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

³¹ Chattel slavery refers to legal ownership. Indentured servitude applies when a person agrees to work for a specified length of time. Peonage connotes debt-bondage or working off a debt. Whereas chattel slavery has largely ended, unfree labour has not. See John T. Picarelli, 'Historical approaches to the trade in human beings', in Maggy Lee, ed., *Human Trafficking* (Cullompton, UK: Willan Publishing, 2007), pp. 26–48.

³² Stephen Castles, Hein De Hass and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 5th edn (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

³³ Kimberly A. McCabe and Sabita Manian, eds., *Sex Trafficking: A Global Perspective* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2010).

discourse does not address how human trafficking ‘is intertwined in the constitutive operations of economic systems’.³⁴

Members of some governments initially perceived human trafficking as a crime and as a potential threat to public order and national security. Their starting frame was one of ‘law and order’. Criminologists adopt a similar starting point of ‘law breaking’. In particular, they focus on the role of transnational crime, organised crime and forms of corruption. Quick off the mark in studying human trafficking from Russia from this perspective were Louise Shelley and Sally Stoecker. They explored the relevance of the ‘political–criminal nexus’ as a legacy of the USSR and its ‘raider mentality’ towards resources, including persons, for quick profits within an ‘illicit global economy’.³⁵ Such trade in humans amounted to a ‘commodification of persons’ at the hands of criminal organisations with ‘their own form of authoritarianism’.³⁶ Like many others, they stress ‘the complexity of the trafficking phenomenon’.³⁷ Also, using transnational organised crime as a central focus, Phil Williams has taken a broad market perspective by looking at the context of commodity markets and at the ‘opportunities, cost–benefit calculations and risk considerations’ of the ‘modern slave traders’. He argues that the structure of markets and market dynamics are relevant as they generate facilitators of trafficking and inhibitors, with the former being stronger.³⁸ This fits into a broad perspective which calls for examination of the structural and proximate factors which shape human trafficking. The former refer to social, economic and political context and the latter to policy and governance issues.³⁹ A related but distinct

³⁴ Jennifer Suchland, *Economies of Violence: Transnational Feminism, Pansocialism, and the Politics of Sex Trafficking* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), p. 1. For a summary of her argument, see pp. 1–21.

³⁵ Louise I. Shelley, ‘The changing position of women: trafficking, crime and corruption’, in David Lane, ed., *The Legacy of State Socialism and the Future of Transformation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), pp. 207–222.

³⁶ Sally Stoecker, ‘The rise of human trafficking and the role of organized crime’, *Demokratizatsiia*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Winter 2000), pp. 129–144; Sally Stoecker, ‘Human trafficking: a new challenge for Russia and the United States’, in Sally Stoecker and Louise Shelley, eds., *Human Traffic and Transnational Crime* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), pp. 13–28.

³⁷ Stoecker and Shelley, ‘Introduction’, in Stoecker and Shelley, eds., *Human Traffic*, pp. 1–12. See also Louise I. Shelley and Robert W. Orttung, ‘Russia’s efforts to combat human trafficking: efficient crime groups versus irresolute societies and uncoordinated states’, in William Alex Pridemore, ed., *Ruling Russia: Law, Crime and Justice in a Changing Society* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), pp. 167–182.

³⁸ Phil Williams, ‘Trafficking in women: the role of transnational organized crime’, in Sally Cameron and Edward Newman, eds., *Trafficking in Humans: Social, Cultural and Political Dimensions* (New York: United Nations University, 2008), pp. 126–157; see, too, Phil Williams, ed., *Russian Organized Crime: The New Threat?* (London: Frank Cass, 1997).

³⁹ Edward Newman and Sally Cameron, ‘Introduction: understanding human trafficking’, in Cameron and Newman, eds., *Trafficking in Humans*, pp. 1–17.

approach regarding crime and law enforcement by Lauren McCarthy examines how the functioning of the Russian criminal justice system and its incentives and disincentives provide structural reasons which make it difficult to prosecute under anti-trafficking clauses.⁴⁰ Some politicians in states losing large numbers of women and girls to prostitution abroad have also remarked upon the threat to the country's gene pool and birth rate, seeing the issue through a demographic prism.

Scholars who pay special attention to the variable of gender emphasise the importance of a sexualised world, the international political economy of sex, the objectification of women and entrenched discriminatory and patriarchal attitudes towards women as sex objects.⁴¹ Regarding the trafficking of women and girls, Sheila L. Croucher sums up the situation as 'the transnational marketing, export, exchange and exploitation of women'.⁴² Kat Banyard argues that the sex trade 'manufactures consent', resulting in 'commercial sexual exploitation on an industrial scale'. She analyses how myths circulating in 'pimp states' are 'used to create a culture and set of laws that encourage and facilitate men's paid sexual access to women's bodies'.⁴³ Women are thereby rendered de-humanised targets, enduring a violation of their boundaries, and receive no empathy.⁴⁴ From these perspectives, human trafficking and the nature of unfree labour cannot fully be grasped without an appreciation of gender politics and the roles of misogyny and violence. Putting it differently, Tat'iana Svad'bina, Ol'ga Nemova and Tat'iana Pakina highlight the combined influences of a 'mass propaganda of luxury' and the 'psychological, management and marketing' techniques adopted by traffickers and set in a context in which women's status in Russia has been lowered. They argue that a 'crisis in the family' and 'a deformation of moral norms' have denied girls their potentials.⁴⁵ Looking at UN peacekeeping missions, Jasmine-Kim Westendorf and Louise Searle have discussed how abuses of differential

⁴⁰ Lauren A. McCarthy, 'Beyond corruption: an assessment of Russian law enforcement's fight against human trafficking', *Demokratizatsiia*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Winter 2010), pp. 1–17; and her *Trafficking Justice: How Russian Police Enforce New Laws, from Crime to Courtroom* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

⁴¹ Jan Jindy Pettman, *Worlding Women: A Feminist International Politics* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 157–207; Chris Corrin, 'Transitional road for traffic: analysing trafficking in women from and through Central and Eastern Europe', *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 4, June 2005, pp. 543–560.

⁴² Sheila L. Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging: The Politics of Identity in a Changing World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), p. 166.

⁴³ Kat Banyard, *Pimp State: Sex, Money and the Future of Equality* (London: Faber, 2016), pp. 6–10.

⁴⁴ Banyard, *Pimp State*, pp. 28–51.

⁴⁵ Tat'iana Svad'bina, Ol'ga Nemova and Tat'iana Pakina, 'Sovremennyi trafik rabotorgovli: prichiny, posledstviia, profilaktika', *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, No. 2, 2014, pp. 43–48.

power and trust by peacekeepers can sexually exploit the vulnerabilities of those they were sent there to protect.⁴⁶

A wide approach which focusses on sustainable livelihoods is integral to development studies and political ecology. It concerns the capabilities, assets and activities needed for means of living. Robert Chambers and Gordon R. Conway argue that 'a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks'.⁴⁷ Those trapped in debt-bondage have no sustainable livelihood or, at best, a highly compromised one which itself is characterised by stress. In fact, debt-bondage is a predicament from which escape is required and a new start necessary before livelihoods begin to be sustainable. The lives of some labour migrants from Central Asia may also fall into this category. Even if not in debt-bondage, many migrants find that their attempts at sustainable living may be challenged by reduced pay, the complexities and costs of obtaining documents for registration and work, and pressures to pay bribes, as well as prohibitive housing costs which may result in having to rent 'mattress space' in cramped accommodation with others, known as *rezinovye kvartiry*, or 'rubber flats'. Study of sustainable livelihoods developed in the 1990s as an attempt to go beyond existing ways of looking at poverty and to broaden analysis to include questions of vulnerability, social exclusion and command over resources and social networks.⁴⁸ Anthropologists in their ethnographic case studies of the livelihoods of labour migrants and family members left behind shed detailed light on personal dimensions, perceptions and understandings of migration processes and outcomes which aggregate statistical data do not offer.⁴⁹ Thus the literature on different forms of vulnerable and unfree labour operates at several 'levels of analysis' with varying perspectives which pose both distinct and overlapping questions.

My own approach here is an interdisciplinary one. The story of human trafficking out of Russia, into it and within it needs to be explained

⁴⁶ Jasmine-Kim Westendorf and Louise Searle, 'Sexual exploitation and abuse in peace operations: trends, policy responses and future directions', *International Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 2, March 2017, pp. 365–387.

⁴⁷ Robert Chambers and Gordon R. Conway, 'Sustainable rural livelihoods: practical concepts for the twenty-first century', IDS Discussion Paper, 1 December 1992.

⁴⁸ The notion of 'sustainable livelihood' was put forward by the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development and further considered in 1992 at a UN Conference on 'Environment and development'.

⁴⁹ Eleonora Fayzullaeva, 'Labor migration in Central Asia: gender challenges', in Linda Racioppi and Katherine O'Sullivan See, eds., *Gender Politics in Post-Communist Eurasia* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2009), pp. 237–265; Madeleine Reeves, 'Clean fake: authenticating documents and persons in migrant Moscow', *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 40, No. 3, 2013, pp. 508–524.

by looking at historical, socio-economic, legislative, political, law enforcement, demographic, gender and attitudinal factors, all of which are essential to an understanding of the changing nature of livelihoods, their fluidities and complexities, and the responses within state and society. Part of this requires listening to how Russians themselves perceive the social and political settings in which developments have unfolded. For this reason, I have interviewed as many experts and activists in the field of anti-trafficking and labour migration as I have had the research time and funding to do, and also designed opinion polls and focus groups to tap into what the public thinks. Underpinning this discussion is the methodological conviction that attention to how individuals express and present their arguments, beliefs and fears, be they experts, the public or migrants, illustrates how they approach, perceive and comprehend the realities and issues around them. I have not for this book conducted face-to-face interviews with the trafficked. I consider there to be ethical questions about doing this and also that it is more appropriate for Russian psychologists to do so than a foreigner from a part of the world in which they may have endured forced labour. There are, moreover, sufficient reports available to know the contours of what trafficked women and men, as well as labour migrants, have been through. This book instead looks at wider historical, political, social and attitudinal contexts and dynamics in which the trafficked and labour migrants are situated. Nor have I interviewed traffickers or 'employers' of those in debt-bondage.

Chapter Breakdown: The Russian Case Study

What merits a Russian case study if human trafficking into unfree labour is a global trend? Case studies of different countries and regions provide documentation and analysis of local patterns and configurations which may show distinctiveness. Russia does have certain characteristics not shared by all states, which include the size of its landmass, its geography of being encircled, the length and variety of its borders and its categorisation of being part of a collapsed empire and a former superpower. Such case studies by specialists of different countries can subsequently feed into wider comparative understandings of similarities and differences across the world. Investigation into the actions of concerned women's groups, NGOs and some politicians in pushing for change illustrates what can be achieved in an authoritarian system and suggests what the limits to success might be and the brakes on it, especially in a system marred by some corrupt practices. The nature of articles in the press and the social attitudes of citizens about a particular problem may vary across the world, linked to the nature of local histories, economic pressures

and cultural patterns across states. Experts on migration policy in Russia may hold views similar to or different from those in other states, and the best way to discover these is to meet and question them and to read the literature that they produce. Thus, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the structure of this book traverses historical, legal, political, sociological and attitudinal dimensions of the issues of human trafficking and labour migration in a particular part of the world and in the largest state.

Precisely because of the existence of different forms of unfree labour in Russia's history, Chapter 1 offers a brief overview of their nature. It introduces – for those social scientists who may be unfamiliar with aspects of Russia's distant historical examples – illustrations of different types or categories of *kholopstvo* (slavery), not prevalent today, in order to underline how varied its forms have been. Serfdom was legally and conceptually distinct from slavery, although some historians view it as 'virtually slavery', whilst others disagree with that interpretation. This historical chapter discusses the ways in which labour was restricted, controlled and debased, indicating variations in patterns and complexities in developments. It also describes the forced labour in Russian prisons under the tsars, the hard labour regimes of the Soviet Gulag, the work extracted from POWs and the impact of the forced nature of the collectivisation of agriculture on the peasantry.

Against this historical backdrop, Chapter 2 moves directly into the case study of the contemporary Russian Federation and focusses on the years after the collapse of the Soviet state up to early 2017. It traces the political dimensions inside the country of naming the problem of human trafficking and getting it recognised in the State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly, as an urgent issue needing attention, debate and policies. Domestic NGOs, women's groups, international actors, some enlightened officers in the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) and a handful of people's deputies in the State Duma fought to make human trafficking a crime. They did not get the specific law on human trafficking that they had been battling for, but President Vladimir Putin did finally in 2003 call upon the Duma to approve amendments to the Criminal Code to include anti-trafficking articles. The chapter explores the difficulties and hurdles of forging human trafficking into a political issue and traces the protracted attempts to get politicians to take it seriously. It captures some of the assessments and feelings expressed by those who battled in anti-trafficking work.

The Russian press has played an important role in the process of educating its readers about the thousands who were trafficked out of the country. Chapter 3 offers a survey of how national newspapers covered stories of human trafficking, exploring the sorts of messages that they

delivered about it and the images of the trafficked and traffickers that they constructed. What Russian citizens learnt about human trafficking came from the press, television and films unless they had personal knowledge of it from their own localities and acquaintances. As in all countries, reporting varies across newspapers. Whereas some provided calm and informative reporting, others told considerably more sensational stories, and one in particular asked the age-old Russian question, embedded deep in its political culture, of '*kto vinovat?*' or 'who is to blame?'

What, then, did the public think about human trafficking? Many, it seemed, blamed the women and girls themselves for ending up in prostitution. Three of the ways in which social scientists can find out about the views in society are by conducting opinion polls, running focus groups and doing face-to-face interviews. Working from the assumption that it matters for our understanding of foreign societies that we examine how its citizens perceive issues and evaluate them, I undertook research using all three of these techniques. Chapter 4 presents the results of responses to questions about human trafficking in nationwide public opinion polls conducted in 2007 and 2014 across the Russian landmass, thereby enabling comparisons of views held over time through longitudinal data. It also shows how men and women held similar attitudes on most issues connected with human trafficking with the exceptions of how strongly they blamed trafficked women and girls and of how welcoming they would be towards trafficked returnees. On questions concerning the reasons behind trafficking, on state capacity to tackle it and on recommended policies for returnees, there were no significant differences in responses according to gender.

Moving from the quantitative data gathered in the population surveys, Chapter 5 takes a deeper look at the reactions, views, thought processes, arguments and ideas expressed in focus groups held in 2007 and 2014. Discussion here provides qualitative 'thick descriptions' generated by the interactions of Russian citizens confronting various aspects of human trafficking and unfree labour.⁵⁰ Illuminating pictures emerged of what was known and not known about human trafficking and of how participants characterised it. There was evidence of both highly informed contributions and also misconceptions. Each group shaped debate with varying emphases as participants worked through the questions posed and reacted to what others said, thereby developing their own group dynamic, which included some momentum and lively disagreements. The passage of seven years between the first two focus groups and

⁵⁰ For the classic text on 'thick description', refer to Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

the second two shed light on variations over time in the points made, the degree of shock and level of indifference.

How likely were experts in NGOs and in research settings to agree with what members of the public said? Chapter 6 examines the conclusions and recommendations expressed in interviews and in follow-up e-mails between 2004 and 2016 from those most knowledgeable about human trafficking. These specialists were keen for the problem to be tackled and for those who suffered from it to receive adequate assistance and rehabilitation. Whilst they shared these goals, the points that they chose to emphasise or the way that they assessed some aspects of human trafficking varied, such as regarding the scale of outflows or the significance of given policies. Across the world, in all policy areas, specialists highlight different aspects of issues. These discussions underscored the hazards of assuming just one 'Russian view' or of more short-sightedly assuming a 'Russian mindset', as outsiders sometimes do.

From expert opinions on human trafficking, the book moves on to complete its macro-picture by looking at labour migration into and within Russia. Chapter 7 sketches a brief history of recent in-migration from Central Asia for work, noting a prior trend in the Soviet era. It discusses representative press reports on the problems, changing hurdles and challenges that migrants face, and it also draws on information given in press releases from the Russian police. In particular, it considers the significance of different angles that journalists take in their reporting and the nature of the questions they pose. The chapter considers the significance of how the press covers stories and the categorisations of unfree labour that it suggests. Discussion includes how Russians themselves may unwittingly get drawn into unfree labour situations in their own country, be it on farms, in brickworks, in prostitution, in metal work, in begging rings or in forced theft.

Russian legislation on labour migrants at first sight looks complex, largely due to many changes in these laws over recent years and flurries of amendments followed by more amendments to those amendments. Chapter 8 sets out to summarise key legislation and its changes. Without going into too many technicalities, it highlights developments in government policies to provide the necessary context for subsequent discussions. It also includes material on pressures on the state from a public concerned about competition in the labour market. Anti-migrant attitudes and xenophobia are also relevant factors, and the chapter presents selected examples of hostile views and actions, including hate crimes.

Experts in migration play a crucial role in responding to policy and in making recommendations for change. Chapter 9 examines their thoughts expressed in face-to-face interviews and in specialist journals

concerning policies on registration, quotas and *patenty* (licences to work) and on tests in Russian language, history and law which now apply to some *gastarbaitery*. As well as discussing assessments of policy direction, this chapter surveys specialist views on illegal migrants, middlemen, management mechanisms, corruption and anxieties about migrants in the Russian population. Evidence shows a committed community of professionals who are keen to improve the lot of migrants arriving in Russia and a readiness to advocate policies for the incomers' smoother integration into localities.

What the public thinks about labour migrants has been especially relevant to changes in government policy due to sometimes negative, even aggressive and violent, reactions to incoming workers, often fuelled by nationalists in different groups and spurred on by some politicians. Russia is indeed not alone in living through years of hostility to foreign migrants. In the second decade of the twenty-first century, the United Kingdom witnessed the anti-immigrant policies of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), then led by Nigel Farage, which fed into the pro-Brexit vote of 2016 to leave the EU. An increase in reported hate-speech and hate crimes followed it. Across the years, the more extreme British National Party (BNP) has been visible in street marches. Other right-wing parties in Europe share anti-migrant views, such as the Front National in France, the Dutch Party for Freedom, the Freedom Party of Austria, Jobbik in Hungary, the Danish People's Party and the grassroots movement in Germany of 'Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West', known as Pegida, which in January 2015 saw 25,000 demonstrate in Dresden after the attack on the offices of the newspaper Charlie Hebdo in Paris. The growth of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and associated terrorist attacks elsewhere in the world, such as in Paris in 2014, Tunisia in 2015 and also on board a Russian airliner over Egypt's Sinai desert, in Brussels and Nice in 2016, and London, St Petersburg, Tanta, Alexandria and Paris again in the first four months of 2017, quickly followed by Manchester in May and London once more in June, have added fuel to negative sentiments, as have allegations about the maltreatment of women in Germany by some migrants. Anti-migrant hostility in 2016 was also integral to Donald Trump's campaign to become the Republican candidate for the US presidential race and persisted into his final campaign and into his presidency. Through populist slogans he advocated building a wall between the USA and Mexico and called for an end to Muslims entering the country. Russian citizens are not global outliers when they criticise labour migrants, but their attitudes do constitute one factor that feeds into their politicians' considerations when they formulate and speak about migration policies.

Examination of Russian public opinion on foreign labour migrants in Chapter 10 scrutinises the results of two questions posed in my updated nationwide survey of 2014 which illustrate strong backing for jobs in Russia to be given to Russians only and a tepid welcome for incomers, but with a recognition that arrivals need money and are driven to leave their own countries due to a lack of jobs there. This was the very predicament that Russians themselves faced ten to twenty years earlier when they sought work in other states as a solution to economic problems at home. These results are compared with those of earlier surveys done by others. The chapter also discusses data from two focus groups held in 2014 which provide more vivid 'thick description' of the beliefs and arguments held about migrant labourers and what they mean for Russia and for the migrants themselves away from home. These data reveal more concern about what Russians might lose than for how migrants might suffer, in sharp contrast to the views of specialists on migration. The chapter closes by exploring some critical and positive opinions expressed by migrants themselves cited in other sources.

The concluding chapter takes a wider look at global estimates of unfree labour in some of the worst offending states in the world and raises pressing questions of security, citizenship, rights and ethics.

Unfree Labour in the Russian Past

The three examples of forced labour endured by Elena, Siarkhon and Sergei are contemporary versions of old forms of unfree labour that date back centuries. In the past, despite the existence of far-flung trade routes, the patterns were not as speedily interlinked as they are in the twenty-first century's globalised world with its fast-paced technologies and electronic connections. Although today's forced labour is hardly a new phenomenon, it is located in different socio-economic and international contexts from those of the distant past. It is also set in distinct regional patterns, often with varying local configurations.

Over the centuries, this immense Russian landmass of steppe, mountains, volcanoes, tundra and bog, much of it inhospitable due to climatic factors and northerly position, inevitably saw invasions, migrations and exiles. Massive movements and upheavals have taken place on its soil and these, to varying degrees, have remained deep in historical memory. In 1237 the Mongols crossed the river Volga and dominated the dis-united Russian principalities, having already conquered much of Asia. Known as Tatars to Russians, they subjugated the peoples there for more than 200 years. After Muscovy rose to become the dominant principality, there followed wars in different directions. To the west, the state was

vulnerable to invasion from Poland-Lithuania and from Sweden, and to the south from Tatar raids. Much later came Napoleon in 1812, the Ottoman empire in 1853 and the Nazis in 1941. To the east, Russia's quest for a warm-water port led to a short and unsuccessful war with Japan from 1904 to 1905. An understanding of Russian politics and society requires that we grasp a geographical imperative of Russian history or of what Tibor Szamuely aptly dubbed 'the threefold tasks of defence, re-conquest and colonization'.⁵¹ Russia has a geopolitical vulnerability that the USA, with its two long sea coasts, a friendly Canada to the north and weaker Latin American states to the south, does not share. So before focussing on the politics of the contemporary migration trends to be discussed, the next chapter provides a short survey of how conquest and colonisation in the Russian past contributed to the shaping of its history of unfree labour patterns.

⁵¹ Tibor Szamuely, *The Russian Tradition* (London: Fontana, 1988), p. 36.